Taking the wheel: Selected aspects of Windsor's automotive working experience, 1920-1938 (Ontario).

Mark Christopher. Sajatovich

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TAKING THE WHEEL:
SELECTED ASPECTS OF
WINDSOR'S AUTOMOTIVE WORKING EXPERIENCE,
1920-1938.

by

Mark C. Sajatovich

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Through the Department of History
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1992

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ABSTRACT

While historians have offered in-depth studies of the growth and development of Canadian unions in the post-World War II era, the history of the automotive workers during the inter-war years has remained relatively unexplored. This thesis is composed of six chapters, each one examining a major aspect of life for Windsor's automotive workers during this period.

In addition to an examination of the worker within the context of the automotive factory, this paper attempts to illustrate the relationships which existed between the worker, the automotive company and his/her family. These experiences and roles of Windsor's automotive workers have not been confined to the walls of the plant, but approached from the perspectives of worker as father/mother, homeowner, or immigrant. This provided a more well-rounded, and complete portrayal of the automotive worker as an individual and as a family member.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father Mark Sr., my mother Dolores, and my brother Scott, whose love, support and long distance phone calls have made it possible.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of my committee. My deep appreciation to Dr. K.G. Fryke for his encouragement, his invaluable assistance in the perpetual refinement of this paper and his overall supervision of my trek through the field of labour history; Dr. Kulisek for his input with regards to all aspects of Ford company history; and Prof. Boskins and Dr. Metcalfe for their insight and their careful scrutiny of this paper.

I would also like to thank Dr. G.T. Bloomfield from the University of Guelph for allowing me access to his unpublished reports made to the Historical Atlas of Canada Project. My gratitude as well to the staffs of the Walter Reuther Labour Archives at Wayne State University and the Municipale Archives of Windsor, Ontario for their attention and assistance.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The working class is neither essentially good, nor essentially bad; it is a complex social grouping which contains many positive features and some less admirable qualities.

Every aspect of the life of the automotive worker was influenced by the complex cycle that existed between culture, career and control. Consequently, a historical rediscovery of the local automotive worker depends upon the ability to synthesize workers' factory culture with their family culture. This paper attempts to provide some insight into the various themes which were prominent throughout the lives of automotive workers in the Border Cities; namely the aspect of the factory/family relationship. The lifestyle of automotive workers in the 1920-1938 period has been examined while giving particular attention to the role of ethnicity, and the importance of the deskilling process in local industry.

In his book *Conspicuous Production*, Don Davis presented an exploration of culture and control by offering a broad profile of elite Detroit families and the impact they had on the community-corporation relationship. He referred to this relationship as a "feedback loop." "In short, community values not only shape business decision-making... but are themselves transformed by the choices of the firm." ²

In the examination of Windsor which follows, it is proposed that such a feedback loop also existed on a different level. Whereas Davis dealt with elites and the community of Detroit, this paper focuses on the relationships that existed between workers, technology and the automotive industry. Changes in this relationship were primarily instigated by management under the
guise of technology, and they had a direct impact on workers, whose reactions in the form of individual and collective resistance led to a struggle for control on the shop floor and in the home. It was in this way that the working class experience of automotive workers in the Border Cities during the 1920-1938 period was dominated by the struggle between forces of company control and worker resistance.

This thesis addresses the question of control because it has been of great significance to various labour historians as they endeavoured to uncover whether or not workers maintained a balance of power on the shop-floor. Bryan Palmer has written that the impact of control on craft culture resulted in the making of the Canadian working class.³ In Windsor's automotive industry, the company control/worker resistance model was equally as relevant because it illustrated how factory life crossed over into personal life. It promoted both individual and collective responses from the workforce and it was these responses that marked the changing composition and maturation of the automotive workforce in the inter-war years.

With regards to the time frame used within the thesis, much of the recent work in the field of automotive history has continued to use unionization as a dividing line. Scholars and students have done much to reinforce the importance of political articulation of workers' demands in the post-1936 period.⁴ There is, however, a great deal more work to be done in the preceding period of 1920-38 (particularly in the area of the working class family and the
history of urban development). Through the illustration of how local workers, management and family culture responded to one another in the 1920's and 1930's, this thesis makes a departure from these previous theoretical patterns that have dominated research in the field of automotive history.

The time frame of this thesis is set between 1920-38 because 1920 saw the beginning of a crucial period in the development of the Border Cities' automotive worker. As E.P Thompson noted in his study of working people in England, the making of a class is a continuous process. The working class automotive worker did not mysteriously assume a position of prominence following the construction of local unions. The character of the automotive worker was nurtured and developed through several processes (namely craft evolution) which overcame what had emerged as divisions in the workforce (such as ethnicity) and formed bonds of unity among the workers.

The process of class development began in the Border Cities as early as 1904 with the establishment of the Ford Motor Company in Ford City. The main theme of this paper, control and resistance in the automotive industry, was a by-product of the concentration of industry which followed the FMC's establishment in the local area and culminated in the 1920's.

By 1920, the automotive industry was well-entrenched in the local area, and had entered a period of concentration (meaning the consolidation of smaller automotive companies and parts plants by larger operations) which established the industrial environment in
which the automotive workers functioned over the next twenty years. Also by this time, aside from their numerical contribution to the automotive industry, the local automotive workforce had grown to form a large and important portion of the Border Cities' total population. Most importantly, 1920 marked the first large scale push of mechanization into the local automotive industry, especially at the Ford Motor Company operation (FMC) of Ford City.

The thesis ends with the second World War. While the re-birth of unionization in the late thirties (in particular, the 1936 Kelsey Wheel Factory strike) and World War II by no means ended working class development in Windsor, these events marked an important point when workers themselves overcame internal differences and were able to voice their concerns through organized collective responses instead of being limited to informal individual reactions in the factory and in the office. With the arrival of World War II, the local automotive workers entered the next stage of their evolution. Significant changes were made in terms of personnel, operations, and factory technology. The most notable change of the war years being the rise in popularity of large scale unionization among the automotive workforce (even though at this point there were still less than 1,000 members in the Canadian region of the UAW).  

This thesis is broken into six chapters. In the pages of the Introduction that follow, there is an outline of the paper and a brief qualification of the methodology (especially regarding the use of Census data). The second chapter contains a
historiographical overview of the major trends in both the cultural and technological aspects of working class history. Next is an explanation of the two phases of automotive development in the Windsor area, where the industrial concentration and centralization during the twenties is examined. There is also a discussion of how the automotive industry underwent serious technological change through the series of innovations made at Ford Windsor until 1936. Also included is a discussion of the implications of new technology upon the worker's social patterns within the factory.

Having examined some of the technological changes in the automotive plant, Chapter three is concerned with the traditional meaning of "skill," with regards to auto workers and how recent historiography has broadened the definitions of "skilled and unskilled." Whereas both terms had been understood solely in terms of practical hands-on ability, "skill" has taken on important political dimensions which offer interesting possibilities for the interpretation of labour relations in the 1920's and 1930's. The key to understanding the workforce lies in the ability of historians to discover how that power effected relations in the automotive plant.

The notion of craft evolution is examined through the works of labour and automotive historians and leads into the process of deskilling/reskilling between 1920-1938. This section stems from the second chapter in that the deskilling process was a direct result of technological innovations brought about by the concentration of the automotive industry in Windsor.
Chapter four attempts to illustrate how one specific form of company control (FMC's Profit-Sharing Plan) differed from early forms of welfare capitalism in the automotive industry. Key among the differences between these two plans was the fact that FMC used this policy not only to control the financial income of its workers and their family at home (i.e. boarders), but also as a method of indirectly shaping the urban geography of the Border Cities.

Chapter five is dedicated to the issues of resistance and ethnicity among automotive workers and what significance it held during the inter-war years. Chief among the issues addressed are ethnic networking, and the evolution of ethnicity from a hindrance to unionization movement to a great common denominator of automotive workers. Also included is a discussion of individual and collective resistance as it applied to automotive workers.

Each family member felt the impact of the family/factory relationship. Chapter six is concerned primarily with examining the repercussions of company control on the family of the automotive worker both as individuals and a unit. For the purposes of this paper, "family culture" has been defined as the lifestyle of the auto worker outside of the factory and within the sphere of his/her home. The term "factory culture" is used when referring to the everyday activities of auto workers within the factory.

The reason for this definition is simply that the majority of the evidence for this paper is drawn from the Census reports of 1921, 1931 and 1941. The "culture" which Thompson referred to encompasses almost every facet of life outside of the factory. In
order to bring the lifestyle of the auto workforce into sharper focus, it is necessary to limit the scope of examination to an area from which direct figures are available.

Finally, the conclusions of the thesis show how the lifestyle of the automotive worker was effected by each of the main components of this paper: industrial concentration, control and resistance, and the elements of skill and ethnicity.

Due to the surprising fact that there has not been a terrific amount of research published dealing with the daily lives of Windsor's automotive workers, one of the most useful sources in this thesis has been the Census of Canada. The great challenge when dealing with Census material is trying to establish a relationship between the statistics and the automotive workers. Such a task is difficult, but there have been precedents. Over the past decade there have been several historians who have explored innovative methods of statistical interpretation.

In their comparisons of Montreal and Toronto, both Michael J. Piva and Terry Copp established data bases which included Census information which they then used to calculate the level of real income for workers in Montreal and Toronto. In a later article, Piva incorporated Census information relating to fourteen principal Canadian cities and used it to calculate and compare wages, incomes, costs of living and real income of the working class within these cities.

In his article, Piva points out that one of the principal problems of working through the Census are the broad categories
that workers are categorized under; within the "iron and steel" category in 1921, the tables subdivide workers by industry in some cases and job description in others. The historian's task of trying to accurately identify and account for each individual automobile worker is further hindered by the addition of vague categories such as "automobile workers not otherwise specified."

Census data has also been used to analyze the home ownership patterns of Canadian workers. Richard Harris, in his article, "Working-Class Home Ownership and Housing Affordability Across Canada in 1931," has used "the neglected 1931 Census" to illustrate how ownership aspirations were stronger on average, throughout the Canadian working-class than the middle class. Here again, Piva's criticism of the Census' changing categories is echoed by Harris. The 1931 Census does not provide identical information for every city in Canada, therefore, the study was limited to eight cities throughout Canada (Windsor is not among them due to limited local information).

Harris concluded that historians' traditional explanation of substantial geographical differences in workers' home ownership rates had been incorrectly tied to Old World notions of "culture." The data allowed Harris to illustrate that there was a low rate of ownership in an anglophone Halifax as well as in francophone Montreal and Trois Rivieres. The Census figures had provided the information necessary for the author to link one dimension of the working class life in both English and French cities.

In this case, statistics had been effectively used to illustrate
how the notion of differences in English and French-Canadian culture was an outdated and insufficient explanation of working-class home ownership patterns. With so many possible statistical interpretations, it becomes vital for Census researchers to qualify as well as quantify their research.

With reference to this paper, the most difficult aspect of investigating the automotive workers had been identifying exactly who composed the local automotive workforce during this period. Official automotive company records concerning the ethnic composition and the lifestyle of local automobile workers are meagre at best. Through the examination of fluctuating numbers within the various automobile related occupations, along with the appearance and disappearance of occupational categories, the Census has given some indication of the transformation of the role played by the traditional automotive skilled worker in Windsor industry. In order to operate with the broadest cross-section of auto workers, several occupations from the Census manufacturing categories of each year have been selected to represent the general body of Windsor's automobile workers. These are listed as Automobile Related Occupations (ARO) in the Appendices at the end of each chapter.

Insofar as the actual determination of occupations for each chart is concerned, the narrow parameters of the Census categories served to restrict the selection process. Certain occupations which would have made positive contributions to the charts, simply did not provide the necessary information. For example, "Car builder" would
have been a desirable category for the 1921 chart. The Census, however, was not able to provide specific data regarding the average weekly earnings for Car builders in Windsor. Therefore, it was not included.

It should also be noted that the numbers within the categories which have been selected as Automobile Related Occupations in the Appendices, may not be referring solely to those workers within the Windsor automotive industry. This issue effects certain occupational groups more than others. For example, it is improbable that the numerical total within the "Labourer" and "Office Clerk" categories were limited only to workers within the Windsor auto industry. By the same token, due to the size of the automobile industry and the relatively few number of Boiler and Engine Makers in Windsor, it is very possible that this group was heavily concentrated within the local auto industry. As a result, the Census figures provide a more accurate depiction of certain categories of workers in the automotive industry than others.

Aside from occupational categories, Census statistics have been used to help illustrate various problems which effected the lifestyle of Windsor's working-class during the 1920's and 1930's, specifically the housing crisis of the 1920's. This paper has also been enriched a great deal by the recollections of Mr. Sid Turnham, a retired Windsor automotive worker who shared many of his experiences which dealt with the Ford plant in the 1920-1938 period. Mr. Turnham's recollections (although they concern events which occurred more than sixty years ago) have been added throughout
the course of the thesis primarily to enliven the statistics and portray automotive workers as individuals and more than simply numbers.

Overall, with the focus of Canadian labour history in the 90's being "from the ground up," no period seems more apt to be examined. The 1920's and 1930's were decades in which support for the worker as an individual was nowhere to be found. The inter-war years in Windsor forced workers to retreat to their families or ethnic communities, move on, or try and stand alone. As Irving Abella wrote:

For the Canadian labour movement, no period was more dismal than the 1920's. Organization was at a standstill, membership declined drastically and union leadership was divided and paralysed. Though this was a case of rapid economic development, the Canadian labour movement was unable to capitalize on these propitious circumstances. It simply could not cope with the new economic challenges of the period.

This paper is an examination of the relationship between Windsor's automotive workers and their employers, and how the worker and his family struggled against company control in the decade prior to effective union organization.
ENDNOTES


Chapter 2: Concentration and Technological Change

In several ways, labour history is a process of rediscovery. For example, Italian marxist Antonio Gramsci was the most influential early twentieth century theorist to realize the significance of working class culture. While he believed that the common political concerns of the workforce were vital to the development of a working class consciousness, Gramsci considered workers' thoughts and actions central to their identity as a "class." Gramsci also stressed that the cultural unification of the workforce would arrive via intellectual and moral levels. As a result, this accent upon culture broadened the scope of working class history to the point where the study of labour became more concerned with workers' lives than workers' organizations. A complete understanding of the concerns of workers depended upon more than a mere understanding of workers' institutions. The working class was a group with strong cultural bonds which linked workers together in their development both as workers and as members of a community. Culture became the theoretical common denominator of the working class. This was a force which unified the workers on a deeper level than political beliefs alone:

...whereas political leadership can be grounded upon a conjunctural coincidence of interests in which the participating sectors retain their separate identity, moral and intellectual leadership requires that an ensemble of 'ideas' and 'values' be shared by a number of sectors... that certain subject positions traverse a number of class sectors.

While Gramsci's notions of culture in the workforce at the turn
of the century laid the groundwork for social historians in the 1980's and 1990's, certain areas of Thorstein Veblen's writings hinted at the evolution of craft and the survival of "skill among the unskilled." As early as 1914, Veblen had presented the concept that even non-craft workers within a machine-dominated industry developed specific skills which were necessary and enabled them to work more efficiently:

"It is the part of the workman to know the working of the mechanism with which he is associated and to adapt his movements with mechanical accuracy to its requirement. This demands a degree of intelligence, and much of this work calls for a good deal of special training besides..."

During the course of the mid-twentieth century, the cultural emphasis which was exemplified by Gramsci, was overshadowed by a more institutional approach. The most influential supporters of this approach were John R. Commons and the Wisconsin school. This new approach became influential because it expanded the focus of labour history through concentrating on more tangible and quantifiable sources (strikes, union membership, etc.), which many historians felt were more relevant than cultural studies. The conceptual framework as established by Commons resulted in the analysis of trade unions as formal institutions, while concentrated attention was given to those relatively few skilled workers within trade unions. The remainder of the unskilled working population were ignored.

Herbert Gutman pointed out the two main faults with this approach; it excluded most working people from the area of study and those few who were studied remained isolated in their own
subcultures and were far removed from the larger national culture. Thus, the Commons approach was representative of a more constricted study of American labour which became "more detached from larger developments in American social and cultural history..." The worker needed to be united with his/her history.

With the mid-sixties came E.P. Thompson. As Gramsci had provided the theoretical base, Thompson produced a practical examination which integrated a cultural approach into his work on the English working class. Having turned his focus to the roles of religion, rituals, family and community in the lives of workers, Thompson proclaimed that "class" was a continuing process which linked the experiences of workers in cultural terms. Workers' lives and experiences were, "embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas and institutional forms." The scholars who followed Thompson's model continued to re-interpret what had previously been looked upon as the building blocks of traditional labour history. Strikes, trade unions, and political movements were all re-evaluated in cultural terms. Most importantly, the cultural approach offered historians of the 1960's an appealing alternative to previous labour history methodologies; either the portrayal of the working-class as martyrs, or the depiction of the rich and powerful as their natural enemies. Most importantly, it allowed the individual worker to re-enter his/her own history as more than a tool of industry.

Herbert Gutman was one of the first historians to put forth the view that "the essential question for historians of the dependent
classes was "not what 'one' has done to man, but what man does with what 'one' has done to him." This direction transcended traditional approaches and encouraged new questions, new methods and the further reinterpretation of primary sources.

Equally as important was his work in immigration and migration history. Gutman realized that the key to a more accurate analysis of the workforce was determined by the ability of the researcher to trace the traditions and influences of immigrant workers back to their countries of origin. This material was vital if the historian was to uncover any ethnic connections which served to both link the immigrant to the homeland and initiate them into North American culture. Thus, the cultural traditions of immigrants did not originate only when s/he had set foot in North America. The acknowledgement of labourer as member of an ethnic community had received limited attention when compared to the interpretation of immigrants exclusively as members of a collective labour force with little sense of ethnic identity.

It was Gutman who was most influential in the reunification of the exploration of both workers' culture and institutions within the scope of labour history. Gutman incorporated Gramsci's notion that immigrants had traditionally been perceived as inferior by social elites in host societies:

...the Italian Antonio Gramsci concluded of such evidence that 'for a social elite the features of subordinate groups always display something barbaric and pathological.' The changing composition of the American working class may make so severe a dictum more pertinent to the United States than to Italy. Gutman argued that immigration was an undeniable method of
transferring beliefs and traditions from countries of origin. This in turn, effected the labouring relationships of all workers throughout America. The significance of Gutman’s work and the influence of this view has effected the field of Canadian ethnic labour history. In 1987, when referring to this concept, ethnic historian Bruno Ramirez wrote:

No respectable work of immigration history today can afford to ignore the precise socio-economic and cultural universe that immigrants left behind, but to which they continued to be linked psychologically in the host society.8

Recently, there has been an ever increasing number of Canadian labour historians who have attempted to tackle detailed studies of immigration patterns in the course of their research. The difficulties which ethnicity presents to labour historians are numerous but the principal problem lies in methodology. What is the most effective method to single out the working-class component of a group and treat them as both "members of a given ethnocultural collectivity and as part of a multinational working class in a specific productive capitalist context..."9

Tamara K. Hareven’s book, Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community is one example of how historians have used the individual experiences of immigrants to illustrate "the economic importance and emotional intensity of family bonds in workers’ coping with industrial life."10 Hareven moved the focus of working-class studies from the workplace to the immigrant community. Ethnicity in this case has become the central focus of twentieth century working-class relations.11
The importance of research regarding ethnicity and working class lifestyles in general is undeniable. However, recent trends in labour historiography indicate that this type of research into working class culture may be highlighted by an examination of technology in the workplace. In this way, the two spheres of culture (represented by the home and the factory) may come together.

Ethnicity and the working class may also be connected through a study of local housing and boarding patterns. In the case of Windsor, the study of boarding may draw attention to the strength of the existing links between a worker's culture, the ethnic community and his/her job. The connections which existed between housing and ethnic lodgers illustrated the power of networking, and also how automotive workers and the various ethnic communities (already established in Windsor), kept their cultural connections and ties to their respective homelands alive. Immigrants found this a valuable step in the acculturation process. As Michael Kazin argued:

Workers did not check their dreams, ideas, prejudices and personal relationships at the factory gate; and the meaning of their history cannot be grasped by assuming that the workplace took priority, as a generator of attitudes, over the neighbourhood, family, ethnic group, or institutions of popular culture.

Ultimately, this relatively recent surge in the analysis of ethnic cultures throughout labour historiography has increased the necessity for a better understanding of relationships within the factory.

The rediscovery of working class culture led to a more in-depth
study of what David Montgomery called the structure of power, "forms of domination in workplace and community life, workers' challenges to that domination, and the role of governmental, business and cultural institutions in deflecting those challenges." The most influential examination of control and domination in the workplace has been done by Harry Braverman. One of the main questions which has evolved through labour historiography over the past fifteen years has evolved from Braverman's argument that the dignity and skill of labour were eliminated with the arrival of monopoly capitalism.

Braverman's main contention was built upon the notion that industrialization acted as a negative force for workers, one over which they had no power. Therefore the study of social control and the worker was thus the best way to understand the "social and economic organization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." Many historians still accept the pertinence of Braverman's argument, but have introduced some refinements. David Noble for instance, argues that technical knowledge came to be concentrated in the hands of modern management and the worker was reduced to "an appendage of the machine." In this sense, Noble argues that the new technology was used by management as a means to an end (meaning complete control) rather than technology as an end in itself.

Richard Edwards' interpretation of labour history differed from Braverman's presentation in that he did not agree with the notion of the worker as a passive and powerless victim. Edwards viewed the workplace as "contested terrain" where management and labour
struggled to win the modes of production. In his study of social relations within the workplace, Edwards examined the ability of the modern corporation to "restructure the social organization of the labour process." According to Edwards, it was only within the context of class relations that technology and efficiency could be properly interpreted.

Workers in this sense were able to "resist and influence proposed changes in the labour process." Through the late seventies and early eighties, labour historians had begun to leave Braverman's interpretation to focus more on Edwards' theory and develop the notion of worker as an active agent in his/her own workplace. The theoretical framework of labour history underwent a drastic shift in order to escape what has been called the "unrelenting grimness of Braverman's Labour and Monopoly Capital." Labour historians in the late 1980's attempted to rediscover the motives and actions of workers in the midst of reevaluating Braverman's argument that monopoly capitalism had resulted in the deskilling of the workforce and the advent of managerial control.

Among those who attacked Braverman's concept were both Canadian and American historians who favoured the "craft revival" thesis. American scholars such as Michael Piore, Jonathan Zeitlin and Paul Adler argued that changes in economic organization and production led to increased levels of skill and greater worker involvement in the production process. Historians such as Craig Heron, Ian Radforth, Robert Storey, Ian McKay, Joy Parr and numerous others
have argued this theory convincingly from a Canadian perspective. Basically, North American historians had begun to write labour history without the worker as a victim.

Canadian labour historiography had evolved into a blend of cultural, ethnic, and family history, and the concept of the worker in the plant underwent a notable change as well.

As the presentation of the Canadian labour force shifted from passive to active, craft evolution became an important theory. Heron and Storey noted in their work, *On the Job*, "the arrival of new technology did not necessarily translate into mindless, unskilled, machine paced assembly lines." While technology may have eliminated a great many skilled and unskilled jobs, there were a great many new semi-skilled positions that were created as a result. Ian Radforth states that among bushworkers in northern Ontario, mechanization was a welcome relief in many cases. While many jobs were lost, the machines made easier work for those that remained and also resulted in the creation of new technical skills among the workforce.

With regards to automotive workers, similar questions remain. Was the implementation of new machinery instrumental in the changing occupational status of skilled automotive workers? How did this technology effect political power of workers in the plant? Had machinery made automotive work easier for automotive workers? The prominence of these questions has marked the coming of age for unskilled workers in their own history. At one time the majority of historians regarded the worker's role in history as limited, and
therefore insignificant, "it is difficult if not impossible to perceive what the average working man [woman] was thinking. Probably very little." However, perspectives have changed. New tools and interpretations have transformed what was once thought to be impossible into a challenge to labour historians in the 1990's. The worker has become the key element around which labour history must be built, "Until we find out what average Canadian working men were thinking and doing on and off the job, the political history of the labour movement is only partially intelligible."  

If, as Montgomery says, a "House of Labour" has been built, these approaches form its foundations. Historians of the automotive industry have followed much the same course over the past quarter century. Having arrived at the factory gates, it became necessary to determine exactly who was inside. In recent attempts to answer this question, historians have uncovered much about the lifestyles and identities of Canada's working-class. With this information, it became somewhat easier to reconstruct the attitudes of the individual worker.

The automotive industry in the Windsor region comprises such a large fraction of its manufacturing history that these two items are almost one in the same. To comprehend the full role of the local auto worker, it is necessary to go beyond the factory and remember how s/he functioned within the community and as a family member. The auto worker was not solely a tool of industry, these men and women were the building blocks upon which the social development, as well as the economic growth of the Border Cities
rested. The 1990's represent the arrival of automotive historians at the crossroads between cultural and technological history:

During the last ten years... we have profited greatly from analyzing workers' own experiences of their understanding of society, instead of proceeding from some supposed ideological consensus or from abstract formulations about 'levels of working class consciousness.'

As automotive workers, local men and women functioned under certain conditions which directly effected their lives outside the plant. When a worker accepted a position with an automotive company, s/he also acknowledged that company control was a condition of employment. Craig Heron noted that this arrangement was common in the Canadian steel industry and was based on personal self-interest:

...in return for complete obedience and passive acceptance of corporate control, the workers got the promise of higher earnings through incentive wages and the possibility of economic security through regular employment, promotion possibilities on the firms' internal 'job ladders'...

If the wages throughout the automotive industry were among the highest in the country, there were elements of the automotive workers' lives that were sacrificed by him/her as compensation for such a wage. As a direct result, one of the most dominant characteristics of many Border Cities automotive workers in the twenties was the growth of a sense of vulnerability. The development of a sense of working class consciousness was a result of the workers' struggle to overcome this vulnerability. As Craig Heron and Bryan Palmer argue, "Underpinning these mechanisms was a resilient consciousness of pride and self-confidence in their social worth that would carry these workers through many
struggles." These qualities prevented the workers acceptance of company control from rendering the worker as little more than a faceless member of the proletariat upon entry into a factory.

Throughout the 1920's, specific policies were designed to bring about the demise of the workers' identity as an individual through various automobile company's attempts to control workers in the factory, the community and the home. There were several processes which combined to dictate the lifestyles of the Windsor auto workers in the twenties. Chief among these were deskilling and reskilling processes [as detailed in Chapter 3—new automotive technology and its impact on the assembly line workers], the fluctuations due to the seasonal nature of the automotive industry [Chapter 3] and new forms of social control [Chapter 6—advent of the Ford Wage and its impact on the local family]. These three elements played important roles in the life of the Border Cities automotive workers and made vulnerability a fact of life. These processes were set in motion through the concentration of Windsor's auto industry.

The evolution of the automotive industry in the Border Cities may be broken down into two principal phases; 1904-1920, and 1920-1939. The early period of automotive history in the Border Cities essentially dates from 1904, when Ford of Canada launched its Canadian operation. Over the course of the next twenty year period, the Canadian automobile industry (whether Canadian establishments or transplanted American operations) flourished in specific centres throughout southern Ontario. The most significant
of these operations were located either in Oshawa (General Motors) or in the municipalities of Windsor, Walkerville and Ford City.\textsuperscript{33}

During the initial phase (1904-1920) the numerous automobile related operations became established in the Border Cities. As Neil Morrison notes, the years 1910-1915 "...witnessed one of the most fruitful industrial and commercial advances in the history of Windsor and the county," and also that "Increase in population and wealth accompanied industrial growth."\textsuperscript{30} This increase in the population of the four municipalities (Windsor, Walkerville, Ford City, and Sandwich) was due in large part to the agrarian/industrial relationship that existed between the Border Cities and the surrounding county [see Appendix, following this chapter]. As Morrison points out:

Though farming was increasingly profitable during this decade, especially during the war years, the shorter working day plus the higher wages in the city made employment there more attractive than farm labour.\textsuperscript{34}

The automotive industry entered a second phase in 1920. Whereas the first phase was distinguished by a process of substantial growth in terms of the total number of incoming workers and automotive companies, in the second phase, the larger automotive companies began to consume the smaller automotive and accessory producers in the area. This process led to fewer automotive employers while the total number of workers continued to grow. The overall growth in the second phase (1920-1938) was at the expense of the smaller, independent automotive producers and suppliers. The concentration is notable due to the fact that this process was national in scope, and automotive workers in Windsor were linked
with the entire Canadian working class through this common process.

Two of the three major automotive companies in Windsor at this period exemplified this type of concentration. Established in 1904, the Ford operation in Ford City was the largest of the eight Canadian branches. The reason for the success of the FMC was the fact that company and local community were interdependent. As early as 1912 Ford was relying as heavily upon the dozen small factories supplying the Windsor operation as these companies were on the FMC for contracts.32 For example, Ford's automotive frames came from the Canadian Bridge Company, malleable castings (items which combined elasticity and strength such as wheel hugs and gear housings in the rear axle) from the Walkerville Malleable Iron Company and the Auto Specialties Manufacturing Company of Windsor, brass parts from the Kerr Engine Company, gas engines from the Canadian Typograph Company and Wheels, and springs axles and bodies from Chatham.33

This supply relationship with local parts industries allowed FMC of Ford City to keep costs low and crowd most other North American automobile manufacturers out of the local market. More than any other single factor, the rapid development of the Border Cities population since 1905 must be attributed to this interdependent relationship which allowed auto companies to develop and the workforce to expand.34

As time passed, the pattern of concentration within the Windsor automobile industries effected the local worker in such a way that the Windsor area automotive worker was more likely to become
employed by, associated with and therefore dependent upon, a large automotive giant rather than a small, locally run automobile manufacturer or parts supplier. The industry was rapidly expanding in terms of size, but the number of automotive manufacturers was decreasing. As the Border Cities entered the Twenties, the FMC had constructed a six-storey building which covered nine acres and had a total floor space of 498,389 square feet. The production of the plant was estimated at 250 cars per day and company had invested over one million dollars in new equipment and almost double this in the erection of new buildings since the beginning of the war.

Even with such an investment, Ford still remained relatively untouched by the major economic crises that followed the first World War. As a result, the company was able to update and rebuild four of the Canadian branches at a cost of more than one million dollars and reduce the price of the Model T by sixty dollars.

The FMC entered into an arrangement with the Fisher Body Company (which was located in Walkerville), according to which, Fisher began to build bodies exclusively for Ford. This association with the FMC provided a great deal of security for the Fisher operation. In late fall of 1919, this company more than doubled its size and the capacity of its plant. Future additions planned included another mill (280x51 ft.), a fourth story on the Body Department building and an enlargement of the power house with between 450-500 employees.

The situation looked so positive that the Canadian Board of Directors for FMC authorized a Canadian expansion plan of $2.5
million. This allowed the purchase of the properties of the Dominion Forge and Stamping Company. This acquisition provided FMC in Windsor with a sheet metal plant, a power plant, a frame plant as well as machine equipment, including tool and dies. Therefore by 1920, machinery which was used by the company to deskill its workers was purchased as a direct result of concentration.

A second example of the modifications underway within the local auto industry was the Maxwell Motor Company of Canada Ltd. As Maxwell entered the twenties, it had acquired a twelve acre site at Tecumseh road and Dougall Street. By 1920, Maxwell Motors had won control of the Chalmers Motor Company which had already constructed a plant at Walkerville. The Chalmers operation, however, was much too small to remain competitive. A new Chalmers plant (200x500 ft.) produced touring cars and a 1 1/2 ton truck. Both Maxwell and Chalmers had established distributors in all principal centres throughout Canada. To take advantage of this, the Maxwell company had a new loading dock constructed for handling national and international orders. The dock effectively doubled the loading capacity at Walkerville. Maxwell employed 175 men, while Chalmers maintained a staff of 75.

While the increasing prominence of the larger auto manufacturers within local industry may have been the rule, there remained exceptions. During this period, in which many Canadian companies were devoured by their U.S. counterparts, the American Auto Trimming Company was one example of a completely independent Canadian-owned automobile accessory operation in the Border Cities.
In 1919, this company which painted and trimmed car bodies, was in the process of adding a five story building (200x100 ft.) which was one and two thirds as large as the old plant. Following the addition, the plant employed 350 and hoped to export business to Britain.

Another accessory plant which did not immediately become affiliated with the larger companies was Motor Products Corporation Limited, located in Walkerville. This was but one example of the many Canadian branches of Detroit companies (Motor Products Company). By 1920, a new building had been constructed on the expansion site of fifteen acres. The new two-story building covered three acres and had railway spurs constructed in the new plant. Whereas the company employed 200 workers before the new plant, they employed approximately 500 workers after its construction.

Two important independent local accessories plants were the Kelsey Wheel Company, and Champion Spark Plug. Kelsey had doubled its plant size and was in the process of constructing an addition of 60x200 ft. as well as a one story building. It employed 240 men. Champion Spark Plug which was located on Hanna Street, manufactured ignition devices and employed sixty men. A new building (85x300 ft.) was under construction. In 1926, fifty-five of the Dominion’s seventy auto and auto parts plants were housed in this region. Near the end of the second phase in 1935, seven of the major automobile plants and thirty-one plants manufacturing parts and accessories were located in the Windsor area.
The construction of automobiles during this period may broken down into three basic functions; these being design, which employed engineers; processing, which was the responsibility of the Foundry and Rolling Mills; and assembly, which involved work on one of the lines. In terms of technological development, the Ford Motor Company of Ford City had humble beginnings. When first established in 1904, the only machinery for automobile finishing was one drill press. When extra power was needed to run the elevator or drill press, a belt had to be attached to one of the rear wheels of a Model C. The third floor of the Ford building was devoted to painting the bodies, chassis and wheels. By 1909, the increase in output demanded more machinery. By this point, chassis were assembled, tested and finished within the machine shop. Approximately one-half of the chassis parts that needed to be machined were worked on here as well. All motors, however, continued to be supplied by the parent FMC in Detroit.

By 1912, a new Ford building had been constructed. The first floor was used for chassis assembly, as the finishing department and also as a stock room. The second floor was used to house the equipment from the old plant's machine shop (plus additional machinery). The old machine shop had been converted into a stock room and a body equipping department. A heat treatment plant was also built.33

Even though these changes are significant, the first major reorganization of the Ford factory did not occur until 1924. In the early twenties, the FMC invested $12,000,000 into a new Ford
machine shop. By 1924, it had been completed and this enabled the FMC of Canada to begin building the bodies for closed model automobiles in the newly equipped body manufacturing plant in the building from which they had recently moved. Following the removal of the older machine shop equipment (which had been transferred to the new building), the engineers ordered new machine shop equipment which was necessary for the production of closed cars.

The process of building an automobile at FMC in Ford City was complex. The two stages of this assembly process were the body and the chassis. There were four main steps that were combined in building of the body of an automobile: the preparation of lumber, the trimming fixtures, the assembly line, and painting and varnishing process. The lumber was steamed and air dried in a kiln. After it had been approved by the laboratory, it then moved on to the mill. Conveyors delivered the lumber to the mill, where woodworking machines cut and shaped the wood into various forms that made up the finished body.

The steel plate which is converted into the car bodies is transplanted onto the same floor as the lumber, where huge presses formed the plate into the required shapes. On the next floor, the trimming fixtures were produced. Sewing machines were then used to complete the production of seats and cushions. In another department, glass was unloaded, ground and polished into shape. When complete, each department delivered its individual product into the stock rooms.

The stock rooms automatically fed a number of lines which lead to
the "framing bucks," where the actual car bodies were built. On these lines a series of small assemblies (floors, roofs, panels, etc.) were completed to form the skeleton of the body, minus the doors. After the skeleton was complete it then proceeded to move to the conveyor. The skeleton was placed on the conveyor and was in constant motion for "several days" until it was finally ready for the chassis.

The body, which at this point was nearly complete, was placed on a monorail carrier. It was here that the car received its first coat of paint and was placed into an oven to dry. Following the drying, the body was inspected, glazed and sanded. The body was painted again and placed in the oven once again. This method was repeated for each of the four coats of paint.

After the finishing process, the car body was removed from the monorail and placed on an apron conveyor, where "skilled men build in the seats, upholstering and windows." The last step in the process was for the body to receive a final varnishing, and then it was supplied with the trimmings (cushions, hardware, etc.). At this stage, the body was then ready to meet the chassis.

Upon entering the Ford plant in the twenties, the layout was already tightly organized:

...the first thing, there was boxes all over the place, ready for shipment, cause the railway used to come right into the plant... and then different rows would be all machines, different departments. There'd be the flywheel here, there'd be crank shaft there, there'd be the transmission plant and down here would be the cylinder block and each department... would go that way [right] and some would go that way [left]. Then down the middle was the motor line, where the finished motors used to go, before they went into the car."
In terms of constructing the chassis, the most important single casting was the cylinder block, and the crank shaft was among the most crucial of the forgings. All castings and forgings had to be machined prior to their assembly in the finished automobile and the machining process required a wide variety of machine tools. As the auto industry began to incorporate larger amounts of sheet steel in the production of vehicle bodies, pressing became a vital part of the process of production.42

The assembling process was composed of several stages. An automobile frame was placed on a track approximately one foot above the floor and as it moves past several groups of workers, parts are fastened to it. "One man performs one operation, another man, or a set of men, another."43 While some parts were assembled into components like carburettors and starter motors, others were assembled into "sub-assemblies" such as engines, gear boxes and rear axles. The most difficult of all sub-assemblies was said to be that involving the engine. This practice was comprised of the cylinder block and head, the crankshaft, and the pistons, etc., in addition to components like the carburettor and the dynamo.44 By the thirties, most popular cars underwent an assembly process which called for the various sub-assemblies to be united with the chassis frame to form the chassis of the automobile. Following this, the completed body was then added to the chassis in the final assembly stage.45

In the mid-thirties, FMC again made large scale technical renovations to their Windsor auto plant. In 1935, the first
electric furnace was set in operation for the production of cast alloy steel crankshafts for steel forgings. This new operation resulted in size of the foundry being doubled. Inside the new foundry, three new furnaces (one electric and two of a rotary mounting type) were installed.

With the installation of the new equipment came a demand for more power. The original powerhouse equipment was three boilers which generated 250 pounds of pressure at 600 degrees Fahrenheit (each producing 110,000 pounds of steam per hour) and a 5,000 kilowatt rating. The total power capacity was 15,000 kilowatts. However, with the extensive use of electric welders and the new electric furnaces, there was a great demand for more power. As a result, three new turbogenerators (20,000, 5,000 and 750 kilowatt ratings respectively) and two new boilers were installed. The overall improvement went from 15,000 to 35,000 kilowatts. These enhanced mechanical techniques made even superior production rates possible.

As Gregory Kealey has noted, the "changes in the capitalist organization of production and the consequent "remaking" or reconstitution of the working class were well advanced before the outbreak of the war." The key element in this remaking of the workforce was the fact that, as Richard Edwards stated in Contested Terrain, "What is important here is that the consolidation of industry immediately produced larger workforces inside the firms."

Edwards proceeded to argue that as firms grew in size and an increasing number of workers spread out and settled in all
directions (factors which are evident in the growth of Ford Motor Co. Ltd. of Ford City, and detailed in Chapter 5), the problem of worker control became more serious. Along with the growth in size, there was an increase in specific types of work being done. This meant that the demand for traditional types of work was lessened, and workers were pushed into certain occupations within the plant. Emphasis was placed upon efficiency and increased production while stricter regulations and working conditions were forced on the workers.

The process of concentration had implications nationwide, and effects were also felt locally in Windsor where there were six strikes in 1919 alone. While the impact of this early concentration of capital may have been prominent, it was not sufficient on its own to act as a catalyst for a massive reorganization of labour within Windsor's automotive industry. With the twenties came the second industrial revolution and the deskilling/reskilling process which combined with the concentration in the automotive industry and brought the local automotive workforce closer to structural reorganization, and collective resistance:

The structural transformation of the working class generated by the Second Industrial Revolution and by the ongoing process of the concentration and centralization of capital, which on some levels weakened the working-class movement, simultaneously stimulated an enhanced capacity for collective resistance at the workplace. Thus, scientific management and other managerial innovations, which attacked... the 'moral economy of skilled men,' began the process of generating an industrial union response.

The process of centralization was well underway, but technological
change was just getting started.

If concentration of the automotive industry is viewed strictly within the parameters of local history, it becomes apparent that this process was the first step in the "feedback loop" between workers and management. Although large North American companies had begun to attack the power of craft workers decades earlier, the problems of labour turnover and informal shop-floor resistance (which led to lower rates of productivity) did not become serious in local automotive operations until working conditions became more strictly enforced. It was concentration which triggered the automotive companies' control attempts through deskillling and subsequent alterations in shop floor relations which led to repercussions in the family. Management felt that tighter control over workers' private lives would ensure stability in the workforce and therefore production. As such, concentration had direct implications on the lifestyle of Windsor's auto working family, and the relationship between family/factory.[see Chapter 5].

Recent approaches to labour historiography have stressed the rise in prominence of the "global worker" (refers to the study of experiences common to the international working class). This means that the experience of the local worker must also be analyzed from outside a local context, and as a contribution to the development of the international working class. This process of concentration within Windsor's automotive industry was another bond that consolidated Windsor's working class with workers around the country. Concentration was not uncommon throughout Canadian
industrial.

This indicates that although the experience of the local automotive workers was unique, their working experience was not segregated from workers in other areas. They were linked through several common processes that affected their lives. The examples of concentration within Windsor's automotive industry help establish that incidents of individual and workforce resistance were neither limited to region or time frame (specifically Winnipeg in 1919).

As Kealey states, collective resistance was more of an international reaction to the structural transformation of the working class before World War I. Windsor's concentration of industry was not completed until mid-twenties, which meant that the processes (craft evolution, changes in the composition of the workforce, company instituted forms of social control) necessary for long-term collective resistance did not come to fruition until the thirties. The "concentration and centralization of capital" in the early twentieth century stimulated an enhanced capacity for collective resistance at the workplace."[1]

The same conditions of concentration and centralization had marked the Windsor automobile industry only at a later date. This being the case, the early (and unsuccessful) attempts at unionization by Windsor auto workers may be considered as primarily a reaction to this early concentration of capital (and not a collective response to deskilling attempts). However, as the complete centralization of the Border Cities' auto industry was not
accomplished until some years after the events of 1919, and technology was not implemented on a massive scale until after 1920, the development of Windsor's "enhanced capacity for collective resistance" was delayed until the late-thirties.

The process of automotive industrial centralization throughout the twenties was valuable for the reason that it served as a basis for more lasting forms of working class resistance. Centralization within the automotive industry was not the sole reason for the development of the workforce. It did, however, produce numerous ramifications which impacted the lives of automotive workers.

As the automotive companies were consolidated, the unity among automotive workers remained practically non-existent. The reason for this lack of shared experience was as Henry Ford said, "as our production grew and departments multiplied, we actually changed from making automobiles to making parts." The manufacture of automobile parts kept the workers departmentalized and physically separated from each other. Production of steel used in the automobile would be completed in one area of the plant, while smaller more detailed parts would be cast in the foundry. All of the various components which were to be used would be shuttled to a waiting assembly line. As a result, workers from the various antecedent occupation such as blast furnaces, open hearths, rolling mills and foundries had found themselves all loosely grouped within one industry. This conglomeration occurred relatively quickly. The Ford City operation began as an assembly plant but as early as 1919 had begun to manufacture parts. In Detroit, the FMC had
established this procedure as early as 1914.

Although this occupational segregation helped to create barriers between the workers prior to industrialization, the second industrial revolution magnified these divisions. William Faunce studied the role of technology in the alteration of work patterns. The first observation made in the study is that the size and frequency of the interaction groups (a number of automotive workers who had regular contact with one another) within the factory setting were determined by several factors. The first of these was the way in which the work stations were spaced along the production line.

In the older plants, machines had been positioned on opposite sides of the moving conveyor, a worker at each machine. The average distance between the stations was under ten feet, and the average size of the work group was ten employees. In the newly-automated plants, work stations were closer and did not demand the perpetual concentration of the labourers. Eighty percent of those interviewed responded that they were able to speak to their co-workers while working. Workers also reported that their newly automated jobs required much closer and more constant attention than their old non-automated jobs.

The second factor which determined the interaction of workers was the ability to control the pace of work. If a worker had the ability to control his pace, he had more time for social interaction. This control had been removed from the auto worker. Not only was there less interaction but it occurred among fewer
workers. The entire system of relationships had been changed in the new plants:

In the old plants each worker along the line characteristically belonged to a somewhat different interaction group than the worker next to him. In the new plant, however, work groups were structured so that the men on each transfer line tended to form a separate and isolated group. 55

Even in cases where the various functions of workers on the line were dependent upon one another for successful production, there was little sense of teamwork. One question which is raised with regards to technology within the plant is the killing of the work ethic among auto workers. How can an automotive worker feel a part of a team when he simply pushes a button that starts the operation of a machine knowing has no effect upon the rate of production?

Where work pace is no longer controlled by the worker, man-hour productivity becomes a meaningless measure of achievement of group goals even where they are identified with the organization to the degree that output is accepted as a goal of such groups. 56

The author reveals that communication between workers in the new plant was limited to expressing direct concerns about the job. In areas of the plant where noise from machinery made spoken language impossible, sign language was used in many instances to warn of approaching foremen and other job related concerns. "...there was little of the free interchange regarding non-work matters which appears to have been characteristic of interaction in the older, non-automated plants." Socially, the workers were isolated on automated production lines. 58 Technology kept the workers from discussing anything other than work-related affairs on the line. Home did not invade the shop.
With regards to the workers' ability to develop friendships in the automated atmosphere, 47% felt that they had more friends on their previous non-automated job, 40% reported no difference. However, a larger fraction responded that socially, they got together more often off the job with friends from the old plant in comparison with their present friends in the automated plant. Not only did the workers speak more freely in the non-automated situation, they also spoke to each other more often outside the workplace.

The workers' relationship to the foremen also underwent a change. The assignment of the foreman was to maintain the correct speed of workers on the production line. Prior to automation this was accomplished through the close monitoring of the individual worker and by repairing any broken down machinery. In an automated plant, there is less actual independent physical work to do (pushing a button as opposed to cutting a piece by hand), so personal appeals do not help maintain the speed of the line. When a breakdown occurred in the automated plant, it was not uncommon for the entire line to stop. Under the traditional system in the old plant, when one machine was out of commission the foreman himself completed repairs while the other machines went on unhindered. In the new automated plant:

...often the whole line stops, as much as a million dollars worth of machinery may be idled while the repairs are made, and neither the foreman nor the operator has the requisite skills to make many of the necessary repairs. Thus the foreman in the automated plant is faced with meeting increased production schedules without being able to utilize effectively either his acquired "human relations" skills or the knowledge he has accumulated about conventional machining processes.
Faunce argued that these tensions had been transferred into the realm of foreman/worker relations. In this way, the foreman was representative of the entire automotive workforce. As workers inherited new skills, they also acquired new pressures and strains.

Workers in other industries of this period were able to overcome this type of physical departmentalization. In his article, "The Realm of Uncertainty: The Experience of Work in the Cumberland Coal Mines, 1873-1927," Ian McKay presented the case of Springhill miners, who were able to sustain a united front through the twenties. The situation of the miners was similar to that of the automotive workers in that they too, had numerous occupations, but still found a "difficult unity achieved among independent men working in an astonishing variety of conditions and doing a number of different jobs." In fact, one of the miners goes so far as to testify against the divisiveness of a factory where he had been employed when he states, "Everybody was pulling against each other." What accounted for the unity of the miners and the disunity among automotive workers? McKay's answer to this question was:

...the precariousness that threatened the miner with death and the community with extinction. The issue of death not only throws into relief the most important values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experience, but it also suggests ways in which the coal-mining communities were distinctive....Death, this palpable presence underground, intensified the solidarity of workers menaced by a common enemy. On the surface, it brought the community together in powerful expressions of its collective life... death in the mines, inherently collective and social, continued to be marked by unifying rituals.

Death had achieved a symbolic importance, which contrasted the
miners' humanism with the "utilitarian calculations of capital." In the mines, death had been personified to the extent where the miner worked with this threat every day. All miners felt the same common threat and expressed it in a similar way.

The issue of death in the automotive plants exemplifies the various divisions between the automotive workers. Workers on the line, or in other departments, did not encounter occupational death as commonly as the miner. Automotive companies placed emphasis on safety precautions in the factory, and the type of sudden, unpredictable death that occurred in the mine "bumps" did not take place as frequently in the automotive plants, or effect as many workers.

Local industries had established safety as a priority prior to the 1920's. On September 22, 1919 the Border Cities Safety Council conducted the first "safety week" in Canada. The emphasis of the campaign was to educate the industrial worker on how to avoid careless accidents. Throughout the course of the week, twenty-one speakers presented four minute speeches in various theatres, the employees of thirty-two industrial plants were addressed during their noon hour break and films were shown on accident prevention. The onus remained on the industrial worker, who was essentially portrayed as accident prone, to protect himself while at work. No mention was given to methods which could be utilized by companies to improve working conditions around the plant. Industrial accidents were much more casual affairs within the automotive plants, which seem to have been accepted by the
workforce as part of the job. "Workmen were at times needlessly burned or maimed. But it is impossible to eliminate all peril from any complicated mechanical employment."  

Automotive workers lived their lives under harsh conditions and the constant pressure to increase their working speed. As a result, they encountered industrial accidents and a gradual decline in their overall health rather than immediate death. Therefore, in the same way that death unified the miners, "accidents" had the much the same effect upon automotive workers. Automotive workers were also divided by lines of ethnicity, skill, geography and occupation. All of these factors worked to reduce the impact throughout the automotive plant when death occurred in one of these areas. A dead worker may have been referred to by ethnic or occupation (slav in the foundry), rather than simply "autoworker."

Other than death, retirement appears to have been one example of an occasion during which the bonds of unity of workers within a department showed their respect and good wishes for the retiring automotive worker:

...cause you don't work the last day you're there. You go in all dressed up. Yeah, you don't do any work the last day, and everybody come up and say [laughs] "God, I wish I was you Sid." They presented me with a wallet, I forget how much money was in it, quite a bit, the guys all clubbed around. They all used to put on like a retirees send-off."

One suspects that in comparison with the large numbers of miners from all areas of the mine turning out for a funeral, those in attendance for the funeral of a deceased autoworker may have been tightly linked by ethnicity or occupation.

Long-standing mining traditions ran through families and the fact
that most miners enjoyed coal-mining had served as a bond between the miners and their community. With the majority of autoworkers, however, there was no community tradition. The job was based less on tradition than it was with the wage. The miners exhibited:

...a deeper psychological investment in jobs which lasted a lifetime, the much greater stability of the community, a larger population which could sustain a sense of mining as honourable work."

This physical departmentalization of automotive workers acted against any sort of collective human experience from developing among the automotive workers. Occupational diversity was added to ethnic and geographic diversity as causes of disunity among the workers. While the industry was consolidated, the automotive workers remained separated.

By 1930 it became evident that the "Big Three" (Ford, General Motors and Chrysler), were the survivors of this concentration process in the automotive industry had emerged as dominant forces in the Border Cities, as well as the North American auto industry. Of the Big Three, FMC had risen to become the most influential automobile manufacturer in the Windsor area. While the process of concentration and centralization went on, it set the stage for further structural developments such as technological innovations and the deskilling/reskilling process that accompanied it.

Stephen Meyer's assessment of the evolution of skill within the auto industry runs contrary to that of Richard Edwards. For Meyer, technology was not a method through which management maintained its hierarchical control over the workforce. Instead, it was a process which succeeded in concentrating the skilled
workforce in specific areas of production and therefore was more concerned with the concentration, not elimination, of critical skills.

In Meyer's examination of the history of technology in automobile production, he cites three distinct phases of development. In each of these phases, the worker adapted to the changing machinery over time and developed the skills which were required to operate the latest machinery in an efficient manner. Automotive production in each of these phases relied on either general-purpose machines, special-purpose machines or semispecial-purpose machines, respectively.68

The first phase lasted until approximately 1910. It was distinguished by general purpose machines and the skills of metal craftsmen to create small numbers of luxury automobiles. At this time the shop was ruled by the all around skilled machinist who, "knew some mechanical drawing and mathematics, how to operate different classes of machine tools, and how to perform fitting, filing, and assembly operations at the bench."69

Even though these men were all highly skilled mechanics, they were human and there remained a large degree of work which was not exact. As a result, specialized machines were built to reduce their margin of error. The operators of these new machines found their work a bit easier and also that it required a reduced degree of the traditional skills to operate them.

By 1910, Ford had redesigned his plant operation in order to maximize the volume of production through the use of unskilled
workers and machinery. The purpose of the new machines was to strip whatever craft skills remained with the workers and render them under complete control of management. For example, the reason for the new design of Ford's automatic lathes was, "to eliminate the judgement of the operator and predetermine the day's output." Ford also claimed that due to the fact that most of the operators were mostly inexperienced Europeans, machines were made stronger and more precise to compensate for their lack of skill.

Until full mechanization of the Ford factory in Highland Park around 1910, assemblers, moulders, machinists and many other production workers were considered traditional skilled craftsmen. Additionally, large numbers of less skilled and unskilled workers—helpers, assistants, labourers, truckers and so forth—complemented and assisted this highly skilled workforce. Indeed, until its technological and organizational transformation, the early Ford factory was "a congeries of craftsmen's shops rather than an integrated plant." In this way Ford himself noted how little unity existed between the workers in the various departments of the shop even before mechanization.

In much the same manner, the Ford Foundry in this period was almost completely dependent on the skilled knowledge of the moulder. The moulder prepared a sand mold which accepted the molten metal and then hardened to form a rough casting. The coremaker, another highly skilled worker, prepared the core for the hollow part of the casting. Assisting the moulder were the flaskers, who made the container to hold the mold, rammers forced
the sand around the pattern for the mold, pourers poured the molten metal, skimmers removed impurities from the metal and shakers shook the sand from the casting. As Henry Ford said, "The work was skilled or unskilled; we had moulders and we had labourers." By 1915, the aristocracy of occupations within the Ford plant was shifting:

In addition to the purchase and construction of the most modern machine tools, Ford engineers designed and constructed special attachments, such as jigs, fixtures, and other mechanical devices, which transformed multipurpose machines into single-purpose ones. Not only engineers, but also skilled tool makers, experimental room hands, draftsmen and metal pattern makers, developed and manufactured the novel machines and devices. In an era where craft skills and traditions still survived, little delineated the tasks of the college educated engineer and the shop-bred mechanic. Both proved invaluable and essential for technical innovation in the Ford plant.

As the 1920's approached, the definition of an automotive skilled worker had been altered to include draftsmen, toolmakers and patternmakers—those workers who designed, constructed and arranged the plant's industrial equipment. The logic was that the more expensive the equipment, the less qualified [less expensive] the class of labourer would be. "Cheap men need expensive jigs, highly skilled men need little outside of their tool chests."

In conclusion, the concentration and centralization of the automotive industry in Windsor meant that a greater number of workers were forced to work for fewer companies. Working conditions became worse with the introduction of technology into the plants. Automotive workers were unable to initiate any effective form of long term collective resistance due to the fact that they remained virtually sealed off in their various
departments. In addition, factors such as ethnicity, a lack of any common traditions and financial dependence kept the workforce vulnerable to company control.

Regardless of a worker's specific circumstances, concentration had a direct bearing on all automotive workers. The safety valve of free choice and open job market conditions was closed by concentration. Concentration of industry limited workers' choices of where to work when working conditions at one plant got too difficult. The conditions which provided automotive workers with job alternatives and methods of individual resistance until the 1920's disappeared.

The single most important unifying aspect of automotive workers in the 1920's and 1930's was the fact that each worker possessed some informal skill that was necessary to production and gave them a limited degree of political power on the shop floor. The following chapter examines this notion of craft evolution, and how unskilled workers inherited political power.

2. Dunk, It's a Working Man's Town..., 27.


7. This "traditional" but limited view of the role of the immigrant and ethnic communities is expressed in Oscar Handlin's, The Uprooted, Boston, 1973.


25. Heron, *Working In Steel...,* 163.

26. John Manley, "Communists and Autoworkers," 106. By 1913, FMC paid its labourers and semi-skilled assemblers and machine operators rates between 32.5 per cent and 45 per cent above the going rate for common labour in the Border Cities. In 1925: "...skilled and unskilled wages in Windsor were reported as 'practically the highest ...in any part of the Dominion.'


29. Manley, "Communists and Autoworkers...." 106.


34. S. Bellinger & G.T. Bloomfield, "Workplace-Residence In the Border Cities 1905 and 1926-27," 2. It was this growth which led to a three-fold increase in the population between 1911-1931.

35. The exact date that the arrangement came into effect is not available. It appears, however, that the approximate date is in early 1919, when FMC in Ford City began to produce the first Ford trucks.


37. Among these were the following:

- Canadian Winkley Co.
- Windsor Manufacturing Co.
- Wilson Motor Co.
- Turner Wheel and Machine Co.
- Eclipse Manufacturing Co.
- Concrete Bumper Co.
- Maple Leaf Manufacturing Co.
- Canadian Lamp and Stamping Co.
- Canadian Commercial Car Corp.
- Hayes Wheel Co.
- White Machine Works Ltd.
- Locktite Patch Co.
- A.C. Ignition Co.
- Square Deal Co.
- Auto Specialties Co.
- Menard Motor Truck Co.
- McCord Manufacturing Co.
- Windsor Machine and Tool Works.


41. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 12.

As of 1928, these parts included axles, springs, engine, transmission, steering gear, wheels, truss rods, fenders, battery, body, radiator, gasoline tank, running boards, hood and lamps.


46. Border Cities Star, April 28, 1936, 36.


51. Robert J. Campbell, "Work, Workers and Working-Class History: A Review Essay," *Labour/Le Travail*, 23, Spring, 1989, 229. David Montgomery has also contributed to the development of the concept of global worker through his acknowledgement that the boundaries of the working class had spread from Toronto in the north to Spain in the south.


53. William A. Faunce, "Automation in the Automobile Industry: Some Consequences For In-Plant Social Structure," *American Sociological Review*. 23:4, August, 1958, 401-407. This study used 125 randomly selected workers from four machining departments of one of the "most highly automated
engine plants in Detroit." All workers had been recently transferred to the automated plant from older plant of the same company, and 80% were working in the same job classification as in the older plants.

54. Faunce, "Automation in the Automobile Industry...," 402. See also, Walker and Guest, The Man on the Assembly Line, Cambridge et al, 1952, 71. Walker and Guest came to similar conclusions in their study. The most frequent interaction was between two to five workers next to and across from each other on the line.

55. Faunce, "Automation In the Automobile Industry...," 403.

56. Faunce, "Automation In the Automobile Industry...," 403.

57. Faunce, "Automation In the Automobile Industry...," 407.

58. Faunce, "Automation In the Automobile Industry...," 404.

59. Faunce, "Automation In the Automobile Industry...," 405-406.


63. McKay, "The Realm of Uncertainty..." 56; see also Bryan D. Palmer, A Culture in Conflict, Chapter 2.

64. Labour Gazette, October 1919. 19:10, 1120.


66. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 14.


Chapter 3: "Deskilling" and "Reskilling."

While the previous chapter detailed how the automotive industry workers underwent a process of consolidation, this chapter is a demonstration of how workers' development of informal skills and the process of craft evolution served as common denominators which linked automotive workers, regardless of their ethnicity or occupation. This chapter demonstrates how, in addition to seasonal unemployment in Windsor, workers were effected by the management's attempted deskilling of traditional automotive craft workers through new technology in the local automotive industry. As a direct result, skilled workers were concentrated in specialized departments of the automotive plant, namely repair work in the maintenance departments. At the same time "unskilled workers" inherited a degree of "skilled power" in their working lives through this process, even though it was against the original intention of the company.

The major management deskilling vehicle arrived in the form of technology. Prior to unionization, the skilled in Ontario had traditionally led workers en masse into instances of collective resistance. It was hoped that machinery would replace skills in the workforce, thereby giving management total control over the rate of production. Automobile manufacturers, such as Ford, implemented new technology in the hope that it would make skilled workers obsolete.

The ultimate implication of technology to the workforce, however,
was not the elimination of the skilled via the distribution of their skills into the machines, but the reskilling of the "unskilled workers," who were called upon to operate these machines. Through this process, common labourers developed new skills which were an indirect product of the automotive company's attempts to eliminate the political power of their predecessors, the traditional craft workers. Along with these new skills, unskilled workers gained a certain degree of political power within the plant and as a result, they were more than fodder for the automotive company's attack on the power of craft workers.

In this way, deskilling was not the infallible tool in the breakdown of craft workers' power that management had hoped. The new machines and larger assembly process did not result in destruction of the workforce as much as it did its reconstruction. The new automotive machinery was instrumental in redrawing the lines of worker/management power in the automotive plant.

The FMC of Ford City had assumed, until the mid-twenties, that large-scale implementation of machinery would effectively eliminate skilled workers throughout a number of maintenance positions and therefore negate any power that these workers had to effect production. Scholars have argued that while machinery allowed management to rearrange work relations, it did not eliminate the power of the worker in the shop. "...it is not the strength of machinery that weakens the human race, but the manner in which it is employed in capitalist relations."¹ It should also be noted that the rearrangement of plant relations did not involve any
significant change in the relationship that existed between male and female gender roles [see Chapter 6].

As previously mentioned, Windsor's automotive workers suffered a deep sense of vulnerability which was to a large degree, the direct result of attempted company control through deskillling. There are two basic forms of deskillling, both effect the income level, job status and as a result, the class structure of the workers. The economic situation of local automotive workers was particularly difficult because they were effected by both of these deskillling processes.

The labour market is a form of deskillling on its own. Cyclical shifts in the automotive industry resulted in, "consequences for the employment structure of both general and localized fluctuations in the level of economic activity."² Basically, the changes in market conditions effected the demand for the product and this has an impact on the employment levels of the various occupations within the workforce. The impact was mostly felt by skilled workers, as David Lee stated, "skilled tradesmen who are pushed out of jobs... are mostly lost to skilled employment completely."³

It is difficult to positively identify the number of Windsor's automotive workers who left the industry through the process of cyclical deskillling. Most local skilled automotive workers were determined to stay within the automotive industry if at all possible. During the depression of the 1930's, the community of East Windsor was considered "very fortunate" by the provincial government because some of Ford's Departmental Managers were in
charge of the local relief operation. "The Ford managers in charge of relief had 'a great advantage over the men,' since 90% of them have been and hope again to be employed in Ford's works." The rationale behind the government's optimism was that it felt ex-automotive workers were so anxious to remain in the immediate area they would not lie to interviewers in order to qualify for relief. If they were ever found out, they would never be rehired by FMC.

Housing Commission records indicate that for many of the local workers to find work in the automotive industry during the downtime. As a result, workers moved to Detroit for automotive work. If Detroit plants had shut down for the season, another alternative open to Border Cities workers was to look for work in another industry. In a letter to the Ford City Housing Commission dated July 29, 1931, one Ford City automotive worker had explained the reason that he had missed a payment on his house to an official:

Says he hasn't worked for three months [in the local automotive industry] and the Chevrolet Forge Plant in Detroit is closed until January 1, 1931. Says only two hammers going out of 450. Going to try for a job at the Steel company in Ojibway.

As a result, not only had cyclical unemployment resulted in elimination of skilled workers through their transfer to other industries, but it also resulted in their relocation to other areas.

This cyclical unemployment produced uncertainty with regards to work and wages and added to the worker's acceptance of poor conditions within the industry. As Craig Heron has pointed out,
this type of economic insecurity forced many workers to respond to incentives, "however demeaning or patronizing, that held out the prospect of regular employment and/or advancement into better paying jobs [as noted in Chapter four]. In the case of Windsor, these cyclical fluctuations were seasonal. [As evidence of the cyclical nature of the local automotive industry, please refer to the graphs at the end of this chapter labelled "Windsor's Employment Index," Tables 1-4].

The second form of deskilling existed outside of the systemic cyclical deskilling was induced by the automobile companies, themselves. During the twenties, various companies began to incorporate occupational deskilling into their attempts to extend control over the workforce. Deskilling in this sense was a term which referred to the first principle of scientific management, as determined by Frederick Winslow Taylor. Deskilling, according to Taylor, meant the dissociation of the labor force from the skills of workers. As Braverman stated:

The labour process is to be rendered independent of craft, tradition, and the workers' knowledge. Henceforth it is to depend not at all upon the abilities of the workers, but entirely upon the practices of management. Implicit in this notion of deskilling was the relationship which existed between work and power. Historians and sociologists have questioned the relationship between skill and power and to what extent deskilling was introduced as a tool of management to eliminate skill from the workplace and limit the political power of skilled workers on the shop-floor. As David Lee has stated:
...is it possible to distinguish the technical from the political/social input into skill, and, further, to say which in the last instance determines either the fate of a particular group of workers or the evolution of the class structure of capitalism?¹

Unskilled workers were quick to learn the new techniques necessary to become proficient at working with their machinery. In this way, they had inherited the skills which had been taken away from the skilled craft workers. This transition of craft from one generation of automotive workers to the next is important because it marks how the "composition of 'craft' changed back and forth over time."²

It is at this point that the automotive development of the Border Cities auto worker breaks with Braverman's theory. Where many observers have accepted the implementation of new machines and technology in 1920 as the point whereby the traditions of craft workers within the automobile industry were destroyed, they had followed Braverman's approach which promoted:

...the tendency to see "craft" as some sort of ideal construction, unchanging in time until it is destroyed irrevocably by capitalist intervention.³

John Lutz has recently pointed out that while there was no question that either factory work was unrewarding; or that skilled jobs were lost in either of the two industrial revolutions:

Braverman, however, by focusing on the nineteenth century skilled craftsmen, limited his focus to the only segment of the workforce that was facing deskillling, and diverted a generation of scholars away from the burgeoning demand for semi-skilled workers drawn from the the formerly unskilled.⁴

Local automobile companies, and Ford in particular, were instrumental in the re-formation and empowerment of the Border
Cities automotive labourers and unskilled. The introduction of technology served as the catalyst for reorganization of the power of the automobile workers. Technology was not a wall through which skills were halted, but rather dispersed among a greater number of workers. It was a bridge that enabled new unskilled workers to inherit the skills of the craft workers and broaden the overall power base of the automotive workers. As Richard Price has noted:

The de-skilling process is fractured and incomplete, and produces a new configuration of skills which then form the basis for a re-constituted "craft" control."

In this sense, technology was the instrument which provided the means for the evolution of craft. Automatic machinery in the 1920's automotive plant was a vehicle which allowed the redistribution of the work of a highly skilled minority to a larger body of unskilled workers. As Graeme Salaman has noted, "Technology is not an autonomous force, but a method or system of methods which is designed in certain economics and political contexts." In the early stages of mechanization, the automotive company regarded technology as a means to an end; that end being the transfer of workers' political power to management. In reality, technology led to distribution of skills to a wider body of workers who now maintained the assembly lines which had been built to replace the skilled workers. This process led to the reskilling and empowerment of the unskilled workers in the automotive plants.

The evolution of the term "skill" has broadened historians' views of worker relations, focusing on more than simply practical
artisanal skills. While skill continues to refer to those workers with a high level of expertise in one particular area of the factory, skill is also used to refer to those who had won a degree of power within the factory. For example, feminist historians have created a definition of skill which firmly incorporates the notion of political power in the plant:

...skill is a socially constructed category [and] managing skill definitions is a political process... a political process in which some workers have more economic power than others.\(^{13}\)

The notion of skill has come to be viewed more than a simple descriptive term. Canadian historians, such as Gregory Kealey and their American counterparts, like David Montgomery, have studied the relationship that existed between skills and workplace control. They have concluded that skill was vital to the workers' sense of self-confidence upon which all collective resistance was built:

Technical knowledge acquired on the job was embodied in a mutualistic ethical code, also acquired on the job, and together these attributes provided skilled workers with considerable autonomy at their work and powers of resistance to their wishes of their employers.\(^{14}\)

This same conditions existed within the Windsor automobile industry. Traditionally, the question of assigning a level of skill to any occupation has been strongly related to the degree of unassisted hand work that the artisan must incorporate into the production of goods. As Thorstein Veblen wrote, "perfection in the handicraft system means perfection of manual workmanship."\(^{15}\)

Michael J. Piva has argued that the evolution of craft may be traced through statistics. With categories such as "machinists", "millwrights", "labourers", "managers", and "foremen", "it is
possible, then, to distinguish skill level and class within the aggregate data...." the question of skill goes beyond such census labels. It is a process of empowerment, primarily among males, which decides material benefits in the workplace. As Shirley Tilletson wrote:

Power may not simply come from skill, but may also enable some workers to establish their skilled status, a status which strengthens further claims to income and other rewards. Skill, then, may not be simply a source of male worker’s power, but may also be a label won in part on the grounds of masculine entitlement. 

This theory expands the boundaries of skill beyond the worker’s practical ability. Skill then, was not an economic fact but an “ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of the sex and power of the workers who perform it." The question therefore becomes one of determining how some groups of workers succeeded in the establishment of definitions of their work as skilled. Unskilled workers acquired these powers through actual job skills and through mastering the machines which carried out the diluted skills of the craft workers. In fact, Alfred Chandler argued that the rise of mechanization in the twenties had such a major role in the redistribution of power among the workers within the automotive plant that it "[made] more confusing than ever such terms as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers."

With most skills of the craft workers having been transferred into new machines, incoming (and as yet untrained) workers inherited a portion of this lost skill. As Charles Walker wrote concerning the workforce in the 1920’s, "there are no unskilled labor jobs on the assembly line." In 1924, the Border Cities
Star reported on the skill required to work on Ford’s assembly line:

Following completion of the skeleton body a miraculous transformation is seen. Body building specialists work on each side of the body, carefully and with much finesse, hanging doors, fitting panels, etc.4

As Braverman noted in Labor and Monopoly Capital, machinery played a significant role in eliminating a great deal of high wage skilled labour at FMC. In his study of the FMC, Steven Meyer reinforced Braverman’s argument. The skilled positions of moulder and coremaker, for instance, underwent a dramatic change of status:

The foundry superintendent asserts that if an immigrant, who has never seen the inside of a foundry before, cannot be made a first-class moulder of one piece only in three days, he can never be any use on the floor; and two days is held to be ample time to make a first class core-maker of a man who has never before seen a core-molding bench in his life.5

David Montgomery has argued to the contrary in The Fall of the House of Labour, that the experience of the skilled workers in the auto industry was not one of degradation or elimination, but one of realignment within the factory:

The number of skilled workers in large industries did not disappear, but most ceased to be production workers. Their tasks became ancillary—setup, troubleshooting, toolmaking, model making—while the actual production was increasingly carried out by specialized operatives.6

Through the 1920’s the automotive skilled craftsmen had become rare but certainly not extinct. Indeed, the overall situation within the Canadian automotive industry appears to have had this much in common with various other mass production industries throughout the United States. As Craig Heron points out in Working In Steel:
...while most of the old-time craftsmen of nineteenth-century ironmaking—the puddlers and the blacksmiths—were gone, all skill did not disappear within the 'gigantic automations,' and management recognized their reliance on such men.

The rapid implementation of extremely specialized single-purpose machines in the auto factory meant that the skilled machinists in the tool room were allotted a high degree of control over the production and design of these machines. The new machines called for new types of skilled workers on the line as well as in the shop. Due to the high turnover rate among assembly line workers, most of the men were not in the plant long enough to learn how to maintain and adjust new machines. This resulted in the entrenchment of a stable group of skilled workers who were required to perform this task:

These included millwrights who located the new machines in the shops, maintenance workers who repaired broken machines, and set-up men who adjusted the machines. Moreover, the larger number of foremen and subforemen, who maintained shop discipline and shop production quotas, also had to know and understand the operation of the complex machines in their shops.

Faunce points out that when the workers were questioned as to whether they had a better relationship with their foremen in the automated or non-automated plant, the majority reported that the relationship had been better in the non-automated plant. Faunce argues that the reason for this change in worker-foremen relations is not due to a change in the personality of the foremen but rather to the transformation of the foreman's role in the plant.

The reason for this transformation is the increasing level of pressure in the new automated plant. The pressure on the foreman has a direct relationship to the deskillling process. The foreman
had lost his traditional skills and in his new environment was forced to learn skills in more firmly rooted in personnel and crisis management.

The final wave of automotive technology was developed courtesy of General Motors. While Ford had perfected the simplistic specialized machines that provided the means for him to conquer the mass market through high volume production, these machines remained limited in their capabilities. In order to offer the public a wider range of automobile styles, it became necessary for General Motors' engineers to design a new line of machines that were easily altered while on the assembly line. In this way, companies were able to manufacture various designs and company more flexible to consumer demand.

A primary concern of these automotive companies that attempted to design such machines was that they could only be adjusted at the request of the executives and not of the labourers who operated them. These "semispecial" machines had several advantages over the single-purpose machines: costs were reduced due to standard construction, it was possible to change designs without scrapping the machine, and new machines were built more quickly.26

The company's attempt to eliminate the skill and judgement from the automotive worker on the assembly line through these semispecial machines was unsuccessful. The main effect of this mechanical reorganization was not the elimination of skilled workers but their further concentration in the tool rooms.
...the transfer of skill drastically diluted the productive skills of the overwhelming majority of automobile production workers. As the new machine tool technology diffused through automobile plants and factories in the late 1920's and 1930's, the skilled proportion of the workforce never amounted to more than 10 to 15 percent of the total.27

Not only were more skilled workers needed for the design and construction of these new flexible machines, but an increased number of skilled workers were needed on the shop floor to rearrange, set-up and adjust these new, more flexible machines.

In this way, though the numbers of skilled workers diminished, they retained a new but equally important role as in previous years.

Automobile work was comprised of many mass production jobs which may not have demanded the exact level of precision and dexterity as the traditional skilled occupations but they did require a great deal of practice:

'Practice' and 'knack' appear to be the appropriate words, then, rather than 'skill.' In some cases the knack can be quickly acquired in a few days; in other cases it takes several months.29

Walker maintained that there were four classifications regarding the complexity of skills on the assembly line in the twenties. First came the single-operation jobs, such as tightening screws, which took an average a day to a week of learning time. Next were the jobs which involved two or three of these simple operations, and again took between a day and a week to learn.

The third classification dealt with those workers (utilitymen) who were a great deal more valuable because they had acquired the skills or "knacks" of many of these routine jobs. Learning time is difficult to estimate because the job of the utilityman equalled
the sum of many low-skilled jobs. The fourth and final category referred to men who had jobs which required eye and hand skills in the more traditional sense of the skilled worker.

Several months of learning time was required before assuming these jobs with any degree of proficiency. One example was that of the "dingman," whose job was to knock out the surface imperfections in the hoods of cars. Each one of these areas demanded a degree of skill as well as a high degree of responsibility. As William Faunce noted in his study of automation in the auto plant:

The worker on the automated line is responsible for a larger share of the production process. The job requires more constant and careful attention. The results of failure to attend closely to the job are more costly, and because of the increased complexity of the transfer machinery... machine breakdowns are more frequent in the automated departments.  

The development of the semi-skilled "machine tender" represented the inheritance of skills and played a vital role in the redefinition of the Windsor auto workforce in the twenties. These semi-skilled machine tenders were employed in work, "that demanded more responsibility and competence than labourers, but less general knowledge than craftsmen." As a result, the semi-skilled workers acquired specific skills necessary for the operation of new machines while on the line and a small select group of highly skilled auto workers became indispensable to the company.

The Census offers some evidence of the rise of the semi-skilled worker in Windsor's automobile related industries. One pattern which emerges from the statistics is the incorporation of labourers into semi-skilled occupations such as machine tenders. The tables in the Appendix are composed according to the number, age and the
assigned skill level of those workers engaged in automobile related occupations as of 1921, 1931 and 1941. The Census of 1921 reflected the skill level of occupations in 1921 more accurately due to the fact that it was taken prior to mass mechanization in the industry. It also reveals that the occupational breakdown within the automotive industry was relatively well-balanced between skilled and unskilled workers. Overall, the figures indicate that there were 428 more skilled than unskilled workers in the auto industry at this point (1557 skilled, 1129 unskilled).

Of the twelve most numerous occupations in the 1921 Windsor automotive industry, six of these occupations could be considered as skilled. However, of the five most numerous categories, three were considered skilled (Foremen included). The remaining three categories (Labourers, Foundry/ Machine Shop Employees and Auto/Bicycle Makers) were most likely unskilled workers at this point.

By 1931, the census reported that the skilled positions of Machinists and Tool Makers were the two most employed groups in Windsor's automobile industry. However, the semi-skilled category of "Machine Tender" appears for the first time in third place. In fourth place is another skilled position, that of Foreman, and rounding out the top five most numerous positions was the semi-skilled occupation of Moulder/Caster/Coremaker. The case of the Moulder is one example of how crafts were transmitted and not eliminated from the plant. With the implementation of new technology between the years 1921-31 in Windsor automobile plants,
the functions of the Moulder were transferred into new machinery. However, the numbers within the Moulder/Caster/Coremaker category rose from 57 in 1921, to 160 in 1931, and 471 in 1941.

Along with Machine Tender, two other new semi-skilled categories appeared in 1931; those of Fitter/Assembler/Erector and Press Worker. In the same year, the categories of Labourers, Auto/Bicycle Makers and Foundry/Machine Shop Employees were eliminated from the Census. It is very likely that the majority of workers from these occupational groups had advanced into either the semi-skilled categories of Machine Tenders, Press Workers or Fitter/Assembler/Erector.

By 1941, the Canadian census had cut down on the listings of occupational groups within the "Iron and Its Products" division. Of the 16,707 Windsor residents listed in this division in 1941, 81% of these were represented in the automobiles and cycles category. The census listed a total of 13,685 males and 709 females working in Windsor's automobiles and cycles division of manufacturing in 1941. At this point, the most highly employed worker in Windsor automotive industries was the semi-skilled Fitter/Assembler. This was a jump (165-1,366) from fifth place to first over the previous ten years and illustrates the rise of the semi-skilled worker (as well as the advance of new technology) in local automotive factories.

One retired automotive worker from the 1920’s, when questioned about his experiences on the final assembly line at Ford's in Ford City, indicated that a great deal of skill was necessary to work on
the line:

...then there was a new machine came in for boring out the wrist pin end and the crank end. I got a job on that, and boy that was a tough... we used to have to put what they called a master rod in and set this here tool to that master, but sometimes it came out perfect and sometimes you'd have one hell of a job getting it, you know, within the radius of what we were allowed."

As Ian Radforth noted in *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980*, in many cases it was advantageous for unskilled workers to adapt to new technology for the reason that with new, more efficient machinery workers increased their production, and such machines also made their jobs easier. In the case of Windsor's Ford workers, FMC brought in Excello machines which made life much easier for line workers. When asked for his reaction to the new machines [did the job become easier or more difficult], Mr. Turnham responded:

Oh yeah, yeah, a lot easier... Yeah. And after a while you'd just throw your rod in and you'd just feel it, and automatically you'd find the two pin points. And changing the tools, cause we had to use the indicator for changing the tools... I run that thing for I don't know how many years, and I got so used to that thing I could change the tools in that almost blindfolded."

While the new machine made the process more operator friendly, there was still a degree of informal skills necessary for the effective working of the new tool:

The Excello job wasn't hard but it was tricky. If you didn't get those rods on those points properly, you'd smash the machine and you'd be down for the day, then they'd put you on another machine, or maybe loan you out to some other department that needed a man."

Within the Kelsey factory, Mr. Klinger stated that the labour process became much easier with the introduction of automatic drilling machines, "Well, naturally, the more improvement in the
In approximately 1925, the FMC showed signs of recognizing the ability of their workers to develop the necessary skills to become adept working with the new machines. In that same year, FMC of Ford City announced that they had formulated a plan which would employ graduates of the Windsor-Walkerville Technical School. According to the FMC, these boys were to be trained along Canadian lines with Canadian ideals and fit them for Canadian business. The students were given an intensive course of training in various departments of the FMC's plant which would last a period of three years and provide the boys with a solid knowledge of specific trades. As the company stated its objectives:

The policy has been decided upon as a result of complaints in the press that Canadian youths go to the U.S. as soon as they leave high school, there to be trained in American business methods and take their place in American businesses.

Traditionally, a large proportion of Canadian boys had left the Border Cities to be trained in the United States and most had remained there. As a result, Canadian based automotive companies had to import their workers from the U.S. [For a more detailed approximation of Canadian/American workers in auto related occupations see Ethnic Composition Graphs following Chapter 4]

By the end of the decade [1929], General Motors in the Border Cities had also developed a plan for the education of boys at the Windsor-Walkerville Technical School. The school authorities had reached an agreement with General Motors of Canada which enabled the boys to receive training for executive positions such as plant superintendents and shop foremen. Once the boys were qualified by
the school as "suitable for the specialized lines of endeavour," the boys were taken in groups, as in the Ford plan.37

General Motors split the young men into sections. One section went to the machines and did practical work and then to the office for a period of management training. The second group travelled to the company's school of instruction at Flint, Michigan. Following this they were sent to the Walkerville plant for "shop and office knowledge."

While in Flint, the Border Cities' pupils were broken into groups of three. Each group spent one or two months at the plant and an equal period at the school. Although the Flint school had been in operation for "some years," no Border Cities' boys "have had the privilege of attending."38

The development of the Trade School system employed by Ford in 1925, and followed by General Motors in 1929 represented an evolution in the company attempts at reskilling the local workforce to company standards, under company control. Under the 1925 Ford plan, the "boys are placed in the shops, where they are taught trades." Four years later, the Labour Gazette reported that under the General Motors plan "some of the boys will at first do machine and other practical work, and will go into the offices for a stated period of management training; others first attending the company's school of instruction at Flint, Michigan and later coming to the Walkerville plant for shop and office knowledge." GM attempted to equally divide the student's time between work at the plant and academic training.39
The early EMC training plan of 1925, represents the first attempt by automotive companies to understand to what extent the informal, "on the line" skills of workers were necessary for production. More importantly, the company also learned that an understanding of workers' informal knowledge of shop-floor operations was vital if management was to limit the informal protests and individual cases of resistance exercised by labourers. What is inherent in the implementation of this form of training plan in both Ford and General Motors organizations is that the manufacturers had made the boys' familiarity with shop-floor operations a priority.

In short, this meant that automotive companies had acknowledged that its attempt at deskillling the skilled workforce had produced a group of semi-skilled workers and labourers who had acquired specific skills which were necessary for management to control if the company hoped to operate a productive assembly line. Without practical shop-floor exposure, the boys were only half-trained. Craig Heron pointed out the same procedure for recognition of informal skills existed in Canadian steel mills:

...the steel companies found that even with their labs and university-educated scientists, they had to rely on the eye of experienced labourers. Frequently, the scientists and managers were sent down to the factory floor to do a labouring apprenticeship before they were permitted full authority.⁴⁰

By the late twenties, the question became how to use these informal job skills. In 1929, the General Motors plan indicated that the company felt that it was possible to teach their students the skills necessary to become a foreman without the long years of experience that most foremen had spent becoming familiar with
operations and workers. Due to lack of evidence, the actual success or failure of this technique is difficult to assess. However, when FMC opened its Trade School in 1936, the company accepted the fact that there was no replacement for experience. FMC realized that while on-the-job skills must be acknowledged, there was no sure way to teach the lessons of experience in a classroom. This attitude was reflected in FMC’s incorporation of workers into their teaching staff:

The teaching staff is chosen from men in the company’s various plants for their knowledge of the trade they are to teach and their interest in young men.  

The FMC Trade School was careful to divide the students’ time between shop-floor relations and theory but it remained focused on technical skills. The FMC exposed students to teachers who were familiar with shop-floor actions, but the company made no attempt to try and teach informal skills in the same way as GM. By 1936, the efforts of the FMC were directed more towards teaching formal skills. Between 1936 and 1954, there had been more than 700 employees who had taken courses in blueprint reading, industrial psychology, mechanical drawing, technical report writing and mathematics. In the same time span there had been 375 graduates in six trades; of these 56 were supervisors, 31 industrial engineers and 20 in purchasing activity.

While General Motors had begun to replace its experienced line foremen with trade school graduates by 1929, the FMC had moved away from this procedure to such a degree that by 1936, the FMC approach was directly opposite to that of GM. FMC recognized the difficulty
in teaching job skills in classrooms and changed its emphasis. The main priority of the FMC had shifted to teaching workers who had mastered informal job skills through daily shop-floor experience the more elusive technical skills. In the thirties, automobile companies' realization that informal job skills were implicit in many assembly line positions led them to redefine their efforts of worker control. Until this point, automobile companies had been satisfied with control over the highly skilled formal skills of incoming workers.

By providing a service of upgrading, the company was offering to teach a significant portion of the remaining semi-skilled workforce the formal skills that had not as yet been offered to them. With their existing practical knowledge and experience, many semi-skilled workers had already reached this half-trained stage by themselves.

It was this reason that upgrading and reskilling had grown to become a priority at FMC. This idea of the shop-floor as a training ground which fit the semi-skilled workers with particular job skills was further developed in the mid-thirties. In 1936, the FMC of Canada Trade School opened. Ford presented the five reasons for its existence as:

1. To provide the company with an adequate supply of tradesmen.
2. To train a sufficiently large number, so that members of supervision could be selected from this group.
3. To conduct tests for up-grading employees.
4. To provide adult education classes for company personnel.
5. To do its part in training the young men of Canada.  

The rapid growth of the School ensured that a great number of the Windsor FMC workers received their training through Ford of Canada.
New machines meant that the companies had to recognize the presence of new skills on the assembly line. Consequently, any worker who hoped to rise through the ranks of workers within the plant had to gain these skills. The company eventually recognized the fact that formal training through company channels did not fully prepare any aspiring student for a management position. The FMC training plan was successful for the very reason that it combined both aspects of formal training and also exposure to assembly line skills. It was estimated that approximately 75% of all workers trained at the FMC School remained with Ford, although they were under no official obligation.

The founding of the Trade School marked a departure for FMC. The company realized that the complete deskilling of its workforce was impractical and that the most successful way to increase production was to recognize these skills existed and then to use them:

Above all, the craft union claim that the long period of apprenticeship still confers vital skills and experience is reflected in management recruitment behaviour. 43

In conclusion, contrary to Braverman, deskilling (or Taylorism) was not "the rabid destroyer of the craft system." 44 It is more accurate to point out that traditional automotive craft workers became more concentrated through company deskilling:

...a job may be downgraded... but the resulting technical change may so expand product volume that disciplined skilled workers are reabsorbed elsewhere, still performing skilled work. 45

In addition to the concentration of skilled craft workers within the industry, Braverman's theory of "degradation of labour" does not apply to the situation within local automotive plants. Whereas
automotive companies may have attempted to create technically
deskillined jobs, they were unsuccessful (and recognized this fact)
in creating deskillined workers. Informal skills were developed by
the unskilled workers and efficiency and high productivity were
dependent upon management's recognition of these informal skills
that were learned by workers on the shop-floor. Once automotive
companies had recognized these skills as a source of power for the
unskilled workers, they sought to control it.

However, "management cannot construct, de novo, the conditions
under which labour is to function." 45 The best that automotive
companies hoped for was that their training programs alerted future
management trainees to the particular demands of life on the line.
In this way, automotive companies became aware of the inefficiency
of the deskillining theory, recognized that unskilled workers had
become empowered and were able to make demands on their own behalf.
Eventually, (by the late thirties) Windsor’s automotive companies
realized that negotiations with these workers was the only fool-
proof way to maintain productivity. Therefore, the tone of the
relationship between workers and the company was set by the
adaptation of a resilient workforce to new technology and the
subsequent recognition of this fact by the local automotive
manufacturers in the 1920's and 1930's.

Ultimately, the issue of skills in the Windsor automotive
workforce was one of transferring the skills of the traditional
craft workforce to the incoming unskilled workers. So while craft
workers had their skills broken down under a process of deskillining,
these skills were passed on to new workers. In addition, the new
generation of auto workers also developed new skills that were
distinct and separate from those of their predecessors:
The skill of a line worker depends on such things as his reaction
time, his spatial orientation, his ability to coordinate and
control the movements of his body. There is very little room
for aesthetic judgement or for composition. His skill depends
on coordinated and controlled repetitive movements, sometimes
with a delicate sensitivity to time or spatial orientation.
Since he has no part in the design of the product his self-value
or self-esteem is not derived from the product.
Consequently, it is not in the work itself but in the workplace
that he finds the satisfactions he needs.

The power that an autoworker earns on the line is his/her most
valuable bargaining chip which was used in many situations, not the
least of which being the FMC Profit-Sharing Plan [see chapter 6] to
earn better wages. The question becomes why automotive workers
accepted such an intrusion into their private lives. The answer
lies in the fact that their decision was dictated by economics.
Workers (who were aware of their power over production) temporarily
traded their privacy and their power on the shop-floor for the high
wage. In difficult economic times, workers awarded the right to
control to management. However, this was not a permanent
arrangement:

...as the workers discover for themselves sooner or later
...when management's right to manage is questioned too
frequently, and orders consequently challenged, power in the form
of coercive sanctions is employed.46

Revisionist views of labour legislation argue that unions removed
the workers' individual free choice regarding company control; that
unions themselves worked against the individual power and interests
of the workers. Unions were formal vehicles which traded away the
worker's powers of informal resistance (coercion) to the government for a guaranteed wage. In this sense the role of the unions had changed since the nineteenth century. In writing on the nature of unions in the 1880's, Bryan Palmer wrote:

In the words of the Royal commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, trade unions had done much 'in promoting a spirit of independence and self-reliance.' Rather than look to government legislation, the unions preferred 'to better their condition by united action.'

By the inter-war years, however, the nature of unions had changed. Whereas the nineteenth century union was a conglomeration of workers against the government legislation and company control, twentieth century unions worked for the government and against the workers. As Albert Finkel wrote:

Coercion in capital-labour relations became less ad hoc and arbitrary because as the state rationalized and institutionalized workers' freedoms of association, so coercion too became more formalized. What before had taken the appearance of the Mountie's charge, now increasingly took the form of the rule of law by which unions policed themselves in most instances.

Through the act of formally acknowledging unions as the official voice of the workers, the government was simply "refashioning the tools which gave hegemony to the capitalist class. The state, in effect, worked to "prevent work stoppages without giving in to demands to force concessions from employers."

Workers ended their acceptance of strict company control and harsh working conditions in the thirties. However, sociologist Michael Mann has joined revisionist historians and argued that modern government and trade union tactics were built around notions of the individual worker's informal skills, the empowerment of the unskilled worker through these skills, and the union's
relinquishing of these powers to the company and the state:

...job control is viewed by trade unions as something which can be exchanged periodically for economic rewards; typically workers will gain some shop-floor control informally, and indeed surreptitiously and then formally sign it away in union-management negotiations.32

The question that has arisen is whether or not workers have maintained the power they had won prior to unionization.
Windsor's Employment Index
1925-28 (Table 1)

Employment Figures

Month

1925  1926  1927  1928

1929-32 (Table 2)

Employment Figures

Month

1932  1931  1930  1929
1933-1936 (Table 3)

Employment Figures

Month

1937-1938 (Table 4)

Employment Figures

Month
## APPENDIX

### AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS IN AUTOMOBILE RELATED OCCUPATIONS IN WINDSOR INDUSTRY, 1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>14-7</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mach/Hill (1145)</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labourers (579)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auto/Bicycle Mkr (451)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreman (104)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15 [19]</td>
<td>71 [27]</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Tool Mks/Die Sets &amp; Sinks (145)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Pattern/Model Mkr (8)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coremakers (5)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polishers/Polishers (5)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Totals                                  | 49   | 93    | 432   | 885   | 76    | 254 | 32 |

* Indicates a skilled occupation.
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS IN AUTOMOBILE RELATED OCCUPATIONS IN WINDSOR INDUSTRY: MALE, 1931.

(Table 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>-17</th>
<th>18-29</th>
<th>30-44</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
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<td>Molders (961)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mach. (582)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mach. (103)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mach. Tend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Foremen (203)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>68</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Shipbldrs (8)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>Shipbldrs (107)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shipbldrs</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Shipbldrs (71)</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
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Totals: 4 21 219 727 717 294 508 12
### AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS IN AUTOMOBILE RELATED OCCUPATIONS IN WINDSOR INDUSTRY—MALE, 1941

**(Table 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18–29</th>
<th>30–44</th>
<th>45–54</th>
<th>55–64</th>
<th>65+</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Peter Assembler</strong> [1,266]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>214</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Machinist</strong> [1,215]</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>248</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong> [1,045]</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tool Maker</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Die Cutter</strong></td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>221</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Die Sinker</strong> [1,065]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foreman</strong> [542]</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Filer Grinder</strong> [497]</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Moulders</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coremaker</strong> Coretter [471]</td>
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<td><strong>Milwright</strong> [125]</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td><strong>Polisher Buffer</strong> [161]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Boilermaker</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plater Riveter</strong> [89]</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals**: 43 199 718 1276 1002 1048 390 74
ENDNOTES


24. Heron, Working In Steel, 63.


26. Meyer, "Persistence of Fordism," 83. The company's concern that operators may alter the functions of these machines is an acknowledgement of workers' informal protests while on the line.


31. Heron, Working In Steel, 64.

32. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 4.

33. Transcription of interview with 4.

34. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 7.

35. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 6.
36. Labour Gazette, August 1929, 25:8, 786.

37. Labour Gazette, September 1929, 29:9, 964.
"The [GM] plan provides for the instruction of boys for such offices as plant superintendent, shop foreman, and other work of a managerial character."

38. Labour Gazette, September 1929, 29:9, 964.


40. Lutz, "Technology and Labour History," 14; Heron, Working In Steel, 70.


42. Windsor Star, August 14, 1954, 14.

43. Lee, "Beyond deskillling..." 159.


45. Lee, "Beyond deskillling skill..." 159.


47. Widick, Auto Work and Its Discontents, 50.


49. Palmer, A Culture in Conflict, 94.

50. Alvin Finkel, "The Cold War, Alberta Labour, and the Social Credit Regime," Labour/Le Travail, 21, (Spring 1988), 125; For more information regarding the government's reactions to ad hoc (individual resistance) coercion on the part of the workforce see also Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, "Towards Permanent Exceptionalism: Coercion and Consent in Canadian Industrial Relations," Labour/Le Travail, 13, (Spring 1984), 137.

51. Finkel, "The Cold War..." 125.

53. Census of Canada, 1921, Volume IV, 75.
Chapter 4: Company Control and Worker Residence

No other sphere of local working class life was effected as greatly by company control as the automotive working class family. The following chapters are concerned with the automotive worker out of the plant and in the home, in the role of husband, father, neighbour and resident. This chapter contains an examination of how welfare capitalism/paternalism on the part of automobile companies evolved into control over their workforce; and how workers and their families reacted to this attempted encroachment on their living conditions over the course of the 1920-1938 period.

Welfare capitalism was a particularly important component of industrial relations throughout the local automotive industry and remains one of the factors which must be studied to develop a complete understanding of the relationship between family and factory cultures in Windsor. Throughout the twenties, local automotive companies had offered generous benefits and incentives to their workers in an attempt to encourage loyalty and productivity. As early as 1922, various automobile manufacturers were attempting to fortify the efforts of their assembly line workers with incentives and competitions that made the job of the automotive worker more appealing. The Labour Gazette reported that the Franklin Motor Company in Windsor was one company that used such a strategy to encourage its workers to help design the car. To this end, it had:
...recently distributed cash prizes of $4,000 to 226 of its employees. The prizes were given as a recognition of the efforts made by employees of the company during six months to improve the Franklin car wherever possible and to cut down the cost of production. This is the second contest, a third is expected to open immediately.¹

The same principle was utilized in the United States, where the Packard Motor Company of Detroit established a departmental bonus system. The standard of production was fixed at eighty percent of the maximum efficiency of the department. The bonus was awarded to workers (of all occupations) according to the number of points by which the figure was exceeded. A ten point gain on the standard equalled a ten percent increase of the worker's wages:

The vice-presidents of the company reported after three months experience of the plan that it is, 'the most satisfying working arrangement for both employees and company that we have ever known.'²

These techniques identified workers as valuable contributors to the developing industry and as such, they were supported by the findings of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology of Great Britain in 1925 which concluded, "until recently labour had been treated too much as a commodity and the worker as a machine. The futility of this attitude was... generally recognized:"³ In these cases, welfare capitalism meant that attention to workers' thoughts and decent working conditions were put before profits. Simply by acknowledging the value of the "human factor" in industry, quality and quantity of production as well as the health and contentment of the workers were increased:

Insufficient interest and attention were preventable by improved selection of workers, the introduction of suitable incentives, adequate supervision, and the avoidance of widely long, uninterrupted spells of work.⁴
As a result, strain and fatigue were lessened, and absences due to illnesses were fewer. The atmosphere of the factory improved, while the labour turnover was reduced. Within the local Ford operation, however, none of these allowances were made.

The North American industrial situation had undergone a dramatic change between the years 1910-1920. The first decade of the century was distinguished by a strong social welfare movement, which attempted to ease the suffering of workers in the workplace. This movement fixated upon the worker as its focal point. However, by the second decade, welfare work as an industrial institution faltered because of what was referred to as its "self-righteousness and its inability to deal with modern problems of industry in a practical, business-like fashion."6

As America entered the twenties, some corporations became noted for their subtle efforts to initiate a "harmony of interest between labour and capital by eliciting the willing participation of workers in their own exploitation."7 The corporations believed that the benefits which had been gained through paternalism might be improved upon by injecting stricter methods of company control. In this way, paternalism became simply a means to an end.

The effects of welfare capitalism, which had originally been instituted to produce a more positive working situation for workers (and some measure of relief for companies from the pressure of social reformers and the public) had been lessened. While the benefit of financial bonuses remained, the right to independent actions and a broad lifestyle for workers had been sacrificed. As
David F. Noble has written, the task of human relations in this period was to transform the human factor of production into an efficient part of the corporate mechanism:

Ultimately, it led the corporate reformers into the schools and homes of employees to habituate and train students for industrial employment and stamp out such vices as drink, disorderliness, laxity, and radical politics. New welfare capitalism meant that major companies throughout this decade adopted the corporate strategy of attempting to win the allegiance of workers. General Electric, for example, stated that the purpose of its group insurance program (Mutual Benefit Association) was to "develop contentment among the members, and relations of mutual loyalty between the employees and the Works' management." This is a typical example of how such pillars of the American industrial community strove to reduce costs, labour turnover and increase productivity through tighter control of worker-management relations. In this sense, the attitude of the FMC was no different from the other corporations. As the company entered the twenties, FMC stated that:

...all this investment, profit sharing, factory environment, comfort, educational work, looked at from the cold blooded point of view of business investment is the very best investment it has ever made. As far as the Border Cities were concerned, this arrangement did not stop within the gates of the factory. By this time the FMC had become very concerned with the association between the worker at home and in the plant. The clearest illustration of the FMC's attitude regarding this relationship came from a former director of the Ford Sociological Department, S.S. Marquis:
Family quarrels have an almost immediate effect on the output of lathes and drill presses... the family is the foundation of the church and state. We found that it is the foundation of right industrial conditions as well. Nothing tends to lower a man's efficiency more than wrong family relations.\footnote{11}

The company hoped that to halt the excessive turnover and increase the rate of production among the male workforce, a strong family relationship would bind the worker to his job. As a result, the FMC endeavoured to create its own working-class family, which would be built upon the Ford family wage (for which workers must qualify). Good, dependable workers came from stable homes. The main goal of the FMC was to control conditions in the home in a manner which was both positive and also guaranteed that the particular automotive worker would be a constant and dependable face on the line. To earn the four dollar wage, the worker/husband (they were predominantly male family men) had to allow investigators into his family's home, and allow them to dictate how they must live, if he was to earn the wage.

With this as the basis of the family/factory relationship, the FMC announced the five dollar day and launched a series of investigations by the Sociological Department's investigators, or the "advance guard of the new pay envelope," to determine which of its workers maintained a satisfactory social and moral environment.\footnote{12} The investigator remained little more than a tool of the department, whose job it was to ensure that the Ford automotive worker in the twenties was living within the parameters that the company had determined as the most appropriate for both Ford of Canada and its employees.
The company's intervention into the private lives of workers marked the point at which the FMC differed from the procedures of other major corporations. Whereas most companies at this time were content to reap the benefits of increased production which their monetary bonuses ensured, FMC was the first to attach the condition of a "proper lifestyle" outside of the plant. This raises the question of where paternalism ended and infringement began.

Herbert Marcuse has noted that in capitalist societies, industries became totalitarian in the sense that they determined not only the "socially needed occupations, skills and attitudes, but also individual needs and aspirations. It thus obliterates the opposition between the public and private existence." It may then be argued that the policies of the FMC Sociological Department were totalitarian and also instrumental in the institution of "new, more effective, and more pleasant forms of social control and social cohesion," as directed by the company.\(^\text{13}\)

The Profit-Sharing Plan was perhaps the most significant acknowledgement of the correlation that existed between working class culture and factory production. It marked the awareness on the part of various corporations that welfare capitalism might be taken a step further and used to bind these two spheres together (with the company retaining a position of control). Marcuse argued that policies like those of the FMC were deceptive because they promoted social control through "false needs" which allowed industry to dictate the framework (lifestyle) in which the worker functioned. In the case of FMC, this meant that the framework was
narrowed to a point where ethnicity, culture, and family were marginal interests. By fulfilling the demands of the company, the worker succeeds and is happy in his limited life. "False needs" then:

... are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery and injustice. Their satisfaction might be most gratifying to the individual, but this happiness is not a condition which has to be maintained ... if it serves to ... arrest the ability to recognize the disease of the whole and grasp the chances of curing the disease. The result then is euphoria in unhappiness.14

As H.M. Gitelman noted, it was necessary to cloak the shortcomings of these false values of welfare programs by capitalizing on their publicity value. "...scholars have emphasized the role of public relations in winning a favorable attitude toward business in the twenties."15 This was the case with FMC. Without the workers' support, the Profit-Sharing Plan would fail.

The FMC Sociological Department was careful to mention that the investigator who was sent from the Department was not attempting to "interfere with the lives of any men nor to dictate how their time shall be spent."16 The Sociological Department realized that even with wage sanctions, the Profit-Sharing Plan was dependent on the collective acceptance it won from the workforce.

In this sense, the Profit-Sharing Plan was vital to the company because its success reinforced management's right to control. It was through this arrangement that FMC legitimately gained control of its workers, "the controlled grant[ed] his controller the right to control him."17 FMC feared that if it became obvious that the company controlled the worker in the plant through influencing his
lifestyle at home, it might break the "euphoria" and encourage resentment on the part of the workforce. This could result in collective resistance, decreased production or negative publicity, any of which would lead to a decrease in sales.

For the FMC, the assertion of its claims that company policy was not designed to interfere with workers' home lives was imperative. In this way it legitimized the company's involvement into the home and managed to maintain the belief that the company was only promoting the best interests of the workers. If workers perceived the FMC as responding to social pressure to restructure the economic organization of the automotive plant for the benefit of its workers, they allowed the investigators inside their homes.

Gitelman argues that attitude of the individual workers towards control through welfare work (in this case the Profit-Sharing Plan) varied a great deal. The acceptance of company policies by some workers but not others makes it difficult to determine exactly whether or not the majority of workers understood the motives of the company. However, even though automotive workers may have been too dependent on the Ford wage to risk their jobs by registering a complaint, there were unquestionably some men who felt disturbed and ill at ease:

They went to my home. My wife told them everything. There was nothing to keep from them. Of course, there was a lot of criticism of that. It was kind of a funny idea, in a free state...

In terms of Windsor's industrial experience, FMC was instrumental in revising the traditional implementation of welfare capitalism. The FMC had been precedent setting in the way in which it broadened
the boundaries of conventional production procedures. FMC's desire to decrease the rate of labour turnover through this Plan was a common objective of much of the earlier welfare work. As H.M. Gitelman states, welfare programs represented "strategic and economic employer responses to the problems of labor recruitment and/or retention."

Instead of attempting to fight turnover through benefit programs and embracing its workers in aspects of design and production, FMC of Ford City followed its U.S. parent in implementing a plan which was not based on ability or initiative within the plant, but rather on its pure control of workers' living conditions within their homes. The Plan involved an immediate increase in a qualifying worker's wages and periodic performance reviews of individual workers.

Reviews involved an investigation of the worker's performance on the job, as well as the personal habits and activities of both he and his family, their living conditions, his ability to accumulate savings and various activities outside of the plant. If the investigators approved the habits, health practices, and overall attitude of the worker and his family towards the company, they were awarded a wage increase. However, if the worker or his family at any time appeared to act against the wishes of the FMC, the increase was taken away.

The Profit-Sharing Plan was introduced to serve as a supplement to the FMC management's deskilling attempts (as discussed in Chapter three) which in this particular case originated during the
early 1920's. The Ford wage became the key to a plentiful supply of labour from the Border Cities. As of April 21, 1915, Ford of Canada announced that it would pay a minimum of four dollars a day for a six day week of forty-eight hours. In the same manner that Ford's five dollar wage in Detroit attracted interested would-be automotive workers from all over, Ford of Canada's four dollar wage had a similar effect throughout Canada, and in the Border Cities in particular.20

The wage increase was the vehicle that FMC of Canada used to justify the company's intrusion into their workers' homes and to dictate their living conditions. In addition, FMC of Canada published a guide for their workers which detailed exactly how they were to qualify for a pay raise. The booklet was entitled, "Helpful Hints and Advice to Ford Employes," and it effectively detailed the living standards that each worker's family must maintain if the worker was to receive and keep his wage increase. No other document in this period had as much influence in setting the rules under which the Border Cities' FMC workers were forced to live (it also detailed the responsibilities of the Canadian branch of the Sociological department in Ford City).21

The wage increase itself was divided into two parts, the Hiring-In rate and the increase in the wage after the end of six months work. Every worker over the age of twenty-two was hired at a rate which ranged from thirty cents an hour upward. Following six months this rate jumped automatically to fifty cents, "provided the requirements for decent habits of life and proper living conditions
are complied with."22 If these conditions had not been met or a worker who had earned an increase later failed to meet the requirements, his pay was decreased to the rate he had earned prior to the increase and remained there until he met the FMC’s qualifications once again. "This rule is designed so that the money received through the wage increase shall not be spent in riotous living or otherwise wasted."23

Ford’s attempt to manipulate the worker and his homelife was rooted in the company’s Sociological Department. The Ford Sociological Department of Ford City operated along the same lines as its parent in Detroit.24 It was this department which issued the final report with regards to which of the workers had maintained satisfactory living conditions, and could therefore be considered "reliable." These men were recommended for the wage increase. As it became crucial for all workers to submit to this plan for it to be effective, the company advised its workers that it was critical for them to notify the Sociological department of any change of address:

This is very important for otherwise the company will not be able to render a report upon your living conditions and cannot recommend you for a wage increase.25

The actual reports made by the Sociological department were based upon the information that had been gathered by the team of Ford investigators:

A staff of investigators had been chosen whose duty it is to show the men how to make the best use of their increase in wages and to illustrate to them by pictures and examples how to keep their homes clean and bright.26

The main responsibility of the FMC investigators in the Border
Cities appeared to be personally uncovering exactly which workers were "reliable." If a worker did not report to work:

You'd report sick and they'd send somebody up to make sure you were sick and if you wasn't, God help you. They'd give you one warning and that would be it, after that you was out."

While actual figures regarding labour turnover with regards to FMC in Ford City were unavailable through the Ford Archives in Oakville, or through the Canadian collections in the Reuther Archives in Detroit, it appears that the methods of the Sociological department may not have been as effective at reducing turnover as the local FMC would have liked. The overall success of the wage in stabilizing the labour turnover was limited, and its longterm effects were anything but positive from the company's point of view. The publication dates on the Guide indicate that the Plan was eliminated in 1927. In March of that same year, the Border Cities Star quoted Wallace R. Campbell (at that time Vice President and Treasurer of the FMC) as saying,

'There is no shortage of men,' Mr. Campbell stated, 'as ample men are here on the Border.'...The demand for cars, he said, is much greater than the supply and the only problem the company faces is to produce the machines fast enough.22

Almost three years later, however, on December 3, 1929, FMC once again raised the daily wage, this time from $6 to $7 a day. Mr. Campbell was again adamant that this wage raise had nothing whatsoever to do with minimizing the rate of labour turnover. The Star summarized Mr. Campbell's notice to the press:

Mr. Campbell emphasized the point that the company has plenty of workmen to supply all vacancies that may occur in the operating departments of the industry.23

While top wages were some consolation to workers, neither the wages
nor the attempted control of the home by the FMC succeeded in ending high rates of labour turnover. High wages were also not enough to shake off demands for improvements in the factory. It was during these years in the mid-twenties when the company underwent such fabulous growth that "early seeds of discontent were sown." Although such problems were not exclusive to FMC, they were a direct result of the "Fordism" which was adopted by FMC's automotive competitors.

As a result of high wages and the Profit-Sharing Plan, the Ford City FMC was flooded with new unskilled workers who were assumed to be no threat to the company's rate of production because they were dependent on the Ford wage [as detailed in Chapter three]. This influx of workers provided the considerable quantity of workers required by management to operate a multitude of new machines. From a management perspective, this base of labourers and operators was capable of performing the tasks of the skilled workforce and therefore diminishing the number of traditionally skilled craft workers.

Concern for humane conditions and worker satisfaction continued to be of secondary importance after the economic considerations of management. The motives for such interests were not charity or "guilt-prompted philanthropy," but the fact that "human engineering and social uplift were important new methods of good, profit-making business practice." This "new" twist which turned welfare work into a more comprehensive form of social control was not original. The exercise of giving financial incentives for employees' thrift
in terms of his ability to accumulate personal savings dates back to 1810. This reinvention of early employee stock ownership schemes was rooted in the FMC's desire to maintain a steady supply of labourers and operators for two main reasons. First and foremost because FMC wanted to render its skilled workers incapable of influencing production. Secondly, through its periodic wage increases, the FMC ensured that workers conformed to the FMC's moral and domestic standards outside the plant. In this way, the company was guaranteed a dependable [fixed] workforce:

It was a standard of living sufficiently desirable to keep most auto workers if not content, at least fairly quiet throughout the 1920's and sufficiently desirable to allow auto employers to present themselves as the representatives of a capitalist system that benefitted its workers not through charity but through the natural working of the systems. FMC had overstepped the precedents of industrial relations which had been set by industries over past decades. What FMC was successful in accomplishing was the creation of a situation in which:

... technology, culture, politics, and the economy merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives. The productivity and growth potential of this system stabilize the society and contain technical progress within the framework of domination.

This form of control (FMC's Profit-Sharing Plan) had a particularly important effect upon on the residence/workplace relationship. The issue of worker residence is more than a listing of addresses, or the charting of geographic locations of workers' homes. It is the degree of social control which the auto companies attempted to exercise over the worker in the home, or as Thorstein Veblen wrote, "what business men may be expected to do for cultural
growth on the motive of profits." It reveals a number of conditions that existed between the automotive companies and their workforce in this period.

In the early 1930's urban historians focused their efforts on determining how industrialization effected the separation of residence from workplace. The main question became one of determining what activities separated the population of the pre-industrial city and spread it over a greater physical area. In the case of Windsor and the Border Cities, the FMC illustrates the force of company control on the very geography of the City of Windsor and surrounding areas. The "suburbanization" of Windsor is therefore linked directly to the issue of social control in the automotive industry.

While recent efforts have continued to increase the base of knowledge concerning the growth and expansion of Canadian cities, examples such as Montreal, Hamilton, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver remain the only major surveys of Canadian urbanization to date. Most of these studies are concerned with promoters, developers, the land development industry and how these elements came to occupy the "center stage" in Canadian urban history. Unfortunately, the examples of urban history which deal with industrial and working class neighbourhoods are relatively few. Certain themes, however, appear relevant to Windsor's geographic evolution. Paul-Andre Linteau has argued that Canada's history has been one of dependency. Whether it was France, Great Britain or the United States:
Canadian society has assimilated not only ideas and models but also capital and people from dominant societies. In the case of suburban development, Canadians were simultaneously influenced by American and British models, sometimes choosing one, sometimes the other, and sometimes trying to integrate parts of both traditions."

On this basis, it may be argued that the expansion of Windsor’s municipalities had been influenced through the FMC’s (Ford City) close relationship with its parent company in Detroit. While Windsor’s geographic growth and physical development may not have been consciously directed by an American model, it appears that the type and location of the workers' homes were influenced to some degree through the local FMC’s implementation of the parent company’s Profit-Sharing policies and its impact on the workers standard of living.

The automobile itself made a significant contribution to the development of the areas outside of the City of Windsor and for the mobility of the auto workers who were encouraged to live there. It has been estimated that the automobile was rapidly becoming a necessary requirement for local workers. In a recent article referring to the development of automobile suburbs, Stephen J. Hoffman clearly stated the value of the automobile in 1920’s America. The automobile, when combined with large scale transportation improvements “enabled city dwellers to escape the barriers posted by Pittsburgh’s topography and provided them the opportunity to settle almost anywhere on the urban periphery.”

This pattern was not restricted to American cities in this period. For example, from 1916 to 1920 passenger cars in Essex County tripled from 1,450 to 5,134. The trend of automobile
ownership among the working class continued to grow throughout the thirties. Although the Census does not list the automobile ownership statistics during the twenties or thirties, however, the figures for 1941 indicate the magnitude of automobile ownership in the Border cities. Of the 9,379 homeowners in Windsor in 1941, 55.9 percent of these owned their own automobile. Among those 15,851 who rented their residences, 47.7 percent had purchased their own vehicles.

The percentages in both categories were the highest of any Canadian city of comparable size in 1941. Equally as important was the fact that 64.8% of those people who were renting homes in the satellite areas of Windsor owned their own automobile. Again, this was one of the highest percentages of automobile ownership in the country.\(^3\) The explosion of automobile ownership resulted in several important changes in the local transportation system and the physical landscape of the area. While the years 1900-1915 have been referred to as the "golden age" of the electric trolley car and the excursion steamer, the early twenties, however, marked an improved system of roads and therefore a transition from train to automobile and bus service. These "puddlejumpers" were a valued form of transportation to early automotive workers:

...and I run down the road to catch the old streetcar. If it was just pulling away and we didn't make it, we used to run like the devil and pull the trolley off the wires and jump on, we used to get hell for that.... We used to catch the old streetcar down here and boy that thing would jump, not like the buses that later came in, were the old streetcars.

In 1925, the highway along the river front between Windsor and Amherstburg was opened, and in addition to this a bus line was
introduced which connected Kingsville, Amherstburg and Windsor. While the electric railway system in Windsor continued to grow throughout the twenties, by 1932 this trend had reached its peak as the Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Railway was replaced by bus service.\(^4\)

Automobiles, as a rule, were becoming less expensive. Between the years 1920-24, the selling price of the average automobile fell by thirty-eight percent. In 1921, the average price had been $906, while in 1926, this number had fallen to $695.\(^4\) By 1927, the prices of Ford's automobiles were within the reach of some automotive workers. The relatively high prices, however, made owning a car difficult without the aid of a payment plan. The Touring Car was listed at $503, the Coupe at $638 and the Sedan at $634.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Cash</th>
<th>Down Payment</th>
<th>Monthly Payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Touring Car</td>
<td>$503</td>
<td>$184</td>
<td>$30.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupe</td>
<td>$638</td>
<td>$231</td>
<td>$38.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedan</td>
<td>$634</td>
<td>$237</td>
<td>$39.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked if many of the workers at the Kelsey factory drove their own cars, Mr. Klinger responded, "When I started at Kelsey Wheel [1928], there was... I think an old Ford around. There wasn't too many cars around."\(^4\)

The question remains as to whether or not Windsor's automotive workers enjoyed a decent standard of living. Michael J. Piva has indicated that even though the seasonal nature of the automotive industry had a negative effect on ability of Windsor workers to maintain a steady income, the standard of living had increased by
the 1920's:

...Windsor [was] a city dominated by secondary iron and steel which in turn concentrated workers in high-wage skilled occupations. And workers in Windsor enjoyed substantially higher average real earnings despite the greater vulnerability to unemployment among workers who toiled in durable consumer-goods industries. [For more information on the breakdown of skilled workers in Ontario, see graphs following Chapter 5]

It has been estimated that the FMC labourers earned their highest wages in 1928, when the average was $33.00 for forty-four hours of work per week. This meant that the average annual wage for FMC workers in 1928 totalled approximately $1,716. This financial high water mark was curtailed by the depression of the thirties, which witnessed the lowest period for wages earnings. In 1933, the average wage fell to $19.60 [wages for automobile related occupations have been calculated and listed in appendix following this chapter]. While wages dropped during the depression, it appears that the average wages had rebounded by the end of the decade. In the pages of the Financial Post, Rhys M. Sale, then President of FMC, was quoted as saying that the average wages of employees had risen from $1,287 in 1939 to $3,063 in 1951. Although the employment may have been unsteady, the relatively high wages seemed within the automobile industry allowed most automobile workers a decent lifestyle, the opportunity to own a car and a house.

To help workers afford an automobile, (in order to encourage workers to maintain family dwellings outside of the immediate Windsor area) in 1923 the Ford City FMC instituted a Weekly Purchase Plan which allowed workers to purchase a Ford automobile
for only $5 per week (plus downpayment). Mr. Turnham reported:

Ford's [workers] used to get a rebate if they worked at Ford's. I don't know what happened, but I guess somebody started abusing it and they cut it out. Used to be able to buy parts off of them cheap, but I guess people were getting the stuff and selling it for a higher price, so they cut that all out."

The increase in automobiles in the local area was so great that it prompted the Border Cities Star to speculate on the many uses of the automobile and the saturation point of the local car market:

Who does not know how various families owning two cars—and both of them Fords? Why should one of the three members of the average family old enough to drive and use a car daily to go to work and leave the other two stranded? ... Every sure enough farm needs three automobiles—any farmer with a family will vouch for that and that number is his goal. Every farmer, one recently said, needs an open touring or roadster for general use, a closed for social and for cold and stormy weather, and a truck for general haulage.

In addition to the local automotive workers and farmers who had become dependent on their automobiles to carry them to their jobs in the local area, during the latter twenties approximately 15,000 Border Cities workers were dependent on their automobiles to carry them to and from their jobs in Detroit.

In the case of Windsor and the development of the surrounding municipalities, growth was a product of more than just the arrival of the automobile and the improvements in the infrastructure which followed. One of the FMC's policies which was designed to encourage its workers to leave the core of the city and thus prevent the establishment of any working class or ethnic neighbourhoods in the Border Cities during the 1920's was the FMC Profit-Sharing Plan. Although this "suburbanization process" between the wars was not caused solely by FMC's desire to prevent
unionization among its workers by a process of geographical separation, the company appears to have strongly encouraged it.

As the rate of automobile ownership increased, it permitted increased accessibility for automotive workers and allowed them to live further away from the automotive plants. Automotive workers from all ethnic groups were spread throughout the Border Cities and beyond:

...they lived all over. Some of them lived down in Essex and some used to drive in from Kingsville and Leamington. They used to live all over... Belle River. They very rarely used to live all in the same spot. All spread out.... same as today...

The concentration of various ethnic populations in the Border Cities were spreading outwards [see charts following Chapter five]. In an attempt to encourage this dispersal of workers, the FMC incorporated a specific residence qualification within its Profit-Sharing Plan for its workers. This meant that the area of family dwelling became a condition which played a role in the final decision of whether or not a worker received a wage increase. Automotive workers were encouraged to establish their families in single houses far away from overcrowded neighbourhoods:

With the new relationship fostered by the automobile came a growing interchange between urban and rural areas, characterized by an increased enthusiasm for the rural environment by the urban population.

FMC maintained that the worker who chose his home in a "locality where there is plenty of room in which the children can play," would be looked on as a responsible parent and would have a much greater chance at receiving an increase:
Children who are allowed to play on the street and in dark, filthy alleys with bad companions, are not receiving proper care from their parents. Such a situation would not only allow the children more room to play, but it would also act against any kind of regular daily contact amongst the workers outside of the plant. The FMC motives of higher production would not be accepted by workers as justification for the intrusion into their lives outside the plant. Automotive workers, however, were aware of the trade off that existed between the home and the factory. Though they may not have been completely satisfied with the arrangement, auto workers recognized that in difficult economic times, such as the early twenties, the benefits which the FMC proposed were in the best interests of themselves and their families.

Although the preferred living conditions which FMC had forced its workers to adopt appeared to be in the best interest of the workforce, the loss of wages acted as an ever-present negative sanction for those men who did not tow the company line. The worker knowingly sacrificed his rights as an individual to the FMC in exchange for the guaranteed security that the Ford wage could provide for his family. In return, FMC expected to be rewarded with an ever-present labour force and the death of high rates of labour turnover.

...it was the Ford Motor Company's manipulation of the family-production relationship and its extensive control of the shop and the home that gave way to the worker's organizations in the late thirties.55

As the population of Border Cities workers ballooned, FMC automotive workers became divided geographically throughout the
various municipalities. In 1905, one year following the establishment of the FMC in Ford City, there were only nine auto workers in the Ford operation. Of these, seven resided in Walkerville and two in Windsor. There were no Ford workers in Ford City itself. By 1926-27, Ford City had grown to become second only to Windsor in its number of Ford workers, and second as well in terms of total workers in the Border Cities region. From 1900-1929, Walkerville and Ford City became the industrial leaders of the Border Cities, while Windsor grew into the commercial, service and residential core of the urbanized area.

WORKPLACE AND RESIDENCE 1926-1927. \(^{56}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Ford Motor Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>2,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford City</td>
<td>956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkerville</td>
<td>691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1926, Ford workers were moving further and further away from the factory. In this way, it becomes possible to see how the FMC policy had made worker distribution a company priority. Figures from 1927 indicate that this pattern of moving outward was not limited to automotive companies. Only fourteen percent of all Border Cities workers were living within a half mile from their jobs.

DISTANCE FROM WORKPLACE 1926-1927. \(^{57}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radius From Workplace</th>
<th>Ford Motor Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1/2 mile</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 to 1 mile</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 1 mile</td>
<td>2,430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-----
|             | 4,120              |
While Richard Edwards argues that the outward migration of the workers away from the plant made company control more difficult, this was not the situation with FMC in Ford City. The housing crisis and the Sociological department made sure that new workers were prevented from banding together and encouraging one another towards unionization, and the high rates of seasonal unemployment kept a steady flow of workers at the gates. "I started there on June 6, 1922, in a final assembly and the first words they said to me was, 'we expect a certain amount of production out of you... and if you can't get it, there's lots outside the gate that can.'\(^{58}\)

Considering the company motives which led to the existence of the Plan, it seems likely that the original motive behind the FMC Profit-Sharing scheme was to curb any unionization attempts on the part of radical groups in ethnic working class neighbourhoods. As the figures have indicated, FMC policies did not create the migration of workers outwards from Ford City, but the company wished to maintain the trend of spreading outwards that Border Cities residents had already established.

During the twenties the Border Cities were in the midst of a housing shortage which originated as early as 1910. It had been estimated that there were hundreds of families without proper housing in Windsor. This condition had arisen out of the population burst from the industrial boom.\(^{59}\) As a result, automotive workers and their families had no choice but to move further away from the plant to find accommodations. This shortage worked to reinforce the FMC policies that demanded worker's
families live physically separated from one another. The Municipal Housing Act of 1920, allowed workers to find homes throughout the Border Cities. This plan allowed each city or town to implement the construction of housing, with the condition that the cost of a house did not exceed $3,500. By the following year, Windsor, Ford City, Riverside and Walkerville had passed by-laws under the Municipal Housing Act of 1920.⁶⁰

With such an arduous housing situation in the Border Cities, it was very difficult for new workers and their families to locate a private home in close proximity to Ford City which they could afford. In exchange for private housing many automotive workers sometimes had to put up with construction which was less than outstanding and made housing more expensive:

So then we moved to Marentette Avenue and one of these beat up Osterhouses, you'd put a candle on the windowsill and the draft would blow it out... I was burning a tonne of coal every two or three weeks. Couldn't keep the place warm. The only place that was warm was the bathroom upstairs... He built streets of the damn things. Marentette was nearly all built by him. I don't know what they're like now, whether they've been improved... I said to the wife, 'Boy, we can't keep this up, buying that [coal].' Cause coal wasn't all that dear but it was dear enough on the wages we were getting, you know.⁶¹

In this case, the worker and his wife proceeded to move into what was considered a less expensive house on Ford Blvd. The house cost $2200, with a $30 downpayment and $30 a month.

While figures are not available for the twenties or thirties in this area, the Census of 1941 indicates that not only was the average rent of those living in Windsor's surrounding areas approximately four dollars cheaper than within city limits, there were a greater number of single dwellings outside the city as well.
Census figures indicate 94.2% of the residences in the areas outside of Windsor were single dwellings as opposed to only 58.8% being single dwellings within the city [Appendix]. The fact remained that the FMC did not want working-class neighbourhoods developing through the Border Cities.

One of the main reasons FMC offered the Ford family wage was to make it possible for their workers to afford the price of a single dwelling. "We cannot too strongly urge... that every Ford employe should have his own home when it is at all possible." In this way, FMC (through its Sociological Department and its Profit-Sharing Plan) made a conscious effort to prevent regular contact between their employees, both skilled and unskilled, off of the shop floor.

As the location of the automotive workers had begun to spread across the Border Cities in the early twenties, a large proportion of workers had been able to settle their families into single homes by the depression. One example is found in Walkerville. With the rapid influx of new Ford workers looking for single dwellings, many of the homes of Hiram Walker employees became occupied by the FMC workers. Walker's had kept row houses near the distillery in Walkerville and almost all the housing in the area was single unit housing. As a result, not only were automotive workers spread throughout the Border Cities, but in most cases, their families were able to reside in their own private homes and rent to boarders.

The FMC was not unique in its desire to provide housing for its
workers. The GM operation in Oshawa, for example, attempted to stimulate the property ownership among workers by offering a "Corporation Savings and Investment Fund," and a "Modern Dwelling Houses Plan." While only 55.8% of eligible employees actually invested in the Plan, approximately 75% of the entire Oshawa automotive workforce maintained company mortgages. The main difference between Ford and GM in this respect was that GM's only criteria for eligibility was that workers must be "employees of long standing."\(^5\)

According to the Census of 1931, 74.59% of Windsor's labourers and unskilled workers in manufacturing industries rented their families' residences, only 25.41% could afford to own their own home.\(^6\) During the depression, many of those FMC labourers who had mortgages to pay were forced to turn to the company for aid:

In 1930,... we was all laid off for ten months and business was bad. We was all on welfare and I missed one or two payments ...this here woman... had bought the mortgage anyway. She threatened to foreclose on me. So, Ford at that time had what they called a Family Representative, and if you had any trouble you went down to see him. So I took all my bills and everything ...'Don't worry, you haven't missed a payment up until now. Well you hang on, there's no judge in the country that would sign a foreclosure order after paying the way you’ve paid...you’ll be back to work in about two or three weeks...When you get back to work pay her up as quick as you can and show her the door.' So I finally got back to work and started paying her about $40-$45 a month until I'd gotten it.\(^7\)

Next to labourers, the second highest rate of tenancy went to moulders, coremakers and casters, of whom 64.29% rented their residence, while 35.71 owned their homes. While 52.63 percent of foremen were tenants, the highest percentage of home ownership belonged to the Managers, who reported an ownership percentage of
By 1941, those auto workers who lived in rented residences within the city of Windsor were likely to have paid between twenty and twenty-nine dollars per month (as did 47% of Windsor's tenants), for an average of 5.4 rooms in a single house [63.3%]. The majority of the local homes were constructed of either brick or wood [46.6% and 43.5% respectively] and most were in good condition [only 22.5 in need of repairs]. Almost all rented homes had running water [99%], toilets [89.7] and a bath or shower [85.1]. When it came to methods of refrigeration, the most common choices were either by ice [50.7%] or mechanical methods [41.5%]. Houses were heated either through a hot air furnace [48.5%] or a stove [34.6%].

For those automotive workers who rented in Windsor's surrounding areas, the majority were living in 4-5 room homes which were mostly made of wood and were almost all single dwellings [94.2%]. While still in reasonably good shape, more of the rented houses in outlying areas were in need of repairs [33.7] than those within the city limits. By 1941, these areas had gained running water, but were still largely dependent upon a stove for their families heating needs.

The seasonal nature of the automotive industry was another factor that worked in conjunction with the Profit-Sharing Plan in the FMC's quest to control the workers residence patterns. In most cases "floaters" or transient workers made up a relatively large portion of the lodgers who rented rooms in local homes. They were also among those elements which the FMC deemed to be unhealthy and
a bad influence on family men employed within the FMC. In this instance, the FMC had incorporated what was referred to as the "demonology of boarding" or the "lodger evil" to help legitimize the company's efforts at control over the residential patterns of their workers. This phenomenon was created by social reformers who "bewailed the imminent breakup of the family." According to Modell and Hareven, however, the family was not in danger under urbanization and industrialization. Social reformers:

...had displaced their concern from the hardness of life inherent in the industrial system to an institution that not only was a sensible response to industrialization, but in absorbing the shock of urban life for newcomers, was decidedly humane.

This misleading stereotype was encouraged by the company to help convince the workforce that these "floaters" were a threat to their homelife. Any worker caught renting or living among transient workers substantially lowered his chances of earning a wage increase:

The company does not approve of men for the wage increase who live in overcrowded boarding houses or tenements. Select a home where there are few boarders or roomers, where the surroundings are clean and wholesome and the appointments of the house are thoroughly sanitary.

The true relationship between industrialization and boarding in Windsor was that the increase of workers simply exhausted all available single housing. However FMC used the negative assertions that lodgers were linked to "exploitation, violent crimes and tenement conditions," to discourage its workers from housing the transient skilled and unskilled auto workers that floated through both Windsor and Detroit; therefore minimizing the high rate of
labour turnover. While the single worker may have found it more difficult to get a job at FMC in Ford City, once inside the plant, the expectations were equally as high:

...they were boarding all over the place. A lot of them wasn’t married. There was a lot of single guys there...it didn’t matter whether you was married or not. They treated everybody the same. Yeah, whether they was single, married, no I didn’t notice any different treatment between whether you was married or single. They didn’t seem to show any difference.

More importantly, this was another way in which the FMC could disperse the workers from the specific areas that were perceived as dangerous due to workers living in close proximity to one another:

Ford City and Riverside, incorporated in 1912 and 1921 respectively, constituted a new generation of residential areas in the Border Cities... Apart from Walker's row housing close to the distillery in Walkerville, practically all the housing accommodation in the area was in single-unit housing. Some of the dwellings, especially in the zone of Windsor adjacent to the Walkerville boundary, were large enough to accommodate two families or several boarders[sic].

The negative connotations of boarding were often based on the assumption that the home was overcrowded. Dunkerson has revealed that those residents who accepted boarders were primarily established homeowners in their forties with an extra room left open by the departure of a younger son or daughter who had begun their own search for independence. Boarders were generally single and hoped to establish their own household; a condition they usually shared with the departed family member. "This pattern of exchange been called 'social equalization' and places the role of boarding for the migrant into the realm of acculturation."

As Harney has noted, the boarding house was generally a strictly run business operation:
oral testimony invariably emphasizes the atmosphere of trust, family values, ... further questioning always brings out descriptions of highly structured arrangements about services rendered, payment for services, controls on boarder behaviour, and on the organization of boarding itself. These latter aspects are clearer in the "group household" than in the family with boarders or the boarding-boss variations, but they are present in all forms of immigrant boarding.  

In addition to the Plan, which encouraged workers to shun floaters, the fluctuations which were inherent in Windsor's automotive industry meant that those transient workers who did manage to find work did not usually last long [for a breakdown of monthly levels of employment for the years 1920-1938, see Appendices for graphs labelled "Windsor's Employment Index" following Chapter three]. While FMC promoted the image of transient workers as unhealthy, those transient automotive workers fortunate enough to be working during the twenties and thirties provided a boost to the Border Cities economy by renting rooms from local residents. As Dunkerson mentions, boarders allowed single women and widows to maintain a household on their own. One example comes from a local woman expressed her regrets to the Ford City Housing Commission on April 8, 1931:

I am in arrears with my monthly payments, also taxes, of which I am fully aware but owing to the property not being rented and as I lost two good tenants who worked at the Ford factory on account of unemployment. I have been unable to keep paid up.

No matter how valuable the income of the boarding auto worker to the local community, Ford of Canada still considered the most favorable employee to be married with children and a home:
It is the hope of this Company that every one of its married employees will own his own home. This cannot be accomplished by everyone right away, but it should be the aim of each one of you...

In this way, the Ford wage increase was an investment in the company's future. With it in place, not only had the transient worker been ostracized, but the stable Ford worker and his family had become anchored in one location and dependent solely upon the company. The economic value of the transient worker to the local population, especially workers, is evident. In this case it was obvious that the FMC policies were not pleasing to its employees who were in many instances dependent upon the supplemental income provided from the transient renters. Overall, the FMC's refusal to accept the practice of boarding among its employees had an economic impact on the family and in all likelihood, nurtured anti-company feelings among ethnic and native workers alike for taking away this form of supplemental income and independent business at home.

In the event that a single worker with no dependents received the wage increase, it was thought that he would, "save all of his wage increase if he so desires and it is from this class of men that the greatest gain in savings is expected." The emphasis was then on the single worker to develop some signs of stability which would increase his chances of earning future increases. A bank deposit, for example, was "a very satisfactory thing to have..." Even a bank account and some investments, however, did not earn the worker as much job security, in the company's eyes, as a family.

Financially, the lodger made valuable contributions to the working family income. Of Windsor's 6,079 wage-earning households
in 1931, there was a total of 1,191 children listed as gainfully employed, and only 225 wives earning an income. The combined income from wives and children [$74,688] equalled roughly 10.4% of the earnings of the head of the family [$718,310]. With this decline in the overall income of the wage-earning family, lodgers became an attractive alternative to provide a degree of financial security. The census reported 1,599 lodgers who contributed approximately an additional 9.3% [$67,323] to the family income. The average monthly contribution made by these lodgers [903] in terms of rent was between $25-39, although a relatively large number [393] were paying between $40-50. Having examined the relationship which existed between company control and residence patterns, the following section discusses the implications which living in such a "framework of domination" as Marcuse stated, had on the local ethnic population.
### APPENDIX

Earnings and weeks employed for automobile related occupations within Windsor Industry, 1921 - Male.

*(Table 1)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Weekly Earnings</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Engineers</td>
<td>$45.73</td>
<td>49.10</td>
<td>$2245.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler &amp; Engine Makers</td>
<td>37.31</td>
<td>42.93</td>
<td>1601.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern &amp; Model Makers</td>
<td>36.25</td>
<td>44.13</td>
<td>1589.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Clerks</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>47.76</td>
<td>1492.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool Makers</td>
<td>32.93</td>
<td>44.23</td>
<td>1456.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinists &amp; Millwrights</td>
<td>31.09</td>
<td>44.11</td>
<td>1371.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundry &amp; Machine Shop Employees</td>
<td>32.16</td>
<td>41.75</td>
<td>1342.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>35.93</td>
<td>916.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Earnings and Weeks Employed for Automobile Related Occupations Within Windsor Industry (23)

(Extract from Table 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Weekly Income</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holtermakers</td>
<td>$30.64</td>
<td>37.41</td>
<td>$1146.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millwrights</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>28.48</td>
<td>949.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers &amp; Unskilled Workers</td>
<td>22.64</td>
<td>39.51</td>
<td>894.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Clerks</td>
<td>26.95</td>
<td>30.85</td>
<td>832.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinists</td>
<td>30.20</td>
<td>26.46</td>
<td>799.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moulders, Coremakers, Casters</td>
<td>26.29</td>
<td>19.76</td>
<td>519.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Labourers &amp; Unskilled Workers</td>
<td>14.63</td>
<td>32.21</td>
<td>451.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Females Employed (All)

- Machinists: 23
- Press Workers/Stampers: 11
- Fitters/Assemblers/Erectors: 9
- Polishers/Buffers: 2
- Moulders/Coremakers/Casters: 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>Weekly Earnings</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patternmakers</td>
<td>$ 38.79</td>
<td>46.17</td>
<td>$ 1799.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool Makers, Die Cutters, Die Setters</td>
<td>37.31</td>
<td>45.84</td>
<td>1710.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millwrights</td>
<td>35.15</td>
<td>43.26</td>
<td>1520.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinists</td>
<td>32.69</td>
<td>44.16</td>
<td>1443.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filers &amp; Grinders</td>
<td>32.88</td>
<td>43.52</td>
<td>1430.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polishers &amp; Buffers</td>
<td>32.41</td>
<td>41.77</td>
<td>1353.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moulders, Coremakers, Casters</td>
<td>30.95</td>
<td>43.51</td>
<td>1346.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitters &amp; Assemblers</td>
<td>31.13</td>
<td>40.08</td>
<td>1255.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Moulders, Coremakers, Casters</td>
<td>24.26</td>
<td>34.33</td>
<td>832.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polishers &amp; Buffers</td>
<td>17.77</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>639.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitters &amp; Assemblers</td>
<td>16.91</td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td>599.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filers &amp; Grinders</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>599.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### HOME OWNERS AND TENANTS AMONG WINDSOR WORKERS, IN AUTOMOBILE-RELATED OCCUPATIONS, 1931 (Table 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>Home Owners</th>
<th>Tenants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen and Overseers</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmiths, Hammermen and Forgers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boilermakers, Platers and Riveters</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Builders and Repairers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinists</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moulders, Coremakers, Cabinet</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millwrights</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LIVING CONDITIONS OF TENANTS IN THE WINDSOR AREA, 1941 (Table 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>City of Windsor</th>
<th>Satellite Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Room 4-</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Single-</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apts-</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs needed-</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Brick-</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood-</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Water-</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile-</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Rent-</td>
<td>$27.00</td>
<td>$23.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENDNOTES


The chronological orders of the Ford wage increases in Canada:
January 1, 1914- $5.00 per day
January 1, 1919- $5.00-$6.00 per day
December 3, 1929—$6.00-$7.00 per day

21. *The Guide's publication date is listed as between the years 1906-1927. Ford Archives, Oakville.*

22. *Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited, "Helpful Hints and Advice to Ford Employees: To Help them Grasp the Opportunities which are presented to them by the Ford Profit-Sharing plan," Ford City, Ontario, 1906-1927. 7.*

By way of comparison, in the Chrysler plant as late as 1928, new men were started out at 40 cents an hour straight time. Overtime wages were 45 cents an hour. During this same period, the wages at General Motors averaged between 45-65 cents an hour, while wages at the Studebaker plant averaged out to 50 cents an hour.

*Auto Worker News.* June 1928, 2:2, 3.


27. *Transcription of interview, 11.*


39. Census of Canada, 1941, Volume 9, Table 18a, 84. Census of Canada, 1941, Volume 9, Table 35, 177.

40. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 4.

41. Morrison, Garden Gateway To Canada... 270-271.


43. Border Cities Star, March 26, 1927, 2.

44. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 5.

45. Piva, "Urban Working-Class Incomes..." 164.


47. The Guardian. (Voice of Locals 195, 200, 240, and 89) UAW-CIO, Windsor. December 10, 1952, 1:8, 66. Canada Region 7 Collection, Newspapers. Walter Reuther Labour Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. While wages had increased 138% between 1939 and 1951, it should also be noted that the FMC of Canada's net profits rose from $3,012,571 in 1939 to $14,885,848 in 1951, an increase of 394%.


49. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 10.

50. Border Cities Star, "Ford Plant to Produce 125,000 Cars This Year," April 19, 1924, 6.

51. Morrison, Garden Gateway..., 272.

52. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 10.

53. Davies, "Reckless Walking..." 130.
54. FMC of Canada, Ltd. "Helpful Hints..." 12.


56. Bloomfield, "Industrial Development," Table 1.

57. Bloomfield, "Industrial Development," Table 2.

58. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 1.

59. Morrison, Garden Gateway..., 235.

60. Morrison, Garden Gateway..., 235.

61. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 7-8.


63. FMC of Canada, Ltd. "Helpful Hints..." 32.

64. Bloomfield, "Industrial Development," 2.


67. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 8-9.

68. Census of Canada, 1941, Volume 9, Table 21c., 104. Census of Canada, 1941, Volume 9, Table 34, 169. Census of Canada, 1941, Volume 9, Table 35, 176.


70. FMC of Canada, Ltd. "Helpful Hints..." 11.

71. Dunkerson, "Wartime Housing..." 110.

72. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 9.

73. Bellinger and Bloomfield, "Workplace-Residence in the Border Cities..." 2.
74. Dunkerson, "Wartime Housing..." 109.

75. Harney, "Boarding and Belonging," 23.

76. Records of the Ford City Housing Commission, 1927-1931. Municipal Archives of the City of Windsor.

77. FMC of Canada, Ltd. "Helpful Hints..." 27.

78. Census of Canada, 1921, Volume III, 149.


80. Census of Canada, 1941, Volume VII, Table 7, 224.

81. Census of Canada, 1931, Volume V, Table 46, 929.
Chapter 5: Resistance and Ethnicity

Windsor's working class resistance to the forms of government and corporate control in the thirties marked an important transition period for local immigrants. Of vital importance to the subsistence of the workers in this period were the ethnic bonds which helped support recent arrivals. These same types of ethnic support groups were common across the country in labouring centres, and through a system of "networking" many ethnic communities began to take charge of their own development as workers and as Canadians. The first section of this chapter discusses the working conditions within the automotive industry and forms of individual and collective resistance that automotive workers exhibited in the 1920's and 1930's. The second section attempts to integrate the experience of ethnic workers into the patterns of resistance.

The transfer of political power in the labour process throughout Windsor's automotive factories from a craft base (skilled) to a non-craft base (labourers) did not occur spontaneously. The company's use of deskilling as a method to win control over the automotive workers, as detailed in the previous chapter, was met with various forms of confrontation. In his research involving the Canadian steel industry, Craig Heron stated that there were two basic types of resistance; individual and collective. The same patterns are applicable to Windsor's automotive industry during the 1920's and 1930's.

Although the workers were separated by many dividing lines, one of the most common effects of life on the assembly line was the
relatively short period of time before most workers exhibited acceptance of the working conditions. One worker noted that after working in the smoke for several days, "My senses seemed to be deadened to its effects, and I did not mind it so much, except that I felt that it was undermining my health."¹

Among the more "disagreeable jobs" was the spring grinder. In one Ford plant, these men were located next to a gas furnace and a steam washer, and it was common for these workers to stop and "stall around in some other part of the factory to get cooled off."² One worker reported that it took approximately a week before the company converted the blowers which carried off the fumes:

Some days my lungs were filled with so much dirt and smoke that before the end of my shift I felt as if there were a weight on my chest... I would have quit. But I needed the money, so I stuck.³

Although there is little question that conditions on the assembly lines and in the factories were harsh, automotive workers were seldom complete victims of the industrial system (i.e. Charlie Chaplin’s film which dealt with 1920’s Fordism, Modern Times). As mentioned in Chapter three, it became possible for workers to exercise methods of informal resistance on the line, in this way they affected not only their individual output but company output as well.

The portrayal of automotive worker as victimized and alienated ran through most of the 1920’s literature (especially Communist accounts) concerning automotive workers in both Detroit and Windsor. One of the main causes of dissatisfaction among workers
was reported to be that they were subject to large lay-offs. These lay-offs were "primarily caused by the awful speeding up system in vogue." Border Cities' Ford workers were, "driven to the limit, the nine-hour day pervades and overtime is on straight time." Eventually men became upset with how they were being exploited, and frustrated at the limited control they retained over their own lives. As FMC maintained its methods of enforcing assembly line production, worker acceptance turned to apathy. For a great many automotive workers in the Ford plants, it was reported that the "meaning of the Protestant work ethic died." It apparently became common for workers involved in Ford's operation to develop this sense of apathy regarding the regulations of the automotive company that was working them into the ground:

After a while I got used to seeing men stall and did not mind it much. After a month in the factory I could stall around myself occasionally and really enjoy it... The reason some of us worked more steadily than others is not because we felt such a loyalty to the company as it was because, for us, the time passed less slowly when we worked than when we stalled.

These types of working conditions may have resulted in a degree of alienation among some workers, but up until recently there has been a tendency in the literature to overlook the fact that a substantial proportion of workers shared a sense of pride in the quality of their work and the overall reputation of the product. In Working In Steel, Craig Heron describes workers taking great personal pride in their occupation as machine operators. This was the case on the assembly line in the FMC factory in Ford City as well:
I told one guy... 'If you don't make that rod right... that's got to be bad for the driver that drives that truck... them poor devils driving the truck, they want the best possible vehicle they can get, so you look after your work and do the best you can.'

While such difficult working conditions also served as an impetus for some labourers to protest informally, there were also open confrontations between men on the assembly line and their foremen and managers:

...we used to turn out about six... seven hundred and something a day. We had two [Excello] machines. They come along one day and said they wanted more production. This is at quality control.... The boss was with him. And I says, "Look Harry, it's like this. Up until now, you've had 700 good rods, which we have to do, we have to work to get that, you know that.... You can either have 700 good rods, or you can have about 1000 and about 20 damn good ones out of that. We won't have time to guage them." Cause we used to guage every one to make sure they was in our qualification, you know. He went over to this little whitey guy... and he told him the same thing as me. He said, "Yeah Sid's right, if you want good rods, you either get 700 good rods the way we've been working, or if you increase production to about 850, you're going to get all scrap." So he shook his head like that and looked at this guy and said, "I think you'd better forget it." So we didn't hear any more of it.

This type of resistance was common throughout the plant. Hard work was not necessarily required to win approval of the other workers. In fact, it was frowned upon because any worker who worked harder than the others upset the established working speed of the group as a whole. Through a constant working speed, assembly line workers defended themselves against the problems brought on by the continuous speed-up. Any new worker who worked in excess of the common speed established by the line workers had violated the order of existing solidarity among automotive workers within the plant. He was seen as working for the company and against the workforce. He also posed a threat to the health of the
more senior workers. "The old workers disapprove and curse the new
man who comes in and works 'as if were on a farm'... All the
workers must do the same amount of work." As one local retired
automotive worker from the Ford assembly line stated, "Course there
might be one ordinary bugger in the bunch, you know, that tried to
upset the applecart. Yeah, some of the guys would put him in his
place."  

In the East Windsor Ford plant of the Thirties, the working
situation within the automotive plant was no better than that in
Detroit. One example of the FMC obsession with timesaving occurred
at lunch break. In 1929, the Ford boxed lunch contained three
sandwiches, one jelly and two cheese or meat, a piece of fruit, and
a piece of cake. The total cost for the lunch was fifteen cents.
In addition, a pint of milk was sold for seven cents and a pint of
coffee or tea for five. It was possible either to bring lunch
from home, or to purchase a boxed lunch at the site. If the
workers brought lunches from home, the lunch buckets were "placed
on pallets and raised to the ceiling where they remained until the
time prescribed by management." The allotted twenty minute time
limit was rarely long enough. The company had hired "spotters" to
report any worker who appeared to be stealing time and it was
common practice for men to start work with their mouths "crammed
full of food."  

Another restriction the workers had to endure was the fact that
the toilet breaks were timed and foremen could look over half sized
doors on stalls to report on those workers who were "wasting
time." The constant alteration of sleeping habits also posed certain problems:

...there are at least one or two shifts under which he [the auto worker] fails to get proper sleep. On the midnight shift, I have seen men so sleepy they would actually go to sleep standing on their feet and drop the instruments they were working with.11

As a result, for Windsor's automotive workers, whether acting alone, or as a group of individuals, it was virtually impossible for workers to implement any effective defence against such conditions. Ford of Canada proved to be equally impenetrable for organizations such as the American Federation of Labour and the All Canadian Congress of Labour throughout the Twenties.

Several other automotive companies such as Chrysler, Dodge and GM had devised "group" bonuses which helped to tear down any informal resistance. These bonuses:

...while in certain circumstances offering opportunities for the group to exercise a measure of job control, offered several more than compensating advantages to management: they facilitated manipulation of the bonus, often undermined solidarity by turning faster and slower workers against each another, and forced veteran workers to pass on the tricks of the trade to newcomers.12

When individual resistance did not provide the necessary relief that workers sought from strict circumstances in the plant, there was growing anger and frustration grew throughout the automotive industry which led to the strike action of the late Twenties and Thirties. While the combined power of the majority of workers appeared to be the only way to change the situation, local automotive companies were quick to respond against such threats from groups of potential unionizers:
I had a nephew, worked at Chrysler. There was thirteen of them tried to form a union... the thirteen got fired. And they were blacklisted, blackballed all over Essex County. They couldn't get a job nowhere. He had to go to Sarnia, he applied for a Truant Officer's job on the school board down there, and that was the only job he could get. None of the thirteen could get a job around Windsor. I think some of them did, but it was years later, after the union got certified in Windsor. The company, I tell you we had a hell of a time at Ford's when they was trying to unionize. Boy, they threatened you with every damn thing, lay-offs and everything else."

Another such incident involved several members from the Kesey Wheel Factory in 1936:

... so Napier got in touch with the Trades and Labour Council in Windsor and he called a meeting and we had a guy there from the Trades and Labour Council... and he wanted us to get into a craft union, and we wanted to get into an industrial union. The night went on and we didn't see things the same way. A couple of days later they fired Napier, his brother... Four guys got fired because we had a meeting about a union."

Without a unified voice, however, workers had few options but to return to the individual responses, especially quitting:

Confronting these employers with demands for changes in their labour policies required some power and a degree of independence from the control mechanisms.... Otherwise, workers would likely leave the company in the hopes of finding better terms of employment elsewhere or settle into an apparently quiescent acceptance of an industrial regime in which they had little or no voice."

Many workers were willing to overlook the problems in the plant and were grateful simply for the opportunity to provide for their families. The Windsor Daily Star reported that when the UAW won the right to represent the Ford workers in Canada, "There were tears in the eyes of some older employes [sic] who regarded allegiance to the UAW as disloyalty." Nonetheless, workers accepted these conditions due to the high wages within the industry and the difficulty that most had finding work in the economically
depressed climate of the 1920's and 1930's:

It was a standard of living sufficiently desirable to keep most auto workers if not content, at least fairly quiet throughout the 1920's and sufficiently desirable to allow auto employers to present themselves as the representatives of a capitalist system that benefitted its workers not through charity but through the natural working of the systems. 23

It was the company's invasion into workers' private sphere and their community life that served more as a motivating factor more than FMC's control in the plant. Workers accepted strict conditions in the plant in order to gain the higher wages that FMC offered for their families. Workers also accepted the Sociology Department's investigators in their homes; but in the attempt to undermine the workers' collective power against company control, the FMC crossed a dangerous line.

Workers' collective resistance against the automotive companies' attempts at controlling the workforce became evident during the late twenties. The famed strike at General Motors in Oshawa ended in 1928 and the pro-union labour forces in Detroit used it to promote formal organization throughout Windsor and Michigan. The Auto Worker News referred to the strike as "a battle, and with the workers properly organized, the result was the first big victory that will encourage every automobile worker in America." 24

It should be noted that the strike was not exclusively a male-dominated method of resistance. In the June, 1928 edition of the Auto Worker News, a letter was published from a female auto worker from Oshawa who had been involved in the General Motors strike. In her letter, she reminded the readers, "don't forget, the girls led the parade of strikers." 25
The first formal attempt at organizing the Border Cities' automotive workers in the twenties came in 1928. The formation of the Industrial Union of the Border Cities (IUBC) led to rapid association with other unions throughout the country. On November third and fourth of 1928, a conference of Canadian automobile workers was held in Toronto. Delegates from the IUBC participated in the organization of the Auto Workers Industrial Union of Canada (AWIUC) which went on to become affiliated with the All-Canadian Labour Congress. The Windsor branch of the AWIUC was organized by Communists and though its success was limited, its objectives were far from modest:

The AWIUC openly organized on a militant, class-struggle basis rooted in the immediate preoccupations of the rank and file. Its programme called for 100 per cent industrial unionism, across-the-board wage rises, abolition of bonus systems, overtime at time-and-a-half, a standard eight hour day and 44-hour week, and systemization of shift work with regular changes of night shifts and advance notice of any firings.

Through the AWIUC, Canadian automotive workers and Border Cities automotive workers in particular were represented internationally. The local unionization movement had gained momentum. American unionists paid close attention to the Border Cities efforts. When referring to a conference of auto workers in Detroit on January 13, 1928, the Auto Worker News reported that, "The most notable encouragement comes from the Auto Workers Industrial Union of Canada, who will send two delegates."

The various automotive companies in Windsor took the establishment of the union quite seriously. It became common for companies as FMC and Chrysler to hire professional spies to
penetrate the workforce and report to management any pro-union activities originated in the Border Cities automotive industry sometime during the late Twenties, "Oh God yeah, spies. Blimey, you never knew who was a spy and who wasn't. Damn guys walking around, you think he was a guy from outside or something." In its March 1929 issue, the Auto Worker News reported that fifteen men who had all been members of the Border Cities Local of the Automobile Union of Canada had been fired by the Ford Motor Company. After an investigation, which was conducted with the help of union officials in Detroit, the Secretary of the Union revealed that the President and Vice-President of the local were responsible and that:

... the two spies made 'detailed statements of their services as labour spies for the nationally known espionage agency, the Corporations Auxiliary Co... and by half a dozen other aliases.'

Although there were many such company attempts aimed at the disruption of the union, there were several equally divisive factors within the internal union membership.

The Communists, for example, filled most positions of leadership with regards to unions in Windsor and wanted all members of the party to join the AWUI. Many ethnic workers, however, were concerned about risking their jobs and withheld their support:

A common point of view was:'let the English workers join first.' Although this outlook reflected a genuine belief that Finns and eastern Europeans were particularly vulnerable to dismissal... the pro-Bolshevization faction... interpreted it as political resistance to the "new line" of independent Communist leadership of strike struggles.

The high points of strike activity for Windsor's automobile
workers during the inter-war years came in 1928 and the 1934-38 period. For example, on July 13, 1928, one-hundred and nine trimmers and body workers at Chrysler's in Walkerville went on strike against their employer for increased wages instead of piece rates. The strike was unsuccessful and settled in favour of the employer. On August 13, that same year, 40 automobile workers at Studebaker's in Walkerville went on strike against their employer for increased wages as well. This strike was partially successful in that some workers received a twenty per cent wage increase.

Finally, in March of 1929 various departments of Ford's operation in East Windsor won a reduction in their working day. 32

Collective resistance took various shapes throughout the twenties and thirties. One such contribution to the "battle" was the organization of a Canadian auto workers' newspaper called the Auto Worker's Life in 1929. The paper dealt expressly with problems which Canadian auto workers faced on a daily basis within the automobile plant, and argued that they were as serious as those on the other side of the border.

This recognition of conditions within the Border Cities automotive plant brought American and Canadian automotive workers closer together. The American labour press referred to the Canadian auto workers' paper as:

... a fighting organ and every lines [sic] of it breathes resistance to the vicious exploitation of the automobile workers to organize, to fight wage cuts and the vicious speed-up system and to build up an industrial union. The same automobile interests that oppress workers in American automobile factories are the enemies of Canadian automobile workers. 33
As previously mentioned, Windsor had a number of automotive feeder companies and a farming industry that were not immediately subjected to the centralization process. It may be argued that these companies functioned as a relief valve for discontented automotive workers, as these parts plants did not register any strike activity until 1934.

By the early thirties, the Depression had shut down a sufficient number of these companies and the centralization process continued to drive automotive suppliers under direct control of the major automobile manufacturers. Ultimately, Border Cities workers had fewer employment alternatives and where individual resistance [via quitting] had become unlikely, (due to economic necessities which in many cases meant family obligations) the notion of collective resistance became more popular. However, it was not until six years after the first strikes in the automotive industry that the formal resistance continued.

Due to the Depression, the Ford wage had been devalued. As a result, following the Depression in 1934, the workers' unquestioned acceptance of the conditions within the FMC and the other automotive companies in the Windsor area had eroded. The threat of further union activity led Windsor's FMC to initiate "major purges of union sympathizers" in 1934. As if the automotive workers needed any further encouragement to resist company attempts at control, automotive companies succeeded in defeating several instances at strike activity across the river. This gave Detroit a reputation as a "graveyard of organizers."
On March 26, 1934, two hundred and fifty foundry workers in an automotive parts factory went on strike regarding wages. The strike ended with a compromise that allowed a 20-25% increase in wages, a nine-hour instead of a ten-hour day, and the recognition of a shop committee. The following month, on April 6, thirty auto accessory factory workers in East Windsor went on strike for increased wages, an eight-hour day, and union recognition. The compromise which ended the strike resulted in a partial increase and a recognition of a shop committee. In addition to the automotive workers, 1934 saw two strikes held by mattress factory workers and one by motion picture projectionists.35

The strikes were not brought about solely due to a necessity for an increase in wages. The automobile industry was not eager to take responsibility for industrial death or accidents. In 1924, the Highland and Rouge Ford plants reported four men died in a single month due to blood poisoning from dirty cutting oil. One worker stated, "Under the Ford system, we could bring practically no pressure to bear upon the management to obtain some consideration for our health."36 Health was secondary to production. The harsh conditions of the plant had worsened in the Depression and in 1936, one indication of the Windsor workers resistance was found in the pages of the Auto Spotlight, which was sponsored by the Essex County Trade and Labor Council. The organization attempted to determine the severity of lead poisoning in the local auto plants. In exchange for their cooperation, the workers who responded were granted some degree of protection from
the retribution of Ford’s and the other auto companies through anonymity:

Blood tests every two weeks for workers in the metal finishing on the body line, is the rule for Chrysler’s. How many are now sick from lead poisoning? Many were sick last year... All communications received will be treated as confidential. Your name will not be divulged. 37

Following these settlements, the timespan between strike action closed from six to only two years. On December 16, 1936, one hundred and forty members of UAW Local No. 195 in the Kelsey Wheel Company Ltd. went on strike. The demands included wage increases, extra pay for overtime, adjustment of conflicts due to speed-up, the reinstatement of five employees who had been fired and the recognition of the union. The strike ended with a wage increase of five cents for skilled and semi-skilled, all strikers were re-employed and an acceptable grievance procedure was worked out. Also in 1936, two strikes were reported by the longshoremen and one by bag factory workers. 38 The Kelsey strike was significant for a number of reasons. James Napier, the father of the local had been born and raised in Scotland, where he had worked in a coal mine as a child and exposed to unionism from an early age. As Mr. Klinger stated, "...he knew more about unions than I did or anybody else." 39 Communists were also instrumental in the support and organization of the Local during the early period:

The left-wingers had been dominating the Local... Jack Taylor, he was secretary, he was a left-winger. Roy England at Ford was a left-winger. They’re the only progressive people who got the guts and were willing to put their life on the line or their future on the line, and I can tell you, there’s a lot of people who paid a high price for their beliefs. 40

The wave of resistance throughout the Windsor automotive industry
continued with the Auto Seat Spring factory workers strike of May 11, 1937. Two hundred workers demanded recognition of the union, increased wages and reduced hours. The strike was ended by compromise. Also in 1937, two hundred Auto Castings factory workers went on strike on May 13th for increased wages, reduced hours and union recognition. The compromise that ended the strike resulted in a wage increase and the shop committee was recognized.\(^4\)

The final surge prior to the second World War came late in 1938. From August 3, 1938 to November 1, 1938, Foundry workers in one automotive company went on strike after demands for a closed shop union agreement and an adjustment of their wages were refused. There were also complaints that the company had discharged union members, and in this case the split between union and non-union was clearly defined. A skirmish erupted between pickets and employees not on strike which resulted in one picketer being convicted of assault.\(^5\)

On October 13, 1938, seventy-six factory workers were on strike in one automotive plant claiming that grievances had not been dealt with. Four days later, sympathy strikes had been arranged in local parts plants and by the 22nd, two-hundred and twenty-two men were on strike. On the 24th, a compromise was reached.\(^6\)

In a local automotive parts factory, a strike lasted from October 18th-24th, 1938, when a union worker refused to handle parts for non-union work and was fired. The settlement sent everyone back to work and the worker was re-hired.\(^7\) Finally, thirty-three glass
factory workers (within an automobile company) went on strike from December 5-7, 1938 for increased wages and improved working conditions. The compromise which ended the strike resulted in a wage increase.  

While strikes illustrated how workers battled for control, outside economic factors reinforced the efforts of the company. In his article, "Autoworkers on the Firing Line," Don Wells supports the argument of Nevins and Hill; namely that market conditions and the seasonal nature of the automotive industry acted as the ultimate form of labour control in Windsor. Even after these incidences of collective resistance throughout Windsor:  

"Ford heads knew they were safe from any work stoppage".... By 1939, though speedup was worse than ever and wages the lowest in the industry, management remained firmly in control."  

Ultimately, although unskilled workers may have assumed a degree of political power as a collective on the shop floor as a result of their development of informal skills, this power was undermined by the forces of cyclical deskillling in the industry and ethnicity in the workforce.

Strike activity on the part of Windsor's automotive workers was caused by more than the concentration of the industry. In fact, the role of ethnicity was critical to the changing workplace in the 1920's and 1930's. Windsor was considered by Communists to be the most logical area for strike activity. This was due in no small part to the various ethnic groups in the area:
The unusually large eastern European presence in East Windsor seems to have stemmed from a conscious Ford policy to recruit a polyglot work force, perhaps as a barrier to collective action. As far as the CPC [Communist Party of Canada] was concerned, the presence of so many eastern Europeans in the industry's decisive plant gave it advantages that were lacking in Oshawa... The party always considered the Windsor area plants the most likely to respond favourably to organizing activity.47

It should be noted, that as a rule few of the ethnic groups in the Border Cities (outside of the British and French) ever approached even 5% of the population of its respective municipality. It must then be assumed that the ethnic population of Windsor and the Border Cities as a whole was particularly active in the radical activities of the twenties and thirties.

Historian Ian MacPherson argued in favour of this interpretation and cited that the violent actions in Windsor during this period had as much to do with the conservatism of natives as with the radicalism of immigrants. He also noted the role of the agricultural/industrial relationship:

Essex county farmers rejected radicalism because the growth of diverse crops insured a steady income despite climatic or economic reverses. This diversity... also meant that farmers could practice more intensive forms of agriculture as the need arose. Hence, fathers, to provide for their sons, changed from raising cattle to growing tomatoes, and the sons in turn, were able to build their homes near the paternal homestead; as a result; stable, conservative family units tended to develop.48

While specific evidence regarding ethnicity in Windsor's development is scant, the Census figures indicate that throughout Ontario in the 1920's and 30's, there was a substantial number of ethnic workers engaged throughout the various automobile related occupations (ARO). Considering the expansion of the automobile industry's various occupations, it appears that the European
population that arrived in Windsor between the years 1920-1930 were employed generally as labourers. As Mr. Turnham, a retired automotive labourer from England stated, "...there was about five Englishmen on that [the final assembly] line... I think there was five of us on that line and two or three on the other lines... And then there was Russians and all kinds of nationalities." 49

The situation within the Kelsey Wheel operation prior to 1936 appears to have followed much the same pattern:

There was all kinds of nationalities, mostly foreign people working there. And supervision was English. Inspectors and stuff like that, they were more like English speaking people. We had Scotch in there and English. A lot of the European people had, I wouldn't call it sweeper jobs, but more responsible jobs. 30

As the Ethnic Composition charts and graphs at the end of this chapter reveal, in 1921, the more highly skilled occupations were dominated by native born Canadians, British or Europeans. The majority of Europeans, however, were occupied as unskilled labourers within the Rolling Mills, Foundry or Machine shop.

By the 1930's, the composition of the ethnic component within various ARO's had undergone a shift. The Ethnic Composition chart for 1931 points to a slight increase of European workers in the areas of Blacksmith/Forgemen, Boilermakers, Tool and Die Makers, Grinders and Filers, and particularly as Moulders/Coremakers and Casters. In fact, Eastern European workers at this point represented the third largest ethnic population within the occupations of Boilermaker, Car builders, Filers/Grinders, Press Workers and Stampers and second most hired among Moulders, Coremakers and Casters, Polishers and Buffers and Rolling Mills
Employees. [See chart on Ethnic composition - 1921 and 1931 Ontario].

Even as the European workers throughout the Border Cities automotive working population were beginning to work their way up the automotive occupational ladder in the 1920's and 1930's, they were faced with carving out their own niche among the working class. It is this process which has been largely ignored in Canadian history. As Jean Morrison has pointed out, the Canadian working experience of the early twentieth century was set firmly within the context of British traditions which had been well-established in Canada for generations. While their struggles were not as well known as those of the anglophones, "other" ethnic groups were forced to work and live within this atmosphere and played vital roles in working class development as well. In this way patterns of working class history and immigration history "intersect."  

The origins of the local immigrants have much in common with those throughout the rest of the country. Immigrants came to Essex County for agriculture and found the automobile industry. This shift from agrarian to industrial was vital to the shaping of Windsor's automotive workforce. Agriculture was an important pathway into Canada during the early twenties for the simple reason that it was the most uncomplicated way into the country. In 1923, Order-In-Council PC 183 placed strict occupational guidelines on those Europeans seeking admission into Canada as immigrants. The order stated that if the applicant was neither a British subject
nor an American, s/he must be either "a bona fide agriculturalist (with sufficient means)," or "a bona fide farm labourer entering Canada to follow that occupation and has reasonable assurance of employment." This automobile/agricultural relationship was reflected in the residences of many of the automotive workers. Mr. Klinger recalled:

They'd been living in Windsor and they'd been living on the farm. The farmers came in and worked and got a job. They came from Essex, they came from all over the place. Most of them were from Windsor but there were a lot of farmers.

As well as being a means into the country, agriculture also provided a viable employment alternative to the automotive industry in times of seasonal slackness or periods of cyclical lay-offs. For example:

...the majority of the guys in the tool repair, they owned small farms away in Leamington and Kingsville, they used to pay a guy to watch their farm, run the farm...like a tomato farm or whatever it was, corn. They'd pay him so much a month while they'd come in...they'd pay him about $30 a month, come in and make $60 or $70 a week here.

The experiences of workers laid off from automotive accessory shops such as Kelsey Wheel echoes the experiences of those workers in the plants:

I went and worked on the farm a little bit. Other ones went picking beans and stuff in LaSalle and welfare was the big thing. There was as many as ten thousand people marching from Landsbury Park to the welfare office. That many unemployed people... then the city started to ship people out of town on farms.... a lot of people from Europe went back where...they came from.

According to the available literature, there were two common methods through which most immigrant workers established themselves in the Windsor automotive industry. A great number arrived in the
Border Cities area with the intention of staying only temporarily and earning enough money through farming to return to their native land with enough savings to begin a family. The second road to Ford City was through Detroit. While some new arrivals simply preferred life in Canada, it was not uncommon for immigrants who wished to become directly involved in North American industry to choose Detroit and establish themselves within the American branch of the auto industry.

This path, however, became impossible for many of the would-be American immigrants when the United States government imposed strict quotas on immigration in 1919. As a result, after being turned away from the American border, immigrants chose to remain in Canada and work in the Border Cities' automotive industry. These workers, for whom the objective was to remain in Canada only temporarily while they earned enough money to plan their future in the "old country" became established as sharecroppers or tobacco farmers. Among those workers who settled in the area, when the income from the business became insufficient to support their household, many had no alternative but to turn to the agricultural job opportunities in the surrounding areas, or to the city and the automotive industry (which in most cases meant the Ford family wage). As Donald Avery has noted, the options available to immigrants were limited:

...the interests of the immigrant workers themselves were the first consideration to be swept aside in the name of Canadian economic progress. Immigrant workers drifted across the country in a desperate search for jobs. Many searched in vain, unable to accumulate enough money either to settle on the land or to return to Europe.
Between the years 1924-1930, there were 29,370 Hungarians admitted into Canada as agricultural workers. By 1931, Windsor had a Hungarian population of over one thousand. Amongst these immigrants there were a great many skilled tradesmen with skills required by the automotive industry (such as blacksmiths), and the automotive industry provided a valuable source of income:

In Windsor, the automobile manufacturing industry was a large employer [of Hungarians]- workers first commuted daily to plants in Detroit, then worked in the newly constructed plants in Windsor.

The automobile industry, however, was not immune to financial difficulties and the newly employed Hungarian immigrant in the factory was as likely to be laid off as his countryman in the fields [for a monthly analysis of seasonal employment in Windsor, see the tables at the end of Chapter 3 listed under "Windsor's Employment Index."]. This lack of job security contributed to the high rate of transiency and seasonal migration among Hungarians. Those Hungarians who had settled in the more urban setting of Windsor were attracted to the job opportunities which became available to them during the tobacco harvest season [especially during the depression years] in the Dehli-Tilsonburg region.

Unlike the Hungarians, most Scandinavian settlement in the Border Cities had ended by 1920. Nonetheless, a number had become established in Windsor and found work in local industry. The majority of Scandinavians that arrived in Windsor had been bound for Detroit, but not all were successful in their attempt to gain entry into the U.S. due to the limits which had been set on American immigration in 1919.
It appears that many Swedish settlers developed strong ties to the auto industry. There are several examples of skilled Swedes involved in the automobile parts industry; immigrants from Sweden were reported as having found employment at the Excello Company, making precision parts for this "feeder company" of the auto industry. Others followed much the same pattern as the Hungarians and Dutch and moved from agriculture to the Ford Motor Company due to its high wages. One Swedish immigrant left the farm for Ford's after seven years:

...he moved to Windsor to work for the Ford Motor Company of Canada, as did so many young people of rural southern Ontario in the 1920's, attracted to the high wages in the automotive industry.

The Finnish immigrants to Windsor began to gather in approximately 1922-1923. The majority had experience in construction, lumbering or coal mines, and most had chosen to emigrate expressly for the purpose of finding work in industry:

Just before the immigration quotas were put into effect in 1919, a large number of Finnish industrial workers arrived in Detroit to work in the automotive industry, travelling directly from Finland. Others who wished to find similar work but were prevented by the new quota laws, in some cases chose to come across the river from Detroit, in Canadian industry.

These are a few examples of the immigrant groups who arrived in Windsor during the Twenties and the integration of these groups into the area's automotive working class was one of the dramatic changes in the composition of the local auto industry.

While the work of many Canadian labour historians has stressed the importance of acknowledging the role of immigrant workers and ethnic communities in the development of the workforce, there is a
surprising lack of such information with regards to the Windsor and the surrounding areas. This is surprising for the reasons that the Windsor area was home to a diversity of growing ethnic communities [see Appendix] during the inter-war years, and they held a great deal of political power. It has been noted that the ethnic population was of such importance to local politicians that in order to become politically successful in Windsor during the 1930's it was necessary to become familiar with the ethnic population.

The reasons for such a lack of local ethnic research are open for speculation. The main reason appears to be rooted in the relatively small proportion of the total population of the Border Cities comprised by the ethnic communities. Also, up until the mid-seventies, scholars accepted the notion that the circumstances which surrounded the lives of a large number of skilled anglophone workers in the area dictated the working class experience for immigrants and ethnic communities.

The ethnic worker, however, was defined and influenced by bonds that were important not only to his/her personal development, but also to those of his family and the workforce in general:

The manner in which European nationalities developed their own sub-cultures as havens against what they found to be alien structures is a well-known feature of North American society. In terms of which groups exercised individual resistance, it appears more likely to have occurred among unskilled Eastern European workers who neither shared a common bond of ethnicity with the foremen, nor held a great deal of political power on the shop-
floor. Nick Etinger, one of the founding members of Windsor's Local 195, the first industrial union in Canada, commented on the number of European foremen, "I wouldn't say too many European foremen, but usually assistants, because they know more than the foreman anyhow, and they were more aggressive people. In Europe, you learned how to work."  

It has been argued that ethnic ties helped determine methods of collective and individual resistance during this period. For instance, one of the most common forms of individual resistance to forms of company control on the shop-floor in the automotive industry was through quitting. As Craig Heron stated, individual resistance occurred on a daily basis, while collective response:

...is rarely present at all times. Workers respond to any opportunities that seem to offer the possibilities of important gains for themselves and their families or for their fellow workers in general, but those opportunities may normally be quite limited.  

Quitting became a more feasible option if the individual had the financial and moral support of an ethnic community to fall back upon. This may in part account for the high labour turnover rates in the Ford City automotive plant which as early as 1913 reached a level of 370%.  

Direct action on the part of the individual worker became more prominent during the industrial growth of the twenties. The reason for this was that centralization of the automobile industry made it increasingly difficult for management to maintain efficient forms of strict hierarchical control within the company:
...the supervisor's power had to be employed in the firm's interest, rather than simply in the foreman's own interest. But as the firm continued to grow, the capitalists' ability to establish each of these conditions eroded.

When dealing with the notion of individual resistance, it is necessary to evaluate the role of the foreman on the assembly line. B.J. Widick noted that process of choosing informal roles for members on the automated production line was evidence that foremen had inherited the instrumental power of allocation over job satisfaction for those workers who felt that it had been lost:

...workers show a great deal of initiative in developing ways to get satisfaction out of the work situation rather than the product itself. The means of production and the product are transformed by workers into meaningful and satisfying situations, from which they find ways of establishing their own identities.

The foreman dispersed power to a number of individual workers in his department who worked under him in an informal sense and saw to it that his orders were carried out. These "petty functionaries" were given working titles such as "crew chief, lead man, pusher, set-up man, gang boss, and straw boss." The set-up men were experienced workers who were in charge of adjusting the setting of the new machine when it was installed or after it had been altered. These men were also responsible, along with the foreman, for determining the pace of production from the new machine. Pushers and lead men were usually the recognized as being the most efficient workers. They were positioned along the line in places where their rhythm would set the speed for the remainder of the crew on the line.

The most important member of the gang, after the foreman, was the
straw boss. Although the straw boss was "a combination of pusher, relief man, spy and all-around foreman substitute," perhaps his most important function was to ensure communication. In most cases, these men were selected because they belonged to the same ethnic group or shared the same language as the majority of their work group. This allowed the straw boss to quickly pass on the orders of the foreman and also press for faster production in the workers' native language. These men were so important to the continuity of FMC's assembly line production that during the American postwar depression of 1922, the number of straw bosses was doubled to increase the pace on the line. In the Ford City FMC operation, the straw bosses also exercised a considerable amount of power over the line worker, "the bosses would be up at the table all the time and the straw bosses would be on the line, going up and down the line, seeing that everything was going along OK."

The straw bosses were seen by most men on the job as being in relatively the same position as the average worker. For the most part, the straw bosses enjoyed a closer bond with the workers than the foremen. While difficult, it was not impossible for non-anglophone workers to rise through the ranks of workers. Mr. Klinger stated:

My brother became assistant foreman. He was a set-up man when I started. He looked after the automatics but more or less carried the assistant foreman's job for most of his years. At the end they made him a foreman and they even took him from Windsor when they opened a plant in Woodstock.

In 1928 the Auto Worker News reported, "the straw bosses, who are paid on results, are made to speed up the workers to the limit in
order to raise their own pay. They too are victims of the corporations." The foreman, according to these reports was caught on "the wrong side of the collar line."

In spite of attempts to train foremen along official company lines, the majority were selected from the workforce. Foremen were not salaried workers, and still continued to wear the same uniforms as workers. The foremen were said to have more in common with the skilled craftsmen than with management. Their traditional powers had become limited and job satisfaction was derived from the informal skills they had developed in conjunction with the formal powers granted them by the company. The reskilled foremen enjoyed substantial power not only as a line manager, but also from the prospect of immediate control over workers' personal lives. The outcome was that individual resistance on the part of the worker was more often directed at the informal skills and powers exercised by the foremen as an individual than as a representative of the company. Workers may have accepted the harsh working conditions in exchange for the wage, but the abuse of the foreman was outside of that bargain. As Mr. Klinger stated:

People bought jobs and the bosses went drinking in the houses, that's why the unions started. [It was] not for political reasons I joined the union, more the humanitarian reasons... you paid whoever hired you, you got so much under the table. You had to pay.... People had to buy jobs, not just at Kelsey, but even at Ford, Chrysler, General Motors. And then they worked a few months or a few weeks and then they laid them off and hired other ones. It used to go around. But then, they [the unions] caught up with them and cleaned house....

While it has been stated that the foremen in both Windsor and Detroit were "especially reknowned for their viciousness," Mr.
Turnham stated that in his opinion, "There were some good and some lousy." The foremen and their crews were but a few examples of the many workers on the line whose working identities had been derived from their roles as informal working leaders. While the strike at Kelsey was brought about in part due to the actions of the foremen, one Canadian example of the willingness of the more highly skilled workers to articulate their dissatisfaction with foremen occurred in Oshawa. On March 5, 1929, Tool and Die Makers in Oshawa began a strike, "protesting against the appointment of a certain man as foreman and also against the employment of workmen brought from foreign countries when Canadian workers were available." This example also illustrates how skilled anglophone workers reacted to the advancement of Eastern Europeans throughout the Ontario automotive industry in the late twenties.

Nelson Lichtenstein noted the responsibilities of the "foreman-contractor" were scaled down considerably. This is perhaps the best example of the impact of the deskilling/reskilling process within lower management levels. Lichtenstein argued that the responsibilities of the "foreman-contractor," which at one point had included placing a bid on a job, hiring the workers and then determining the speed, layout and methods which were to be used on the line, were scaled down. "Production line foremen had little say in scheduling or engineering and only a slight voice in the maintenance of the production facility." This was the case in Ford City as well, as foremen never fixed the machines:
No, they used to have repair men, fix all that. They were the tool repair... if you had a machine that broke down, you'd tell the foreman and he'd send a notice over there and they'd send a man down to see what the trouble was.

While their traditional powers had been stripped away, the foremen developed new informal on the line methods of control which enabled them to retain complete power over their workers. One of these powers was the ability to decide which workers were to be laid off:

The foreman had the say. If he happened to like you, or if you sucked around him and did him favours—or if you were one of the bastards who worked like hell and turned out more than production—you might be picked to work a few weeks longer than the next guy.

Another apparent result of the process of deskilling/reskilling on the auto workers was the clear illustration of the adaptability of the auto workforce. The viciousness of the foremen was returned in no small order by some workers who felt jealousy at the success of the foremen and other workers, not because of any additional monetary benefits, but because of the division between those who were able to derive satisfaction through exercising such informal authority on the assembly line, (and derive tangible benefits from it) and those who were not.

The need for shop control increased with the size of the workforce and it also became increasingly difficult for the company to limit the power of the foremen and make them adhere to the wishes of the company. The automotive companies, FMC in particular, became content to allow the foremen to exercise their independent power on the floor as long as they continued to enforce the "tyranny of the clock." More importantly, the main reason for the independence that the foreman was allowed within the company
structure was not because of his value as an enforcer of company policy and speed on the line. The foreman was permitted to deviate from the company policies regarding control of men on the line because he performed the invaluable service of absorbing the individual resistance of the workers on a daily basis. He was, in effect, a shock absorber for the management of the automotive company.

This evolution of the role of foreman was a result of the consolidation of industry which demanded the creation of a new hierarchy within the plant which continued to influence the daily lives of the automotive workers. In the course of the day to day routine within the automotive plant, acts of individual resistance were more prevalent than collective resistance and they became directed more towards the foremen as an individual, than towards the company as an institution:

Most often, workers’ resistance involves a confrontation with the frontline foreman. This may involve direct action in the form of physical intimidation or threats to damage the foreman’s personal car; more often worker resistance takes the form of minor sabotage to tools or products...Less frequently, direct action takes the form of collective absenteeism in which several workers agree not to come to work on a particular day. This can make it difficult for the foreman to 'cover' so many absent workers...

By comparison, Windsor’s skilled workers were not as likely to be subjected to harassment from foremen for two reasons. Skilled automotive workers in maintenance positions held a great deal of power over production. Because of their skills, they were able to escape the tyrannical rule of most foremen. Aside from the political power that helped eliminate the necessity of individual
resistance among skilled workers was the fact that both foremen and skilled workers during the twenties were predominantly anglophone [see Ethnic Composition charts which follow this chapter].

The relationship that existed between control, worker resistance and ethnic networking has not been investigated specifically in relation to Windsor. However, the literature on worker migration suggests that networking was far from uncommon. Darroch and Ornstein have established that as early as 1871 the pattern of "ethnic networking" existed in southern Ontario:

...the major ethnic groups were 'institutionally complete,' so that immigrants could seek work, lodging, credit, and other forms of aid from their own group. There is now considerable documentation of the presence of ethnic networks and communities in the nineteenth century which could function in this way. If networking had existed in this region, then the monopoly capitalism (through automobile companies) which existed in Windsor provided the perfect environment for it to manifest itself among local ethnic communities.

Robert F. Harney has offered evidence which identified that monopoly capitalism used geographic and cultural isolation (manipulation of lodging, transportation and employment) as a force which produced the most extreme forms of exploitation of immigrants. Boarding was first and foremost a method which allowed the immigrant to maximize his financial resources and at the same time, "as much as circumstances permitted, recreating or remaining in the ambiente of the home country."

Harney argued that the family run boarding system was not essentially removed from the traditional group household, but a more advanced and efficient
Enterprise, a labour intensive and administrative organization around a working wife and serving children, was not only a traditional aspect of the European rural family but was an efficient adaptation of that tradition to the city. In a recent article, Jennifer Dunkerson reiterated the argument made by Harney. She pointed out that many of the migrants who required lodging in the 1920's and 1930's were recent immigrants and lodging served as "an institution of ethnic orientation and acculturation into North American society."

During this period monopoly capitalism was dominant and Windsor also had an abundance of both immigrants and ethnic communities. Networking appears to have been a very plausible option for immigrants throughout Windsor during the 1920's and 1930's. It continued to reinforce the objectives and goals of the individual automotive worker, and to some degree divided the various ethnic groups throughout the plant and the local municipalities. In the case of Mr. Turnham, the actual motive for travelling to Windsor was an automotive job:

Anyway, I couldn't get a job anywhere, I tried everywhere. So my dad was out here. He had been out about a year and started in Ford's. She [his wife] said, 'Let's get married,' she said, 'and go over to Canada with your dad.'

Due to the fact that he was unable to obtain work in the Ford plant in Ford City immediately upon arrival, he stated that the assistance of his family already situated and working in Windsor was vital to his successful migration to Canada:
...my other cousin, like one of the boys met us. He had no car, so we didn’t have to walk only the half a mile to where the puddlejumpers [streetcars]... They lived just off Ottawa street on Warhol avenue. Finally got there and got settled... I lived with a cousin of mine. On top of May avenue, after I left my uncle on Hall avenue I went to live with these cousins on May avenue, and I stayed with them for over a year I guess, and then my cousin... he bought this house on Hall avenue. We rented it from him for sixteen dollars a month."

Prior to working at Ford’s, Mr. Turnham’s uncle was instrumental in finding the new arrival employment in Windsor, "By then my uncle, he worked for Merlo and Ray, the contractors. He spoke to the boss about me and he got me a job wheeling gravel sand into the old scoop mixers." Both men decided to leave this job because their wages were dropped from 75 cents an hour to 35 cents an hour. This was due to the fact that, "...there had been a lot of guys coming out from Austria and those countries... and they was working at cheaper money." 55

Once again, Mr. Turnham’s uncle relied on his connections within the ethnic network, to find other jobs for both men, "'Well,' he said, 'I know a guy down in Sandwich, that I used to work with in England, a guy named Sam Wess... and we went down to see him on the Monday.'" 56 Both men found jobs. Following the expiration of construction contracts, Mr. Turnham then found work with his brother (who had previously arrived from England) as a worker in the construction of the Prince Edward Hotel. It was while working here, that he was notified that he was to start work at Ford’s:

So I went into Ford’s and I thought, 'My God, I'm not going to last in here a week.' You know all the racket. I didn’t know the back end of a damn machine, I’d never worked on machinery outside of the levers for the signal box on the railway, so anyway I lasted forty years."
The connection among ethnic workers in the 1920’s and 1930’s was a definite factor in finding employment:

In those days, I tell you right now, it wasn’t what you knew, it was who you knew. If you knew somebody big up there, you would get a job in there. I know if you was a scotchman, it was easy for you to get in up there cause the boss of the inspection department was a scotchman.

The situation in the automotive accessory plants was identical. After only a few days in Windsor, Mr. Klinger obtained a job in the Kelsey Wheel plant, with the assistance of his brother:

I went on a Saturday and I went with my brother and we ran into a man. I didn’t know him from the man in the moon. Then he [Mr. Klinger’s brother] says, "This is my brother." So naturally he was well-liked and did a good job and so he says, "Well, you bring him to work on Monday.” I started on the 14th or 15th of August [1928].

In the case of the Kelsey operation, this type of networking ran through the entire workforce:

It was more or less like a family affair. You had fellas working in there like myself and my brother. There was the Kosakalufsky brothers. There was two other guys, Harry Ouellette and Herb Ouellette, father and son. There was like a family. You were a good worker, well you brought your brother or your son and so on.

Perhaps as Harney stated, not only were the various ethnic institutions born in the "sojourning years, so was North American ethnicity itself." The question is often raised as to which role was more important, the immigrant as worker or as member of an ethnic community. This question can only truly be answered by each individual worker. While it may be true that early in the development of the automotive industry, ethnic connections were crucial in establishing work relationships and financial support for
immigrants. On this basis it could therefore be argued that ethnicity was a stronger force than class, however, evidence indicates that role of ethnic identity came to merge with the notion of class in forming a sense of identity among Windsor's immigrant workers.

In his book, *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class*, Michael Mann argues that class identity is "the definition of oneself as working class, as playing a distinctive role in common with other workers in the production process." Mann also notes that there were three main characteristics which applied to the worker if he was to be identified with a class. First, the worker must hold the "perception that the capitalist and his agents constitute an enduring opponent to oneself." Second, the worker must combine the two previous notions of unity among workers and class opposition to form a belief in class totality. This belief became, "the defining characteristic of one's total situation and... the whole society in which one lives."

The final component which designated the individual as a "worker" was the conception of an alternative society. This was the objective, "toward which one moves through the struggle with the opponent. True revolutionary consciousness is the condition of all four, and an obviously rare occurrence." Revolutionary consciousness was not rare in Windsor during the inter-war years. Ian MacPherson notes that the most critical problems of the day directly effected the entire Windsor area, as a result, the harsh living conditions in Windsor provided a friendly environment for
radical left-wing activity among all citizens:

Problems caused by housing shortages, overcrowded schools, a steadily increasing cost of living, and the continuous arrival of new citizens, were most perplexing in the best of times; in times of acute difficulty, such as created by the depressions of 1929 and 1929, they were nearly insurmountable. It was during these most difficult periods that a high percentage of Windsor voters turned to more radical politicians in hopes of finding solutions... Thus during the Twenties and during the Depression of the Thirties, radical movements prospered... 

While ethnic groups may have been active in union struggles, the assumption, that all immigrants brought radicalism and violence seems out of place with regards to automotive workers in Windsor. As a rule, little ethnic trouble erupted among the workers on the line or in the plants, "We all got along pretty good. There was no fight or you know..."I don't like you because you're Russian." This seems to attest to the fact that only a relatively small proportion of European immigrants were active in radical causes throughout the Border Cities. Paranoia and fear of immigrants and their cultures in early twentieth century, may have succeeded in exaggerating the link which actually existed between ethnicity and violence in Windsor:

... there was little doubt in English-speaking Canada that ethnicity and violence were intertwined. The orderly evolution of Canadian society as a natural and inevitable process based on British precedent was a salient tenet of British Canadian mythology.... The ethnic composition of those who took part in the many violent labour disputes reinforced the idea that violence was an alien import to Canadian society and its British institutions. In fact, that the small (but growing) size of the Eastern European faction of Windsor's total population was proportionately modest in comparison with "overwhelmingly English and French Canadian Walkerville."
Nonetheless, resistance was present and both native born and immigrants were involved. While workers accepted company control on a short term basis, the thirties marked the end of this acceptance. One of the most apparent signs of this turning point arrived in the form of collective action and resistance through political channels on the part of the ethnic communities after 1930. For those local immigrants who chose to become politically active, the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) was a strong force. In terms of its membership among automotive workers throughout southern Ontario, the strength of the Communist Party of Canada and the CLDL was based primarily upon Ukrainians in Oshawa, as well as Ukrainians, Finnish and Slavics within the Border Cities:

Its greatest support, and potentially the most significant, came from the eastern Europeans of East Windsor who comprised 25 per cent of the town's population in 1931... The unusually large eastern European presence in East Windsor seems to have stemmed from a conscious Ford policy to recruit a polyglot work force, perhaps as a barrier to collective action.

Not surprisingly, the Communist Party of Canada, "always considered the Windsor area plants the most likely to respond favourably to organizing activity," it also maintained "a number of links with the 'native' labour movement." The League recognized the value of these communities and was quick to show support of these groups. The increase in the number of Windsor-area unemployed prompted a shift of the emphasis of recruiting practices of the Communist Party from the factories to the homes of the unemployed and a more widespread appeal from "foreigners" to native-born Canadians. The Communist Party method of recruiting
new members in the Windsor area moved away from the front gate demonstrations of the Twenties. There was a certain amount of respect among auto workers for local communists. As they were willing to put their jobs, security and future on the line, "they inevitably attracted the admiration and, if they sought it, the political support of ordinary workers."[15]

Any Party member who met support on the topic of unionism from his fellow workers was to try to start a union shop group. The standard procedure was to visit the worker’s home, and then invite him to a get-together, perhaps "an informal coffee party." The Party membership was multiplied in the same way. The Communists in the Border Cities were effective in recruiting, and by 1933 had succeeded in recruiting approximately one hundred unionists in eight Border Cities plants, through fourteen shop groups. They had also succeeded in electing three "united front" councillors in East Windsor.[16]

Across the country, ethnic communities formed strong bonds among members and worked as a support system for their individual members and in cases where radical political beliefs and activities had been organized, they supported these as well. One specific example were the Finnish in Canada. As early as 1921, "the Finnish component in the Canadian radical left came to represent over 50 per cent of the movement’s numerical strength."[17] The co-existence between the Finnish and the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) lasted until 1925, when the Finnish radicals refused:
...to sacrifice their own organization to the Communists Party's determined policy of bolshevization of the various language sections (chopping up of the different ethnicities into and blending them together into smaller homogenized independent "Canadian" cells as a more acceptable product for the political consumption by the masses)."

A second example of such exclusivity was found in Winnipeg. The Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association [ULFTA] was threatened by the Communist Party of Canada that devotion to ethnic traditions must come second after their obligation to the Party and their fellow workers:

Ukrainian comrades [must] work in the closest harmony with under the direction of Party leadership...Until the ULFTA eliminated narrowness and natural exclusiveness... its important task of guiding Ukrainian workers and families into the revolutionary trade union movement would be severely hampered.

According to Mann's categories for class identity, it becomes apparent that ethnic workers did not perceive themselves as individual workers as much as members of an ethnic community. This assertion of independence was labelled as exclusivity and did not endear such ethnic communities to those who placed the obligations of the individual as worker beneath his/her duties as a member of a particular ethnic group.

The same bonds of unity were prevalent throughout Windsor in the 1920-1938 period as well. Even though the Communists had courted the support of ethnic workers by assisting in the establishment of various ethnic organizations, this did not always succeed in winning the loyalty of the immigrants. Some of the first Yugoslav clubs in Canada were formed in Windsor in 1927:
By 1930, the Canadian Labour Defence League had organized several branches among Canada's ethnic groups, including the Yugoslavs. The CLDL sought to protect and defend those labourers who were persecuted because of their active involvement in the labour movement.  

The clubs were eventually dissolved due to the fighting between pro and anti-government socialist and conservative factions. "by 1935, the socialists, who liked to be called 'progressives' had developed their own Canadian identity participating in various labour-management conflicts." In this case, the bonds which existed among the Yugoslavs succeeded in splitting the membership down the middle. The CLDL was unable to prevent the destruction of this organization because ethnic tensions were too powerful for the Communists to extinguish.

Ian MacPherson has noted that between 1931 and 1935, the various radical philosophies, "had not solidified into definite political party organizations in the Windsor area." One of the reasons behind this lack of worker solidarity was the diversity and strength of the Windsor's ethnic communities and their reluctance to band together as workers at the expense of their ethnic identity. One example of such a division occurred in 1931:

Tom McKean complained bitterly about the ways in which Slavic prejudice had disrupted the Party's organizational efforts among oppressed Black workers in the Windsor area.  

Even with the Communist Party's return to a position of prominence following the decline of the AWIU in the late-twenties, it was still not able to suppress the ethnic issue. In an attempt to win allegiance from these groups, occasionally Communist organizations gave support to local workers to illustrate how the struggles of
Windsor's ethnic workers were not completely removed from the objectives of the Communist Party:

...in Windsor the League gave $200 in defence of two Ukrainian communists who were charged with disturbing the peace when they attempted to break up a 'fascist' meeting."

Ethnic communities remained distinct societies that maintained close internal relationships. Every ethnic community defined its experience as workers according to its own standards and within its own environment. The Ukrainians, Finnish, Slavics and other ethnic communities in Windsor were tightly bound to their sense of heritage and traditions. This factor limited the effectiveness of any unified workers' movement for the reason that such groups did not address the specific needs and independent concerns of various ethnic communities. It was not until after the Depression and into the late thirties that workers began to show signs of ethnicity and class beginning to merge into any kind of semblance of working-class consciousness.

Darroch and Ornstein have argued further that traditionally, the issues of "Ethnic and religious diversity have been seen as militancy against the development of common class consciousness." Their study of ethnicity and class in Ontario between 1861-1871 revealed:

...individuals often changed occupations and moved between larger occupational categories, with little regard for class or status barriers.... There was visible occupational specialization of ethnic groups...the differences could not be called serious cleavages."

These findings indicate ethnicity was a more important force to the late nineteenth century worker than his/her identity as a worker or
his/her class consciousness. With the strength of ethnic bonds throughout southern Ontario as early as the mid-nineteenth century, and the fact that ethnic networking existed in Windsor throughout the first decades of this century, it becomes easier to understand how class consciousness was forced to remain a secondary priority for most automotive workers.

Though the numbers of ethnic automotive workers had increased, the process of working class development for Windsor's "preindustrial peoples," as Herbert Gutman referred to them, was marked by their distinct roles as members of specific ethnic communities in the local struggles. Automotive workers within the Border Cities and surrounding areas were not pawns whose moves were choreographed by company officials. It is unfair [and inaccurate] to assume that throughout the twenties and most of the thirties, Windsor's automotive working ethnic population was not as equally disturbed by conditions within the local auto industry as were the Canadian-born anglophone workers. Immigrants were in many senses, doubly oppressed as wage earners and as "foreigners."

Whereas ethnicity had served to divide workers since at least 1920, by 1936, this situation appeared to be evolving. Mr. Klinger stated:

"The most active people in the union, I would say, were the ethnic people who had the biggest support of the union. As far as leadership and experience are concerned, there were some Englishmen who were miners and had that background from over there already."

Both natives and immigrants were in the process of adapting to various changes in the home and in the neighbourhood that effected
their ability to concentrate their efforts against automotive companies. Nonetheless, the ethnic members of the workforce made direct contributions to the local working class experience. As a result, their identity as "Canadians" was shaped by this experience and the ramifications of their actions. As important as it was for immigrants to have a say in their working situation, it was equally as important to maintain a sense of their cultural, traditional and religious connections, with their recent past.126
# APPENDIX

**BORDER_CITIES POPULATION, 1901-1931.**

(Tables 1 and 2)

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<th>1931</th>
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1. Registration of Border Cities, July 1, 1931.

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# Ethnic Composition of the Border Cities, 1921.

(Tables 2)

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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chin/Jap</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>1,628</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages may not add up due to rounding.
## Ethnic Composition of the Border Cities, 1931

*(Table 3)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Windsor</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>East Windsor</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Lower Merion</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sandwichtown</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Wallingford</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>26,902</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5,598</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>8,028</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>8,972</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1,284</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>9,355</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2,249</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>8,709</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1,969</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2,326</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgian</td>
<td>159</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Czech/Slov</td>
<td>238</td>
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<td>635</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>734</td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finn</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>1.2%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>2,830</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>2,219</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>1,495</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese/Asian</td>
<td>265</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Zeki</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic Group</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>1931 Total</td>
<td>1921 Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>14,530</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33,135</td>
<td>20,644</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>12,910</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13,131</td>
<td>7,077</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>13,781</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14,235</td>
<td>7,304</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>16,894</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17,295</td>
<td>12,475</td>
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<tr>
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<td>343</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech/Slovak</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>1,579</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>1,858</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1,965</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2,453</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>486</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
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<td>3,682</td>
<td>1,114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>1,256</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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<td>863</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>2,515</td>
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<td>2,573</td>
<td>969</td>
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<td>Romanian</td>
<td>1,412</td>
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<td>1,155</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>284</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>1,127</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Other</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ethnic Breakdown of Workers in Automobile Related Occupations in Ontario (1921) (Table 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>Semi-Skilled</th>
<th>Labourer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brit. Poc.</td>
<td>.62%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>.05%</td>
<td>.06%</td>
<td>.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ethnic Breakdown of Workers in Automobile Occupations in Ontario (1931) (Table 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>Semi-Skilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>.4%</td>
<td>.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Canadian Born and Aliens in Automobile Related Occupations Throughout Ontario (Table 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canadian Born-pre-1921</th>
<th>Canadian Born-1921-1931</th>
<th>Non-Canadians Before 1921</th>
<th>Non-Canadians 1926-31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto, Aircraft &amp; Cycles</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokers, Rigamors &amp; Machinists</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundry Products &amp; Forgings</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>1,996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foremen (Manufacturing)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers &amp; Unskilled</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinists &amp; Millwrights</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanslers / Coramers / Carters</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethnic Composition - 1921 Ontario
Automobile Related Occupations

Ethnic Composition - 1931 Ontario
Automobile Related Occupations
EXPLANATION

For the preceding Ethnic Composition Graphs, the calculations were made by grouping each of the automobile related occupations from the 1921 and 1931 Canadian Census under one of three categories. Unfortunately, the category of Labourer disappears from the 1931 Census. It can be assumed that those labourers have been incorporated into the remaining body of occupations. The ethnic composition was as presented in the graphs were based on classifications preset by the Census. For 1921, the occupations listed under Skilled were as follows,

- Boilermakers/Engine Builders
- Machinists/Millwrights
- Moulders/Casters
- Pattern & Model Makers
- Tool Makers/Die Setters & Sinkers
- Coremakers
- Foremen

The 1921 Semi-Skilled component contained:

- Rolling Mills Employees (other than labourers)
- Foundry/Machine Shop Workers
- Forgemens/Weldermen/Hammermen
- Grinders/Filers

The 1921 Labourers were qualified as:

- Rolling Mills labourers
- Foundry and Machine Shop labourers
- Auto & Bicycle Makers

By 1931, the categories had been regrouped. This resulted in the merging of labourers into the remaining categories.

1931 Skilled:

- Machinists
- Millwrights
- Foremen
- Tool Makers/Die Setters & Sinkers
- Patternmakers
- Moulders/Coremakers/Casters
- Welders
- Mechanics

The 1931 Semi-Skilled:

- Boilermakers
- Rolling Mills Employees
- Blacksmiths/Hammermen/Forgemen
- Grinders/Filers
- Machine Tenders
- Press Workers/Stampers
- Polishers/Buffers
- Enamellers/Lacquerers
ENDNOTES

1. On the Belt, 4
2. On the Belt, 4.
3. On the Belt, 4.
7. On the Belt, 5.
8. Heron, Working in Steel, 63.
10. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 5.
11. On the Belt, 8.
12. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 14.
15. On the Belt, 5.
17. On the Belt, 6.
18. Manley, "Communists and Auto Workers..." 111.
19. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 14.
20. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 2.
21. Heron, Working in Steel... 113.
23. Peterson, American Automobile Workers..., 21.


29. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 14.


31. Manley, "Communists and Auto Workers..." 119.


35. Labour Gazette, February 1935, 35:2, 125.

36. On the Belt, 4.

37. The Auto Spotlight, April 1936, Series 1, Model 1, Windsor. Sponsored by the Essex County Trade and Labour Council and endorsed by the International Union, UAW of Canada.


Information obtained from interview with Nick Klinger.

39. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 2.

40. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 7.


42. Labour Gazette, September 1938, 38:9, 978.

43. Labour Gazette, November 1938, 38:11, 1223.

44. Labour Gazette, November 1938, 38:11, 1223.

47. Manley, "Communists and Auto Workers..." 112-113.
49. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 5.
50. Interview with Nick Klinger, 4.
52. Morrison, "Ethnicity and Violence..." 145.
54. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 6.
55. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 10.
56. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 6.
62. Magee, A Scandinavian Heritage, 47.
63. Magee, A Scandinavian Heritage, 47.
64. Magee, A Scandinavian Heritage, 68.
65. Some examples of Canadian historians who have incorporated and built upon Gutman's theme of pre-industrial peoples are Darroch and Ornstein's "Ethnicity and Class, Transitions Over a Decade: Ontario 1861-1871," p.7-27 in David J. Bercuson's Canadian Labour History: Selected Readings; Craig Heron's Working In Steel. See chapters entitled "Labour Power," 73-111, and "Resistance," p.112-159; any of the articles included in Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando's Ethnicity, Power

66. Ian MacPherson, "The 1945 Collapse of the C.C.F. in Windsor," *Ontario History*, 61:4 (December, 1969), 208. MacPherson states that one of the secrets of the popularity of Paul Martin was the fact that he had, "... efficient, pleasant personnel greet each new immigrant... in his constituency..."

67. Morrison, "Ethnicity and Violence..." 147.

68. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 4.

69. Heron, *Working in Steel...*, 112.

70. Heron, *Working in Steel...* 114.


76. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 13.

77. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 4.

78. *Auto Worker News*, June 1928, "Border Cities Automobile Workers Begin to Organize." 2:2, 3.

79. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 1, 5.


81. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 6.


84. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 7.


91. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 1.

92. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 7.

93. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 3.

94. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 3.

95. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 3.

96. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 13.

97. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 1.

98. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 3-4.


101. Mann, Consciousness and Action... 13.


103. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 5.


105. Manley, "Communists and Autoworkers..." 112.

106. Manley, "Communists and Autoworkers..." 112. The eastern European faction of Oshawa accounted for only 9.5 per cent of the total population, with 6.5 per cent in
Windsor and only .1 per cent in "overwhelmingly English and French Canadian Walkerville."


108. Manley, "Communists and Autoworkers...." 122.


110. Laine, "Finnish Canadian Radicalism..." 100.


115. Avery, "Ethnic Loyalties..." 72.


117. Darroch and Ornstein, "Ethnicity and Class...," 9.

118. Darroch and Ornstein, "Ethnicity and Class," 25.

119. Interview with Nick Klinger, 7.

120. For example, the case of the church of St. Nicholas, a local Russian Greek Orthodox Church which was established in 1916 by a small group of Russian immigrants. In 1918, the Church entered a critical period during which, "The economic pestilence that swept Russia in the form of Bolshevism had its echo in Ford City, delaying the progress of the Church." Over the course of the next ten years, the community struggled to maintain St. Nicholas, its religious foundation, and by 1928 they had solved all the financial difficulties and saved the Church.

122. Census of Canada, 1921, Volume I, Table 27, 458.
123. Census of Canada, 1931, Volume II, Table 33, 402.
125. Census of Canada, 1931, Volume VII, Table 64, 974.
126. Census of Canada, 1931, Volume V, Table 41, 714.
Chapter 6: Working Women, Wives and the Factory

Women who were mothers were mothers at the mill and at home, at the laundry line, and on the picket line. The market appraisal of their skills influenced their working conditions, and their emigration decisions, and their sexual experience. The simultaneity of these ways of being was inescapable, and from this simultaneity followed heterogeneity. Neither manliness, nor womanliness, worker nor boss, native nor newcomer was a unitary condition...

This quotation from Joy Parr captures the unrestricted scope of the working experience as it applied to both women and men. This chapter attempts to briefly discuss the multiple roles of worker, business partner and mother that were experienced by women in Windsor's working class during the inter-war years.

Automotive historians, and labour historians in general, have tended to regard white collar workers as a specific group of workers, perhaps not as relevant for investigation as those workers on the line. This chapter illustrates how there were fewer women in blue collar automotive work than in white collar automotive jobs in Windsor, and that those women involved in white collar automotive work in the local FMC operation were in the same type of dead end job as those women throughout the country during this period. Perhaps most importantly, white collar working women were subjected to the same company motives of deskilling in the clerical occupations as were blue collar workers in the automobile factory. This is an important link which strengthens the assertion that the working worlds of the white and blue collar workers are united, and should be studied as such.

Unlike few other manufacturing centres in Canada in the Twenties, women in Windsor made a comparatively strong contribution to the
Local automobile related occupations. In fact, among all eight Canadian cities with a population of 20,000 in 1921, (Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Victoria, Sydney, Sherbrooke, Verdun, Trois Rivieres), the only females employed in "heavy" auto-related occupations outside of Windsor were twenty-four Foundry and Machine shop employees in Toronto.

In Windsor there were forty-nine females among the Auto and Bicycle Makers, a single Painter/Varnisher (aged between 25-34), three female Foremen/Inspectors (two were between 25-34 and one between 20-4), six female "Miscellaneous Iron Workers" (1-15, 1-17, 3 between 20-4, and 1 between 25-34) and four female "Machinery Makers" (1 who was 17, 1 between 18-19, 1 between 25-34, and 1 between 35-49). It seems, however, that females in the automotive related occupations [feeder industries such as Kelsey Wheel] were first hired during the second World War. Even during war time, women did not appear to be situated in the local Ford's plant, as a retired FMC worker stated:

There was no women working in the plant when I worked there [1922-1962]. Not until. well I retired in 1962...Anyway, I don't know the exact date the women started in the factories, but I know it was after I retired in 1962. Now there's quite a lot of them.

When questioned directly about the number of women working at the FMC plant during the second World War, he responded, "There might have been some, but I don't think there was any at Ford's. Not that I can remember. Like I say, it was nearly all of these high school kiddies, guys from college and that."

By 1931, all Census categories referring to women had been
altered except that of Foremen and Overseers. In this category, the number of women jumped from three in 1921 to eleven a decade later. More importantly, the 1934 Census lists women in several new semi-skilled occupations. In Detroit by 1929, women in the industry were gathered in "light" occupations such as Finishing and Polishing. This pigeon-holing continued throughout the 1930's even when the employment of women in heavy occupations would have been a great deal cheaper than male labour.

Throughout the thirties, female automotive workers appear to have climbed into what were regarded as more highly skilled and politically powerful positions within the plant. This is reflected in the respective earnings of women in the plant at that time. In terms of Windsor's female automotive related occupations in 1941, the female Moulders, Coremakers and Casters were earning the highest wages of any female occupation within the automotive plant at approximately $832 per year. This placed them at $11 above the average ($821) of female Automobile and Cycle workers. At the same time, the remaining female occupations were all below the average. Polishers and Buffers were earning $182 less, while female Fitters and Assemblers, Filers and Grinders all earned $221 less than the average annual earning.

While women were not as prevalent in terms of sheer numbers throughout the Border Cities automotive industry as they were in Detroit, local automobile establishments, such as the FMC, still tried to promote an attitude among the workers that women outside the plant were different from those women who worked inside the
plant. This perceived difference was anchored in the moral attitudes of Canadian society. The FMC was very supportive of the existing Victorian notions regarding women and work, "that women were both the guardians of morality and the most easily corruptible and that the poor were poor because of some flaw, usually a moral one, in their character." 

Wives of automotive workers, however, were "helpful" in supporting their husbands' efforts to provide for the family (which meant fixing husbands in their automotive jobs and thereby reducing labour turnover), while female automotive workers, who were rapidly becoming equal in terms of job skills, had the potential to assume the political power of males on the shop-floor and threaten the will of male workers on the job. The automotive companies and labour organizers sought to remove women from the workforce and attempted to reinforce the traditional "male hegemony" within the North American automotive plant.

To paraphrase Joy Parr, the way in which manliness mattered in Windsor, begins with the authority men showed as both line workers and craftsmen of recognized skill. In this authority they were distinguished by gender from women who did not share life on the line, whose proficiencies were private and unrewarded. In this sense, not only have unions worked to lessen the power of the individual worker on the shop floor, they have "historically reinforced conventional social attitudes concerning women's role."

As Ann Schofield states:
The trade union thus reinforced a sexual division of labour both at home and in the workplace, for the ideas expressed in the American labour press clearly linked home and work and facilitated the transition between them for women.

The labour press was equally concerned about how technology had uprooted traditional notions of skill and power in the plant, and how this had been transferred into the automotive workers' homes. This was certainly the case with the Detroit labour press... The September, 1927 edition of the AFL-CIO Auto Worker News proclaimed that due to the fact that women were equally as capable of working at semi-skilled jobs such as running presses and drills in the auto factories:

...men are being laid off to join the mob of unemployed Detroit workers... the prevailing wage for them [women] is twenty to thirty cents an hour for the same work... Detroit is beginning to take on the aspects of a "she-town" in which the women work and the man looks after the kids.

Through the deskilling/reskilling process, women in the plant had assumed virtually equal power as men in the shop. Unions functioned as a barrier to prevent women in the plant from exercising that power.

No matter the influence of the few individual female automotive workers, they had not (according to the Census) acquired the number, or the skill level necessary to combat the united will of the company, the males and the early unions.

The presence of females in the local automotive industry was most likely felt within the white-collar areas of the operation. One of the shortcomings of traditional labour history is that it has presented those within the system as only one of two polarities: industrial workers or capitalists. Since the turn of the century,
the Canadian working class has witnessed the maturation of a variety of white-collar workers that share a great deal with blue collar workers in the local automotive industry. Automotive historians have not detailed the working experience of the Canadian white-collar automotive worker. Perhaps the best explanation for this oversight is that historians continue to accept the notion that there was little distinction between the experience of blue and white-collar workers. As Braverman wrote:

The problem of the so-called employee or white-collar worker which so bothered early generations of Marxists, and which was hailed by anti-Marxists as a proof of the falsity of the "proletarianization" thesis, has thus been unambiguously clarified by the polarization of office employment and the growth at one pole of an immense mass of wage-workers. The apparent trend to a large nonproletarian 'middle class' has resolved itself into the creation of a large proletariat in a new form.  

Braverman's argument which states that the concerns and interests of the "working class" and the "new middle class" are one in the same continues to be very influential, however, to study the factory at the exclusion of the office is a serious omission. Peter Meiksins is another historian who has followed Braverman's lead and pointed out that any differences in the opinions and objectives of these two groups are only short term. In the long run, the most powerful unifying force between them is capitalism. Therefore, the most significant of the common interests between the white collar workers and the traditional working class is the shared condition of being exploited wage labourers.  

This approach which Braverman used (and historians like Meiksins have adopted) to link the white collar and blue collar working experience has become widely accepted and resulted in the exclusion
of clerks and other white collar workers in the studies of the Canadian automotive industry (it should be noted that Snyder's work, *White Collar Workers and the UAW*, is a distinct example of a successful study of this relationship in the United States).

This approach is insufficient by itself because it ignores not only different working skills and relationships in white collar jobs, but it also negates the impact of the rapid influx of female workers into the manufacturing workforce. The statistics regarding females in the Canadian white collar workforce illustrate how women had grown to dominate the position of clerk throughout Canada. In 1891 only 2% of the total labour force was composed by clerks, but in 1931, the percentage of clerks in the workforce had grown to 6.7%:

Much of this increase in office employment is accounted for by the recruitment of women into newly created menial administrative jobs. Thus between 1891 and 1931, the female proportion of total clerical employment soared from 14.2 to 45.1 per cent. By the beginning of the depression, the female clerk was a defining feature of the Canadian office.

With regards to why women became entrenched in the clerical fields, some historians had argued that employers were able to reorganize the work and create typing pools and institute secretarial training in high schools. As a result, the skills of the stenographer "flooded the market." This approach, which owed much to Braverman, also argued that white collar and blue collar workers had attained different skills and one of the most powerful forces which worked to link male labourers and female clerical workers was the deskilling process. As Jane Gaskell has written, mechanization (i.e. typewriter) provided female clerks and
stenographers with jobs that demanded a high degree of skill. In this sense, female clerical workers underwent the same deskilling process as male automotive workers [see Chapter three]. As a result, the clerical workers in the office were linked to the automotive workers on the line. As the number of secretaries and clerks increased, the skills (and political power) of the stenographer were distributed throughout the secretarial pools.

More recently, Graham Lowe has presented a theory of task specialization which argued that the creation of a new level of jobs in the office lacked the previous skill components of the bookkeeper and were therefore less attractive to middle class male clerks who expected upward mobility. As a result, a new world of employment was opened for a large number of Canadian women with specialized skills:

Employers were pragmatic enough to recognize the clear advantages of women's higher average education, traditionally lower pay and greater availability for menial tasks. As women flooded into these subordinate positions which employers had defined as 'female,' they became entrenched as the modern clerical corp.4

Even with the problems that the workplace presented to women (low wages, long hours), industrialization and the growth of white collar work had created new jobs, gave women a choice of how to earn their income and on a social level, workers worked together in large numbers. In this way industrial jobs offered women a satisfactory alternative to domestic work, which was considered as "'non-productive' service labour...In a society based on the production of commodities for sale and profit, domestic labour was progressively devalued as production was removed from the home."15
Industrial work presented women with new jobs, new opportunities and the chance to learn new skills:

Because the isolation of her workplace made standardization impossible, the domestic servant could not enjoy any benefits of industrialization, such as a minimum wage or a shorter working day. Industrialization also changed work done within the home, by transforming it into service labour. Domestic labour became less and less satisfying as its productive aspect was reduced; it became a never-ending round of maintenance chores...

In this sense, the example of clerical and office workers do not fit clearly within the mold of Braverman's theories of deskilling and degradation. Women in the office, as in the case with the assembly line workers, benefitted from the new technology and acquired new skills and opportunities as a result of it. The shift from women as domestic labourers to skilled clerical workers is an example of craft evolution.

The Census indicates that this was probably the case among young women in Windsor. It is likely that female automotive workers were far more evident in the Office Employee category. According to the census, twenty-five per cent of the total office employees within manufacturing were female.

**AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WINDSOR OFFICE EMPLOYEES**

*(IN MANUFACTURING), 1921.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even with such a relatively strong representation within this sector, women were still not granted equal wages even within what historians have considered the "light" end of the auto industry.
The best illustration is provided by Ford of Canada. As of March 16, 1920, Ford's instituted a new wage schedule. This schedule split wage rates into two categories - the Hiring-In rate, and the Skilled Rate. For example, all general office help which was to be hired, was given a Hiring-In rate of $130.00 per month. After a thirty day probation period had been passed, they were automatically advanced to the skilled rate of $150.00. The four main categories of wages were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hiring-In rate</th>
<th>Skilled Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Messenger Boys:</td>
<td>$ 70.00</td>
<td>$ 80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon promotion to the Junior Clerk position, they were automatically advanced to the first skilled rate of $100.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Clerk:</td>
<td>$ 90.00</td>
<td>$ 100.00 - 140.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon turning twenty, automatically advanced to first skilled rate of Senior clerk $150.00.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Clerk:</td>
<td>$ 130.00</td>
<td>$ 150.00-230.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women:</td>
<td>$ 100.00</td>
<td>$ 120.00-150.00 (maximum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nowhere in the schedule does it mention the progression of women to the position of Senior Clerk. In terms of salary, women were classified as Junior clerks, regardless of years on the job. Veronica Strong-Boag has indicated that the majority of the women in white collar occupations were middle class girls who left their jobs upon marriage. The women in the Ford's offices offers some validation to Strong Boag's claim that middle class women who remained in paid employment found themselves "dead-ended." What
the schedule indicates is that within the clerical operations of the automotive industry, women faced the same type of struggles in terms of asserting any sort of power on the job as did female workers on the line.

The establishment of women in clerical white-collar occupations served as a type of inauguration within the automotive industry. The twenties and thirties allowed women the opportunities to form the associations that had already attached men to organizations outside of the family and had allowed them to claim the right to "mediate on behalf of the less experienced female part of the population." While the expansion of women throughout the entire automotive operation did not occur until after the depression, "...in these decades most women preferred to counteract the dissatisfactions of public life by attempting to construct fulfilling private worlds with spouses, families, and friends." Inside the home of the automotive worker, the Ford family wage may have succeeded in keeping wives out of the industry, but this does not mean that women were without power in the home. By allowing male employees to earn a wage which would support their family, the FMC supported the dominant ideology of the day which stated that there was no need for women within the auto industry. As Strong-Boag has stated it:

The allocation of domestic responsibilities overwhelmingly to women frees men to explore a wider range of social, economic and political avenues. These other activities are then rewarded with benefits for the most part superior to those afforded for work in the home. The fact that women are assigned pre-eminently to the domestic sphere also encourages employers to pay them lower wages and offer them fewer opportunities."
The Canadian Census figures for 1931 support this argument. The prevalence of this ideology was evident throughout all automotive families, regardless of husband’s occupation. For instance, in the families of 66 professional Engineers only one of their wives was employed; from the families of 98 Moulders, Coremakers and Casters, twelve wives were employed; of 743 Machinist and Millwright families, 27 wives were employed; from 171 families of Foremen, only 2 wives were employed; in the 28 families of Boilermakers, Platers and Riveters, no wives held jobs; Finally, from the 1,291 families of Labourers and "Unskilled workers," only 88 wives were in the workforce. Of the wives who held jobs, the greatest financial contributions were brought in by the wives of Machinists, Mechanics, Foremen and Moulders.22

While it is assumed the women within the automotive industry faced clear difficulties in terms of asserting individual power, wives and mothers outside the plant faced equally important issues. For example, as previously noted, society had strong opinions regarding the notion of women working within the factory. "Proper" wives were expected to maintain this rigidly imposed moral code and were not allowed the option of taking a second career. The Labour Gazette presented an effective illustration of the Windsor public’s reluctance to accept either men or women in dual roles as both factory workers and as homemakers during the twenties:

the demand... for cook generals [chefs] could not be met and... the need for a training school for this class of worker is very great, the employers refusing to take factory workers into their homes to train them as house workers.23

It may be argued that the Canadian automotive industry remained
predominantly male with "a clearly demarcated 'women's place' in its various divisions." At the same time, the Canadian Census indicates that the few women who were involved in Windsor's automobile related industries in 1931 were by far the largest proportion among cities of similar population. Even with the growth in the number of women throughout the automobile industry, the allocation of work remained the same throughout the inter-war years, with men as breadwinners in the plant and women as managers of the home.

This did not mean, however, that while women in the automotive plants attempted to earn a living, automotive workers' wives who remained at home did not undertake roles of responsibility within the family framework. "...their task was to transform the cash income of the male breadwinner and, not so incidentally, their own labour, into the comforts of home." Wives of automotive workers enjoyed a great say in domestic and household affairs, such as the very purchase of a house:

So she was looking at the paper one night and she saw this here, this place here... she said, "I'll go up tomorrow and have a look, see what it's like." They wanted $2200 for it and $30 down and $30 a month... So she came up and looked at it and I came home that night, she said, "Well, I bought the house...I paid him the downpayment, we got to go down to the lawyers." I left everything to her.

Aside from the working class wife as manager of the home and business partner, women functioned as mothers. At this level, the struggle was not against unions or companies but government. In the home, women exercised a certain degree of power over such important family decisions as the actual size of the family. The
figures have shown that between 1921 and 1931, the population of children between 0-14 in Windsor rose from 28.3% to 28.9% of the total population, and also that the number of children over 15 were returning to the classroom, which meant more children had a longer stay at home. This increased number of individuals in the home made the workload of the mother so heavy that further children became an unnecessary burden. As Diane Dodd has written:

Birth control technology could give women rational control over the quantity and quality of their labour in the home, just as other technological advances had improved the workplace where their husbands worked.

The issue of birth control raises the question of how women and men viewed the issue of control in the home. Dodd argues that women wanted reproductive control to sustain a manageable household and an effective family unit. On the other hand, men who advocated the use of birth control saw it less in terms of sustaining the working household as much as in terms of the sterilization of the "unfit." As Strong-Boag argues, in the twenties, the competence of women as decision makers with regards to marital fertility (and also as parents) was frequently questioned:

Mothers who claimed rights 'to freedom and amusement' were blamed for all the shortcomings of modern society. Any woman who refused maternity was damned as 'a traitor to the race and a coward and a skulker in the battle for life and should be branded and despised accordingly.'

The point that men did not recognize the contribution of wives in the home has been argued. Although Dodd has not detailed the particular case of Windsor, certain evidence appears to illustrate the fact that the wishes of local mothers did not have a great deal of emphasis in the decision of whether or not to allocate birth
control:

In ... Essex County, however, efforts to place birth control dissemination in the hands of municipal authorities met with failure probably for a combination of political and financial reasons [not specified].

In spite of their struggles for control of their individual and working lives in the home and the plant, it appears that local working women and wives of automotive workers were slowly gaining an awareness of one another. One example of this process was the Workers' Educational Association, which was established during the twenties. Although classes were filled mainly by trade-union members, women were encouraged to attend. Such a movement may have helped to introduce and familiarize working women and wives with each other as well as working men. In this sense, education outside of the plant may have helped unite women inside and outside the factory as well as break down existing gender barriers within the auto plant. Even with this type of progress, it was not until following the second World War that "housewife" became a role which meant anything more to automobile companies than anchors which kept husbands fastened to automotive jobs.

As Joy Parr and many historians have noted, workers at the plant were fathers and mothers in the home. While evidence is relatively meagre regarding the attitudes of Windsor's automotive workers as parents, it is necessary to speculate upon the performance and priorities of the automotive worker in this role in order to draw a complete picture of the working class family.

The theme which seems to have been underdeveloped in educational history is that of working class parents who played an active role
in the removal of their children from the plants. In so doing, they believed they enhanced the employment opportunities of their children through education. Through the course of the 1920-1930 period, Windsor's working class automotive parents had become determined to encourage the education of their children for several reasons; namely that they perceived education as an accessible method of advancement for the children and also that sending a child to school was an investment in the long term financial future of the family.

Educational historian Jean Barman has cited examples whereby labour activists considered education of working class children necessary for the emancipation of the working class. Locally, the importance of education seems to have been more closely related to the progress of the individual and the family than the workers as a collective. This was in no small part due to the many divisions which existed among the automotive workers (which have been discussed in previous chapters).

It is difficult to make any assumptions with regards to the priorities of working class men and women as parents for the reason that to date there has not been an actual study of the transfer of local children from the automotive shop into the classroom. In this sense, the case of Windsor appears to be typical of many Canadian cities, as the role of education in the lives of the Canadian working-class has been greatly overlooked. So much so, that as late as 1984 educational historian J. Donald Wilson felt it necessary to proclaim that:
It would appear that educational historians will have to take the lead in forging links between working class and educational history. Certainly labour historians have shown no interest in how working people were hired, what educational criteria were used or how work was learned (whether at school or on the job).  

Wilson noted that the efforts of educational historians in the seventies were directed at the nineteenth century, and that with the eighties, much of the new educational history needed to be directed at the inter-war years.  

There is a noticeable difference in the available sources which deal with children in the various automotive occupations. For instance, the literature published in Detroit’s communist labour newspapers during the twenties and thirties made a point of dwelling on the fact that children were used regularly to replace adult males on the assembly lines and throughout the factories. While this claim is made for both Detroit and Windsor, the evidence seems to indicate a different situation in Windsor. Census figures illustrate that there were very few young girls at work in the automotive occupations, and oral testimony has validated this information (at least with respect to the Ford and Kelsey Wheel plants in Windsor). It appears that the children of working class families were more familiar to the classroom than the boiler room:  

...he was about seventeen, eighteen. I would say sixteen up some kids started, below that I wouldn’t know... Most of them went to grade school.  

The incorporation of Census data as evidence of working class parental attitudes towards childrens' education during 1920-1932 is not concrete proof. In a recent article, however, Chad Gaffield
indicated that this type of historical examination of education and school attendance through statistics is relevant to the appraisal of parental attitudes, "...historical sources reveal far more about parents than children, and more about sons than daughters."  

According to the Census of 1921, local children were more likely to leave school as they turned fifteen. The depression, however, meant that children of automotive workers left the workforce and entered the classroom, regardless of age, during the inter-war years. For example, from the 669 children (7-14, and 15+) in the families of Windsor's Machinists and Millwrights, 163 were employed in some manner and contributed to the family income. It should be noted that of the 408 children under the age of 14 in this category, 390 (95%) were listed as "at school" and only 5 were illiterate. It was a different situation with children over 15. Of the 261 children listed, only 58 (22%) were "at school" and 163 of the total number of children were classified as "children earning." The earnings of these working children totalled $127,052, roughly 9% of what the head of the family was earning.

This pattern is repeated in the children of moulders, coremakers and casters. Of the 27 children listed as 7-14, there were 26 (96%) reported as "at school." However, in the 15+ category, the situation is similar to that of the Machinists and Millwrights. Of the 25 children listed, only four (16%) attended school while 17 had already joined the workforce. The children's earnings in this case equalled $14,052, approximately 4.5% of the earnings of the head of the family.
This pattern was also present throughout the children of families where the head was employed in automobile related occupations such as Foundry and Machine Shop employees, Boilermakers and Engine builders, and Rolling Mills employees. By comparison, 92% of the 7-14 year old children of Windsor labourers (in manufacturing) attended school while only 11.2% of those over 15 attended classes. These figures indicate that a very high percentage of under 14 year old children from parents in the various automotive related occupations attended school in the twenties. For the most part, the child's education ended after the age of fifteen.

Over the course of the next ten years, the overall percentage of children in school jumped by a significant proportion. Most notably, the depression played a significant role in the decline of working children in the 15+ category. For example, in the listing of selected automobile related occupations in Windsor, the percentage of Professional Engineers' children at school jumped from 23.08% in 1921 to 59.18% in 1931. By the same token, the percentage of Engineers' children over fifteen years in the workforce decreased over the same ten year period from 65% to 33.33%. This decrease is repeated throughout the remaining automobile related occupations. In the families of Machinists and Millwrights, the percentage of working 15+ children decreased 63.30% to 48.97% while the percentage of children in these families attending school increased from 33.78% to 47.84%.

The percentage of 15+ working children from the families of Moulders, Coremakers and Casters decreased from 68% to 46.94% by
1931 while the children from these families at school rose from 37.72% in 1921 to 48.11% in 1931. This trend did not exclude the children of Labourers and "Unskilled workers." In this category the percentage of 15+ working children decreased from 69.16% in 1921 to 54.11% in 1931. In the same decade, the number of children in labouring families who attended school increased from 32.23% in 1921 to 45.07% in 1931.46

As these figures indicate, the children of Windsor's automotive working families were pushed back to school during the depression. More specifically, the depression sent young boys back to school. According to the 1921 Census, there were no females under the age of fourteen working as Automobile makers, Machinery makers, or Miscellaneous iron workers in the Windsor area; there were only fifteen females between the ages of 15-19 who worked in these same occupations. Also, as previously mentioned, a retired Ford's automotive worker has noted that he witnessed no females, girls or women, between 1922-1962 in the Ford factory. By comparison, while there were only three males between 10-14 in Windsor's automobile related occupations, there were 163 males between 15-19 who worked in these occupations.47

While females may not have been in the automotive plants in 1921, the figures indicate that they were in the classroom. For example, in Windsor, female children ten years of age and over enjoyed a higher rate of literacy than males; 98.23% of females in this category were able to both read and write, compared to 98.01% of males. Males in this category suffered from a higher proportion of
illiteracy, with 1.65% unable to either read or write and this compared to 1.41% of females in the same category.42

While Windsor children were attending school between 1920-1938, there is a great deal of debate with regards to why they were there. The system of education in the early twentieth century was not perfect and this is reflected throughout the educational historiography of Ontario. During the inter-war years the provincial education system was going through some substantial changes. As Prentice and Houston have acknowledged, Canadian historians have only recently begun to analyse the relationship that existed between the public schools and capitalism in the nineteenth century, "proposing for schools a historically specific social function, particularly in disciplining a future wage-labour force.43 This study of education in Ontario has produced two approaches to the relationship between labouring children and the school system. The "social control" approach which contends that the fears and concerns of the ruling elites in society were protected and projected through the advancement of particular themes which ran throughout the educational organization. Bruce Curtis has argued that while this approach may not be entirely accurate, the ruling elites in Ontario did have a specific interest in the education of children:
...the central concern of governing classes in state education was the reconstruction of popular character and culture. Members of the governing classes were particularly concerned that the conditions of social independence which characterized political-economic organization in the Canada might lead to the destruction of political authority, property relations and Christian religion.... Education was seen as a means for the remaking of popular culture and character, for the transformation of tastes, for the solidification of general habits, for the creation of a popular intelligence capable of appreciating the 'rational merits' of bourgeois society.

The social control approach does not interpret the primary role of the school as transmitting literacy, but rather as the recreation of the child in the preferred image of governing classes. Curtis has taken this argument one step further to indicate that the definition of "schoolchild" as:

...a flawed entity in need of discipline and training, an incomplete social subject which must submit to the process of schooling for its 'own' good... is an accomplishment of the Educational State and not a fact of nature. 43

The second or "labourist" approach disputes the argument that children (especially working children) were sent to school because their parents had been convinced against their will that it was in their own best interests by the ruling classes.45 The labourist approach introduced the notion that working people began to take an active role in the education of their children during the twenties. As Jean Barman has argued in the case of Vancouver, B.C., "...working people turned their attention to the city's schools, not to overturn the system but rather to obtain for their children fairer consideration within it."47 This "labourist" approach (termed by Craig Heron) was more appropriate for 1920's Windsor due to the fact that it has acknowledged the active role that working class parents took in the lives of their children.
Both feminist and Marxist historians continue to view the "labourist" interpretation of educational history as "a rosy view" of schools which ignores the manner in which society encouraged children to consent to social inequalities. However, the automotive workers in the 1920's and 1930's who wished for a better future for the children (primarily sons) had nowhere else to look for a path out of the Rolling Mills but to the schools. Feminist educational historian Susan Russell has argued that schools were enforcing class and gender divisions among students. In the particular case of Windsor, education along class lines might have had advantages in some cases. Within the specific context of Windsor's automotive working class families, predetermined schedules for the development of students (if they existed) may have served to encourage students who wished to qualify for company training programs.

It appears that by the 1920's, the "labourist" interpretation of working class education in Canada was appropriate in Windsor. Working class parents (and not solely reformers or labour organizers) were instrumental in the shift of their children out of the automotive plants and into the schools. The figures indicate that the Depression may have acted as a further incentive to children who were returning to school. Childrens' reappearance in the classroom appear to have had as much to do with the priorities of working class parents as they did with economic hardship. The attendance figures from this period also indicate that Windsor's working class priorities regarding education merged into the
nationwide pattern. Ellen Greenberger has stated that in the pre-industrial society, children's work benefitted the family unit. It was not until the intermediate phase which followed, that children's paid labour was actively discouraged:

...families benefitted directly from the additional income brought in by older children who went to work outside the home... children's work contributed to the cohesion and economic well-being of the family unit. 49

There have been two main interpretations of the relationship which existed between the Canadian working class and the educational system in the twentieth century. The first of these argued that the government used the school as a weapon which socialized the children according to "the priorities of the existing order." 50

There are several arguments as to what the actual role of children in Canadian industry was, and why they left the factories. Canadian historians accept the fact that by the turn of the century English Canadians viewed children as fragile, requiring special treatment and learning experiences to develop their potential. According to this approach, middle class English Canadians, who accepted this version of childhood, "sought to impose control over the family life of the lower classes." 51 The anti-child labour legislation of this period was one of the means by which this was accomplished. As far as this approach is concerned, the children's tenure in the factory came to an end due to the humanitarians who devoted themselves to the removal of children from the strenuous working conditions that were prevalent in the factories.

Another theory is that labour organizers sought to defend adults'
jobs from the availability of cheap child labour and eventually won
the legal victories that were necessary to remove children from the
workplace. While there is undoubtedly a certain amount of truth
in both cases, their importance tends to be overemphasized. In the
first case, many reformers and humanitarians felt that the
factories were actually preferable to the harsh realities of the
streets, parental abuse at home, and the development of an overall
sense of morality. "The concern, therefore, was not to free the
child from labour, but to assure that labour was not morally
debilitating." Parents who worked in the automotive industry
remained the greatest force in removing their children from the
plants. With regards to the reasons why the parents began to take
such an active role in the education of their children, there are
a number of reasons.

The aging of the auto workforce throughout the twenties and
thirties can be interpreted as a process through which the working
class gained a thorough understanding of the technical and personal
relationships within the daily operations of the auto plant. It
was primarily via these older workers that the effects of the
various processes involved in working class development were
witnessed and could be gauged. After experiencing the changes in
the industry and in the workforce over a period of years, the elder
members of Windsor's working class had gained a knowledge of plant
and industry operations that were passed down to the next
generation of workers. The end result was a body of workers with
a realistic vision of their role within the local auto industry.
The significance of the study which follows is that it illustrates how the acquired attitudes and knowledge gained by elder workers was transferred to those younger auto workers in the plant. These shifting priorities among automotive workers had a direct effect on the lives of their children.

Most importantly, as workers grew older, their expectations of reaching higher personal economic goals and social status within the auto industry vanished. The company's inflexibility with regards to altering technological aspects of the production process (halting speed-ups, fewer working hours, etc.) in favour of the workers resulted in a realignment of workers' aspirations. Workers hoped that simpler and more realistic occupational objectives could be obtained in the near future:

...jobs which they can handle as they grow older and which will give them more individual control [over] work pace. Their inability to achieve even these short-run and immediate gains was found to be a source of frustration.

The aging process placed these factors in a context whereby these men and women turn their attention to the next generation. As has already been mentioned in Chapter three, the unstable economic conditions in the inter-war years combined with the automobile companies' attempts of control produced a sense of vulnerability regarding the worker's personal position as production and assembly line worker. It is difficult to monitor the changing priorities of aging automobile workers, however; in 1954, Robert Guest published a study in which he examined the attitudes and long-range goals of career automobile employees in America and then compared them to those of younger auto workers employed at a newer automotive plant.
As the study by Guest indicates, the priorities of auto workers had indeed changed over the course of the years. According to the study:

"The potential for movement into supervisory jobs existed, but movement was limited by the available openings, by low turnover of salaried positions and by the fact that the restricted range of skills in assembly line operators had a tendency to limit movement into skilled non-production work and into certain staff positions."

From a sample of 202 assembly line workers, 70% had enjoyed a substantial rise in economic job status. An average increase of more than $500 a year. Following the initial jump, there was a levelling off for those who continued to work for a long period on production jobs. Among average workers with long service in the production areas of the factory, most made a substantial economic gain in taking a job on the assembly line, and as a result had experienced a very slight rise in individual job status over a period of 12-15 years, a condition "arising essentially out of the technological standardization of skills."

When the aspirations of the production workers were examined, 20.8% revealed that they preferred to remain on their present jobs. For the largest part, these were desirable off the line jobs or repair work. The remainder of the workers wished to leave their present jobs. A more surprising result was the fact that the "overwhelming majority" of this group wished to remain in some form of blue-collar work, while only 7% wanted to become supervisors. The second largest group wanted to move into skilled craft work in the Maintenance Department.

The conclusion that the study arrived at was that while the
production workers wished for some kind of change, they were setting goals which in terms of expected monetary gains were relatively modest. When younger workers were questioned in the same manner, only 8% of the men indicated that they wanted to remain at their present jobs. The largest number of the men (one-fifth) wanted to become supervisors:

It is perhaps to be expected that young men aspire more than older men. Nevertheless, these data suggest that an important change apparently takes place the older a worker gets and the more experience he has in this kind of technological environment. It would appear that younger workers tend to approach their job future with more expectation of vertical mobility. 58

When both young and old workers were asked to reveal how good they thought their chances of moving into the job they wanted, 60.7% of younger workers responded "poor or no chance." Of the older workers, 81.5% gave the negative response. These figures indicate that having witnessed the work experience of older workers, younger workers were convinced that traditional advancement was out of their reach. 59 The impact of the aging process with the technological changes in the plant that accompanied it led workers to believe that there was no real future in their jobs. Basically, jobs in the automobile industry limited the potential of the worker.

The usefulness of Guest's findings are limited when applied to the situation of automotive workers in Windsor due to the number of variables which exist between his American factory workers and those in the Windsor. The one common element between Guests' automotive workers and those in the local area between 1920-1938
was the fact that Windsor’s automotive workers were also aging:

In 1925 about 1% of Ford Motor Company workers were over 60 years of age and about 20 years later, approximately 18% were over sixty years of age.\(^{60}\)

Equally as important was the fact that Windsor automotive workers in 1920-1938 had gone through the conditions of the second industrial revolution brought on by the new techniques and technology of the local FMC. Although his study takes place at a later date, Guest has examined the effect of aging on automotive workers that had gone through the same process of technological change in the automobile plant. Although the study cannot be interpreted as a perfect facsimile of the attitudes of Windsor’s workers, it offers some interesting possibilities.

When it became evident that even the more moderate goals of aging automotive workers were out of reach, the average worker was tempted to leave the plant, but age worked against this decision. For instance, the concern over what role age would play when he lost his position within the plant, “made him think of the relatively good pay he was now getting and of the responsibilities he had towards his family.”\(^{61}\) The fact that the worker was not winning the battle with management over the role of technology and control in the plant enhanced the personal sense of vulnerability regarding work.

Automotive parents were attempting to break the cycle which condemned their children to the same living (and working) conditions that they suffered through encouraging them to attend school. Research has exhibited that the majority of working-class
children inherited the lifestyles of their parents:

It is one of the features of class societies that deprivations...in one area of social life are highly associated with deprivations...in other areas. So we would expect to find that those who are deprived at work...are also deprived in terms of health, housing, education, etc...these inequalities, are historically very stable and are transmitted, in various ways, generationally.62

The earnings of workers in the various automotive plants in the Border Cities in 1928 outside of FMC were another factor that worked against fathers encouraging sons to follow them into the plants.

At General Motors in the Border Cities, workers received a wage between forty-five to sixty-five cents an hour. In many cases, a number of men working on the machines were reported to have been replaced with children (in this case mainly girls) who were paid only thirty cents an hour.63 Studebaker workers made as low as fifty cents an hour, while the wages at Godfredon's sank down to forty-five cents.

It is at this point that the careers and experiences of Windsor's automotive parents crossed over into the lives of their children.

As Lorna Hurl has argued:

The assertion that parents chose to enrol their children in school as opposed to sending them to work presumes a parental desire to create a different future for children and/or a realization that increased education of children would contribute to the integrity of the family unit. Thus to further understand the actions of working class parents in withdrawing their children from factory labour, it is important to consider the place of child labour in relation to parental attitudes concerning child-raising, family integrity and family destiny—that is, at goals concentrating not only on survival but also on upward social mobility.64

As a result, working class parents throughout the province became
concerned that the childrens' wages were earned at the expense of their education, and better jobs with potential higher wages in the future:

...their fathers,... expressed the desire to have them attend school for longer periods. Employers, too, acknowledged the advantages of literate children. 

A better education (which in most cases meant completing high school) was seen as a way for children to move out of the lower echelons of factory work. For males over 15, this option included a chance to achieve highly skilled or management status through company training. In 1931, for example, the population of working children throughout Ontario was almost exclusively made up of boys (of 13,716 working children, 11,743 were boys) only eleven out of every 100 boys under 14 were employed. 

Windsor did, however, share one common feature with workers in Vancouver, that being the failure to unionize in the Twenties. As Barman argues, the failure to unionize gave to individual worker time to reassess not only his personal options for the future, but also those of his family.

Barman indicates that the programs were felt by many of the working class in Vancouver to be impractical and needed to become more than, "merely a preparatory school, for the University." However, among Windsor's automotive working class parents, while the content of the available classes may have seemed impractical, in the cases of many young men, they served as a means to an end. That end being company sponsored programs which were offered to boys having completed high school with high grades. It was
automotive training programs that may have been the one element that distinguished Windsor from Barman’s working class Vancouver. In Windsor, there was tangible evidence of education leading to positions as highly skilled workers or managers. This may have acted as a form of reinforcement for the practical benefits of education to sceptical working-class parents.

As previously mentioned, Border Cities boys had the opportunity to proceed from the Windsor-Walkerville Technical School into a company operated training program if his grades were good enough. By the mid-twenties, for instance, GM offered career advancement via a foremen’s and supervisors’ apprenticeship programme at its Walkerville truck plant. With this end result, the value of education produced practical results."

In conclusion, the women employed within the Windsor automotive industry were relatively few in this period, but had inherited political power in their occupations (no matter whether blue or white collar) through the same process of craft evolution as the male labourers. It was this new power among women that caused the companies, unions, and men on the job to foster codes of morality which discouraged the potential political threat that women posed in the factories.

Outside of the plant, wives of automotive workers managed the household affairs, cared for children and were still not allowed to exercise their free will or stray from the social norms as determined by others. Finally, a combination of economic hardship and hard experiences on the job, sent working class children back
to school in the thirties.

### APPENDIX

**School Attendance According to Ethnic Group, 1931.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Windsor</th>
<th>Canadian</th>
<th>British</th>
<th>American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>4,075</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>2,946</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>179</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Yugoslavia</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Romania</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Czech.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Asiatic</th>
<th>Other European</th>
<th>Holland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Ukraine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Parr, Gender of Breadwinners..., 245.

2. Census of Canada, 1921, Vol. VII, Table 38, 150-1
   The three Windsor occupations in which women received the
   highest wages were: Printers ($36.37 a week for 45.67 weeks),
   Teachers ($26.19 a week for 50.31 weeks), and Milliners
   ($22.16 a week for 44.27 weeks).

3. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 5.

4. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 10.

5. Transcription of interview with Sid Turnham, 10.

6. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, "One Hundred and Two Muffled Voices:
   Canada's Industrial Women in the 1880's," in Veronica Strong
   -Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds. Rethinking Canada: The
   Promise of Women's History. Toronto, 1986, 90.

7. Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in

   Question in the Journals of the AFL and IWW, 1905-1920,"
   Feminist Studies, Volume 9, Number 2, 337.


11. Peter Meikins, "", in Working People and Hard Times:
    Canadian Perspectives. Robert Argue et al, eds. Toronto, 1987,
    168.

12. Graham S. Lowe, "Mechanization, Feminization and Managerial
    Control in the Early Twentieth Century Canadian Office," in On
    the Job. Heron and Storey eds., Kingston et al. 1986, 177.

    Historical and Political Issues," in Roberta Hamilton and
    Michele Barrett eds., The Politics of Diversity: Feminism,

    of Clerical Occupations in Canada, 1901-1931," in Veronica
    Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman eds, Rethinking Canada: The

16. Leslie, "Domestic Service in Canada," 73.

17. Census of Canada, 1921, 75


25. Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled. 113. Windsor's automotive working class families appear to have followed the national pattern in this respect.


27. Transcription of interview, 8, 9.


32. Dodd, "Hamilton Birth Control..." 71. Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920," in Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff eds., The

Biddi cites a pamphlet from the Essex County Maternal Health League in 1937. However, Angus McLaren states that as early as the 1870's there were "fifty criminal abortions a year."


34. Morrison, Garden Gateway... 254-255.

Morrison notes the war efforts put forth by various urban and rural women's wartime organizations, those who became nurses and those who replaced men in factories and munitions plants. The most extensive treatment of female automotive workers after World War II is presented in Ruth Milkmans Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II. Urbana et al, 1987; see especially Chapter 7 entitled "Demobilization and the Reconstruction of 'Woman's Place' in Industry." 99-127.


37. Transcription of interview with Nick Klinger, 7.


39. Census of Canada, 1921, Volume IV, Table 41, 537.
40. Census of Canada, 1931, Volume V, Table 41, 715.
41. Census of Canada, 1921, Volume III, Table 40, 420-421.
Census of Canada, 1921, Volume III, Table 40, 410-411.
42. Census of Canada, Volume II, Table 92, 644.
45. Curtis, Building the Educational State... 17.
46. For an expanded presentation of this argument as it applies to central Canada, see Craig Heron, "Labourism and the Canadian Working Class," Labour/Le Travail, 13, (1984), 45-75.
47. Barman, "Knowledge is Essential...," 14.
57. Guest, "Work Careers and Aspirations..." 158.
58. Guest, "Work Careers and Aspirations..." 164.

59. Guest, "Work Careers and Aspirations..." 158.

   For purposes of analyzing the process of aging, Windsor's automobile related occupations have been grouped in each chart in the Appendices of this chapter according to the number within each occupation. The occupation which employs the largest number is on the top of the chart, the occupations which follow then descend according to the size of each group. The age categories have been clearly marked.

61. Guest, "Work Careers and Aspirations..." 161.


63. Auto Worker News, June 1928, "Border Cities Workers...", 2:2, 3.

64. Hurl, "Restricting Child Factory Labour..." 116.
   More specific information regarding the daily responsibilities of children in the automotive plant is available in Walter Edward Ulrich, On the Belt, 1929. Walter Reuther Labour Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, in collections of Local 203 and 205, Box 8, and in the Vertical Files; for specific information regarding how twelve to sixteen year old boys from the Henry Ford Trade School in Michigan were substituted for thousands of production men in the 1920's, see The End of the Ford Myth, same collection.


67. Barman, "Knowledge is Essential..." 22.


69. Census of Canada, 1931, Volume IV, Table 88, 1412.
CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate how the inter-war years were crucial to the re-shaping of the local automotive industry in two main ways. By 1920, ethnic communities throughout the Border Cities had become so well entrenched in local industries, (automotive among them) that "networking" through ethnic channels and connections had become the most reliable manner of finding a job [and keeping it] in the automobile industry. Secondly, this thesis sought to explore the relationship between technology and the labour process in the automotive industry. The findings revealed that although automobile companies attempted to breakdown the power of skilled workers through deskillling, they were only successful in rearranging the balance of power on the shop-floor. Instead of limited skilled workers holding a great deal of power over production, the new relationship resulted in a larger number of labourers inheriting the power to stop production on the line. Thus the power of skilled workers was not eliminated, merely passed on to a more widely distributed body of workers.

Although these were the two main discussions contained within the paper, in order to realize the full impact of these aspects of working class life, it was necessary to develop them within the context of the automotive family and its relationship to the industry.

This thesis fundamentally argues, as Marx did, that control was not solely a technical aspect of industry but a social one as well.
In order to understand the objectives and long-term aspirations that were held by the automotive workers in Windsor, it is necessary to place their working experience in the context of a struggle for control between individual and industry. This company/worker struggle involved the labour process and technology and was fought both on the shop-floor and in the home.

The chapters of this thesis have been arranged in such a way as to form a basic synthesis of selected elements of automotive working class life in the inter-war years. The main strand which unites these distinct passages is the theory that Windsor's automotive workers were active players in their industry and their daily lives.

There were two distinct phases in the development of Windsor's industry: pre-1920's which was marked by the establishment of the automobile industry and an overall growth in total size of the workforce. The second phase of development was distinguished through the centralization of the local automotive industry and several changes in the composition of the Border Cities' automotive workforce. Concentration of industry led to the need for more effective management and control over the workforce to ensure higher production.

While automotive companies introduced technological innovations into the factory for the purpose of stripping power (and the chance for resistance) away from the skilled workers, new machines were a dual-edged sword. Skilled workers were not eliminated from the production process, merely concentrated in repair and maintenance
departments. Secondly, machines succeeded in distributing what had previously been skilled jobs, among the many new semi-skilled workers that had formerly been occupied as labourers. Consequently, the company attempted deskilling of its workforce led to the distribution of powers from the skilled to the new machine operators. The wide dispersal of power in the plant meant that any attempted metamorphosis of working conditions or work relationships demanded support from workers as a collective.

Throughout the course of this paper it has been argued that the evolution of the automotive industry in Windsor contributed to the development of the collective identity of the automotive workers, at the expense of the power of the individual worker. Components like cyclical deskilling and the seasonal nature of industry worked against workers (created vulnerability) because they could not economically survive without the wages of the automotive companies. It was for these reasons that workers sacrificed their power on the floor and traded it instead to automobile companies for wages necessary for the survival of their families.

Even though Windsor’s automotive assembly lines were in the forefront of scientific management and technological innovation, the great majority of the workers were reskilled instead of deskilled. It is an oversimplification to attach the early failure at unionization in the Border Cities to the fact that these men and women were simply militant by nature. Almost every aspect of the automotive working lifestyle in the twenties and thirties worked against the unity of the workers. Within the industry, the
men/women were broken up not only according to ethnicity and categories of skilled and less skilled, but also among the various occupations required to manufacture the many components which were assembled into the finished product. Deskilling/reskilling effected workers of all skill levels. This case serves to illustrate Eric Hobsbawn's point that "industrial solidarity must be learned... so must the common sense of demanding concessions when conditions are favorable, not when hunger suggests it. There is thus the material time lag before workers become an 'effective labour movement.'"

Within these departments, the workforce was infused with workers of all nationalities and ages. Unlike workers in other industries in the twenties and thirties (like miners), the automotive workers were middle-aged in a comparatively young industry. Automotive workers simply did not have generations of groups such as miners whose traditions and common work experiences bound them together. Instead, they were developing their working traditions as they went along. As a result, each department produced a group of workers with a distinct outlook and opinion.

One of the most interesting features of Windsor's development during the 1920-38 period was that the industrialization did not appear to cut deeply into the autonomy of the ethnic communities. It was not until following the Second World War that the neighbourhoods became as much "working class" as "ethnic." Oliver Zunz once wrote that it was "change" more than "continuity" that characterized the industrial society in Detroit. This was the case
among Windsor's various ethnic communities:

People's daily lives generally centred in the smaller communities within the larger city, where class divisions were often mediated by ethnic bonds.

In an attempt to enhance the power of management and do away with informal resistance (slowdowns, labour turnover, etc.), the automotive companies instituted new formulas that were designed to acquire a certain degree of control in the daily life of the automotive worker at home. In difficult financial times, workers were prepared to allow the company intrusion upon their roles of husband and father. The home was sacrificed for higher wages. Company control over areas like boarding, which served as primarily an economic necessity for many Border Cities families, was shunned by FMC in order to keep its workers dependent solely upon the Ford wage. It also portrayed the transient worker as evil in an attempt to discourage the ethnic communities which provided workers with alternative sources of support and orientation to that of the company.

All of these ongoing processes in the twenties and thirties were direct connections between the worker, his family and the automotive company. The automotive workers in Windsor, like the industry itself, crossed from infancy to adulthood without the aid of unionism. This has brought into question the accuracy of the traditional view of unions as saviours of the working class; that of the UAW in particular being an expression of internalized hatred of the alienated, dehumanized automotive worker.

The Local 89 News, which was situated in Amherstburg, published
a statement in its first bulletin of July 16, 1946 which raised the question of whether or not the sacrifices that the individual worker made in the thirties for the unionization of the forties had actually been worth it:

A recent survey of what it costs to live in the Windsor-Amherstburg area proves that for a small family you have to spend $10.00 more a week to get the same amount of groceries, rent and clothing as you would have got in 1939. We, the workers, get on average only about $5.25 more in wages each week than we got in 1939.2

While it would be ridiculous to argue that the unions did not increase the standard of living of workers via benefit packages and guaranteed wages, this approach to unionization as the final solution to the problems of modern workers is flawed. It does not take into account the fact that through unionization, workers were deprived of their ability to offer informal individual resistance against the operations of the company or their treatment within it. The workers' conceded their practice of "on the job" resistance to the company via the unions. Under the system of union-negotiated collective bargaining agreements, the individual worker almost ceased to exist and was replaced by the demands of the collective as determined by the union. In effect, the worker may have been relegated to a cog in a machine once again.

The most interesting implication for participants of Windsor's automotive working experience during the 1920-38 period was whether or not workers had gained any independence from company control at the expense of being subjected to a different brand of control through the union. The automotive lifestyle in the inter-war years produced semi-skilled individuals with an informal capacity to
voice disapproval within their occupations. Windsor's labour
movement benefitted substantially from immigrants who were willing
to demand change from an industrial system that they felt treated
them unfairly, and brought a working knowledge of union
organization to the area. Unions effectively presented an
opportunity for workers to trade this right to the company and the
state for benefits. Windsor's early automotive workers, to
paraphrase Mr. Klinger, were like family. Perhaps the final word
on Windsor's early automotive experience goes to Mr. Turnham, who
stated, "...we used to work together as if we was unionized then,
everybody used to help each other out."
ENDNOTES


2. Local 89 News, Amherstburg, 1951.

3. Transcription of interview, 14.
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The Border Cities Star

The Labour Gazette

Local 89 News {Amherstburg}

The Windsor Daily Star
VITA AUCTORIS

Mark C. Sajatovich was born in 1968 in North York, Ontario. He graduated from Sydney Academy in 1986. From there he went on to graduate from St. Francis Xavier University in 1990, where he obtained a B.A. in History. He is currently a candidate for the Master's degree in History at the University of Windsor and will graduate in the spring of 1993.