

INTERVIEW NUMBER THREE: Bob Morrison

Interview With: Bob Morrison, former plant superintendent for Gooderham & Worts;
now working for Flavourchem Inc

Conducted By: Christopher Andreae, Historica Research Limited

Location: Former Hiram Walker Offices, Gooderham and Worts Property, 55 Mill
Street, Toronto

Date of Interview: June 29, 1994, interview started at 7:25 P.M.

Notes: After the interview Bob talked informally for a few minutes and began to mention a lot of other stories. For example, he noted that the same security staff was providing site security for Drivers Jonas. He mentioned that Lexan window panes were put into the cupola of the malt house and the old administrative building because birds kept flying into them. The flower garden in the parking lot in front of Buildings 25-27 was a special project of Dave Sellers. Dave had had some difficulty getting the plants to grow but they were doing quite well now.

Bob would be a good source of further information about the plant and its people. He wanted to walk around the plant as we talked.

Occasionally Bob's voice is very quiet and it is impossible to hear a few words.

Start of Interview

Chris: Let's just start off by stating who you are, when did you start at Gooderham and Worts, when did you leave and maybe briefly what you are doing now?

Bob: Of course, I am Bob Morrison and I started in August of 1951 as the office boy and moved along the ladder into the inventory department, order department, purchasing, plant superintendent, accounting.

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Chris: Is that what you finished?

Bob: I spent 25 years at this plant and then I became the Manager of Sales and Marketing Administration for Hiram Walker. I left this plant and went with them for 5 years. I guess it was a little tough because I had a massive coronary. Administration is a little heavy. I returned here after I had been with Hiram Walker six years, I returned after a six months absence and sort of worked back into my way down here because I handle the whatever the pressures. I spent the last 8 years at this plant. It is total of 39 years with the company.

Chris: When you were with Hiram Walker, were you here in Toronto or down in Walkerville [Windsor, Ont].

Bob: Here in Toronto. The Gooderham and Worts administration was handled by Charlie Lynch, here in Toronto and the Gooderham and Worts sales staff were here as well and the Hiram Walker were in Windsor. They decided to amalgamate the two and rather than sending it all down to Windsor, they wanted to spread it around so they brought the marketing of the administration here in Toronto and Charlie Lynch took it over. He needed an assistant so I went up with him. He retired and I took over.

Chris: What year was that?

Bob: Oh, 25 plus 76.

Chris: OK. My understanding, the building that we are in, 58 or 57 [actually Building #25], anyway, this was built for the Hiram Walker sales staff, right?

Bob: That's right.

Chris: But you started at some other place?

Bob: Yes, it was up at Yonge and Lawrence, the northwest corner. I don't remember the building now but it is right on the corner and we had the bottom floor of that building.

Chris: I think it was Paul Allsop, I think, that said you had the extra space down here.

Bob: They had the buildings and actually, when I was up there, I used to talk about coming down here. When I was working I thought, we have all this room down at this plant, why don't you utilize it. I guess they were listening and possibly Paul was talking to them later on about the same thing when he came down here and they decided to come down. I didn't believe they could do what they did but they certainly did a wonderful job. It looked better than it does right now.

Chris: When it was in use?

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Bob: When it was in use and clean.

Chris: I guess it only ended up being used for about 10 years or so.

Bob: It wasn't even 10 because I had been back with Gooderham and Worts and I was only here 8 years when they shut it down so they didn't start the renovations until after I came back here. I would say it was probably 7 years that they were here.

Chris: I think the building that we are in now will be demolished so probably very little of the actual renovations will stay on.

Bob: I don't know what they are going to knock down but it will be heartbreaking. Believe me.

Chris: Have you followed the development?

Bob: I have been reading it in the paper and they told us what they thought they were to do when they told us they were shutting the place down this was what they had in mind. Actually, they told us what they were going to do with it before they told us they were shutting it down. It was a surprise later. I imagine they will follow part of the plan but, from what I read, in the papers. They were going to make Rack D into a shell, that is the one on the other side of the street but I understand that they are not going over there now. They will probably stay within this area.

Chris: Well, Rackhouse D and the two beside it, the two smaller ones. The two smaller ones are going to go. Rackhouse D is apparently going to stay. Have you been to the Seagram Museum [in Waterloo]?

Bob: No.

Chris: It will probably be used in something like where they hollow out the...

Bob: They had originally intended on gutting the entire building and leaving the walls and then putting offices on the inside perimeter leaving the centre of it open for gardens or whatever and then the top they were possibly going to put skylights over which is what they did with the stable across the street that we used to work in.

Chris: Before we go on with the history, just a little bit more of the current developments. One of the ideas is to have residential at the west end where the tanks are - the molasses and glycol tanks - and use that open area where the parking lot is for new condominium construction. The area along Trinity Street on both sides is viewed as the historical corridor so the buildings that really front onto it will be retained. On the east

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side, will be the office/commercial. There will be two new areas with the historic core in the middle.

Bob: It is nice to know what is going on. I still feel attached to the place. You can't spend 39 years with a company and sort of forget about it. I was sort of hoping I would finish my days with this company but obviously that wasn't to be. Maybe I am. I am still here. I am still collecting a pension from them so I guess I am part of the organization.

Chris: Talking a little bit about the plant process, you are the first person I have talked to out of a half a dozen that started while grain mashing was still underway so you must have remembered the mill in operation.

Bob: I remember the mill in operation, I remember the spent grains because the riboflavin concentrate, the remainder after the product was manufactured with dry grains. It would make me itch. When I went into the building where it was bagged, I just about went crazy. That's one thing that I do remember.

Chris: From the dust?

Bob: I don't whether it was the riboflavin, whether it was high in protein or what it was but it used to drive me crazy.

Chris: Is that Building 4, just off where the mash cookers are?

Bob: The cookers were over there. [pointing] There was the distillery building and the cookers were here and right at the front of the building, where the grain came in. Actually, outside you can see where the scales are. Of course, you have been upstairs and you saw where the grains went in. I guess they mixed them with water and cooked them.

Chris: I was just thinking when you were talking about the mash drying or the spent grains and that, it seems to me that there is still in Building 4, which is just on the north side of where the distillery building is...

Bob: That's where the dryers were.

Chris: . It has a rack. It looks to me that the grain would have gone up and maybe dried somehow. Is that the area you were talking about where the spent grains would be?

Bob: Yes, that's is where they were manufactured. This was wet, soggy grain and it was dried. It was dried Actually at Walkerville you can see it coming off in sheets because they have more modern equipment down there. They still sell it. It is sold to barns for cattle feed.

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Chris: It went out bagged or in bulk?

Bob: They would bag it.

Chris: So there was a bagging operation in there as well?

Bob: That's how I got involved because when I was in inventory, I would go in there and count the stuff. Every August that's what I was doing. It would really get to me.

Chris: The other thing I have often wondered because it [the equipment] has all been dead, that area, when I have been here, was there much noise. Do you remember anything in the grain part of the mill?

Bob: No.

Chris: And the mash cookers?

Bob: No. I suppose there is more noise now than there was when the boilers were going full blast. The current boilers. I think they are still there. I haven't been in there in a while, but they have three 10,000 pound vapour steam boilers. I guess the furnace must have made a lot of noise. They had big coal burners in there then and that was cleared out and that is where the boilers are now. In fact, one of the boilers is still there.

Chris: A boiler and coal bunker and all that, is still ...

Bob: Yes, Jimmy Woods used to drive the truck all day long down to where they would pick the coal up and he would bring it back and dump it down into ... The grates are all gone now. They covered them over, but they would dump it in the grates and they would feed the furnace that was going all day long. That's all his job was.

Chris: Until the gas boilers went in in the 70s, it was coal?

Bob: Well no, we were oil. To the west, in fact the boiler is still there, the bunker used to burn Bunker C oil. There are three gas burners. You want to see them?

Chris: Well, the three gas units that are sitting there?

Bob: Right. This side [pointing] is where the oil burner is. That's a 30,000....

Chris: Oh, a big boxy Allis Chalmers. Is that it?

Bob: Right. That's a beaut.

Chris: So that was the predecessor to the three boilers that are there now.

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Bob: Yes. Previously to that would be coal fired furnaces.

Chris: Ok, because there is that brick one that is still sitting there.

Bob: Yes, it is on the south side of the three boilers.

Chris: So that was already dead when you arrived?

Bob: No, No.

Chris: That was in use as well?

Bob: Oh yes. When I came here, they were feeding it with coal.

Chris: So that was the coal one and the oil one was in the

Bob: The oil went in.

Chris: And then all of that closed down and then the gas ones...

Bob: Yes, it is more economical to run for several reasons. These boilers over here do not require engineers to operate them. Actually, you could leave them alone and they would run themselves except that someone would have to check the water. You can't put junk into them because they would scale up so quickly that they would shut down. So you had to watch water quality and just check them to make sure that they were running well. But they run themselves, basically. The other ones you had to have engineers to operate them.

Chris: In fact, beside that oil burning one [Allis Chalmers] is the control panel and smack in the middle of it, is it a Waterous steam gauge? Something from about 1880 is mounted on the panel. Maybe afterwards you can just go and take a look at it. It seems so bizarre that here is high tech 1950s and 1960s or whenever it went in and they have this 1880 steam gauge on it. It seems bizarre.

Bob: [unclear]

Chris: I guess what you are saying is that you don't really remember the grain mashing?

Bob: Not really. When you are 16 years old, you are looking for a job back then. I quit high school and, what the heck, I had to go back to school later on, actually to Ryerson. Its a job, its Gooderham and Worts, so what. Its General Motors, its anyplace, who cares. You just come down, make your bucks and go home and spend it when you are that age. Paul Allsop was more - you have spoken to Paul obviously - he was quite interested in this plant but he came from a modern plant down to this place and to him it

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was a toy ... not a toy, but something new. It was an old building. It was the beginning of Hiram Walker, Gooderham and Worts so he really delved into it and I just treated it as a job.

Chris: Right up until the end?

Bob: No, actually with Paul, I got more interested in the place with Paul because him and I used to run tours here for the, what is it, Canada's First Post Office [Toronto's First Post Office, 260 Adelaide St. E.] I forget, Joan I forget her last name but every once in a while they used to take people around to old places in Toronto and this was one of their highlights of their tours. We would take them around and show them all the buildings and tell them the history of the place and afterwards we would go upstairs to the reception area and have a few sandwiches and a drink. It was quite nice, actually. This was near the end, of course.

Chris: You discovered it....

Bob: Yes, I have the stuff at home. I have the plans of the buildings when they were built and a bit of the history so you can read it.

Chris: You finished off as plant supervisor here. Is that it? What were the job responsibilities?

Bob: All of the plant. Like Paul was a plant manager/Vice President. This plant was his responsibility but all of the plant personnel were under my jurisdiction. All departments - pure spirits, denaturing, the distillery, maintenance. Everything was under my...

Chris: So you were responsible for the production?

Bob: For the operation, basically, really.

Chris: So if Walkerville setup of, I don't know, 10,000 litres, or whatever quantities you would be working in, it would be your job to see that they got the spirit that they....

Bob: We would produce molasses alcohol here that was either put in barrels and put away, aged it for a few years - or we shipped it, in its state, to other distilleries, to Corby's, possibly to Walkers - It all depends. We also had grain spirit here that was sent up to us from Walkers because they were concerned about strikes. This was not a union plant. They didn't want to be a union plant because we got everything that the union plants got anyway and then to have to pay out union dues. So they would send the product up here and we would keep it in tanks and if there was a strike, we didn't bottle it at this place but we could ship product to places in the U.S. like bulk stock to the U.S.

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We also maintained outside warehouses for bottled stock which we brought. One of the fellows here, Danny James, was the Manager of these outside warehouses. He ensured that there was product in these warehouses at all times. Actually, it sounds sneaky but even the people that were in the union realized you had to do this because there is brand loyalty. If you go into a liquor store and there is no Canadian Club and there is a bottle of Seagram VO there and you have to buy it, you might get to enjoy it and if you get to enjoy it, then you don't sell anymore Club. These guys that are coming back to work after the strike may not have a job because there is no product. I think they allowed it to happen but it just made it difficult.

Chris: Which I suppose was the purpose of the strike. It got both sides talking again.

Bob: Oh, yes. But you didn't want to take your product from the shelves. You just wanted to make it difficult for management.

Chris: Difficult enough so that they had to agree...

Bob: You weren't being held under the gun but you didn't want this thing to go on forever either. You just wanted to get rid of the strike. They used to agree. I don't think they ever had any real problems.

Chris: You were responsible for [everything], once the order was placed. I presume what happened towards the end is you were producing for Hiram Walkers...

Bob: We produced the rum for our organization which was Hiram Walker/ Gooderham and Worts.

Chris: Who set the production schedule?

Bob: That was done in Windsor. They knew what they required, how much. All the scheduling was done in Windsor. They would send us a schedule once a year or maybe update it and say we require so many gallons or litres of molasses spirit for February or March or whatever and we would produce the alcohol and know that we had to have so much ready. That was my job. I had to make sure I had the molasses into the plant for production and make sure we had enough production to fill these orders. They wanted so much shipped in bulk and so much put away in barrels. They put it away in barrels because they had to look down the road, two or three years. As far as rum goes, you don't age it forever. Whisky you age a little longer, 15, 20 or 30 years but with the rum they would say, OK our sales

Its a tough job, actually, to figure what you are going to require because you have to look down the road. Its probably getting boring at this point, now I am starting to think like the sales end. You have to look at who is coming out of school, who is going to be drinking certain brands. Are they going to be drinking scotch or are they going to be

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drinking rye or are they going to be drinking beer. You look at the blue collar guy, he's drinking beer. You know that if he gets a raise then he's going to move up to rye and if he really hits big time, he's going to move to scotch. You have to look at the population and see who is going to university and who is not.

Chris: And then you get hammered by the health trend. Isn't that what really did this plant in?

Bob: Well, I think it has done all of the distilleries in, really. It is the health and the government that hurt. This has nothing to do with the plant but it is the government taxes puts such high taxes on alcohol that they feel they are going to have great benefit from all these taxes. But people then say they can't afford to buy it so they don't buy and the taxes really, the money isn't coming in. They jack up the taxes again because they are not getting enough and less people buy it. And yet again, if you take the taxes down and you make it too cheap then everybody is drinking. Its a catch 22 thing. Then you have the social problem. But the government really doesn't understand.

It is not only the distilleries that are getting hurt, it is the tourist industry. Like you can have the Masons or the Shriners that are down in the States and they are going to have a convention. These guys spend money big time so they look at different places that they are going to have their convention. They have had it in Toronto several times. It is a great city. It is a good tourist town but then they start saying, "Hey look at the booze up there. I can get a shot down in Brokeneck, Arkansas for \$1.00 and its going to cost me \$5.00 up here" - so they just don't come.

Chris: Not now. Not with a \$0.72 dollar [making Canada cheaper].

Bob: It's tough.

Chris: Although it seems to me that tax has been around for a while and everybody grouses about it but it really was the health kick that hard liquor is bad and wine and beer isn't good for you that... Didn't that do in hard spirits?

Bob: If you drink enough. It's alcohol. Beer is alcohol, wine is alcohol, whisky is alcohol. There is 40% alcohol in whisky. Wine has got anywhere from 8, 9 10% up to 17, 18%, so if you have a glass of wine and you have an ounce of whisky you are still consuming the same quantity of alcohol. It really is a joke as far as I am concerned.

Chris: So maybe it is more demographics and that. What about the bottling? Was it ever done when you were here?

Bob: No, that had stopped when I came here.

Chris: Way back?

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Bob: I don't even know when the bottling was stopped. I think it was stopped possibly in the war years. I really don't know. It could have been even before that.

Chris: The canning line that is in Building 58, 59 was antifreeze. Was that going then full strength?

Bob: Oh yes. We had a great canning operation here. When I started here, we used to do Hot Shot. This is how it started. Hot Shot alcohol antifreeze. It used to be all alcohol antifreeze at one time and then glycol came in so we also had Hot Shot alcohol and Hot Shot glycol antifreeze. Then we took contracts. We used to do Canadian Tire, we did General Motors, Chrysler. Basically, they were ethylene glycol but with different inhibitors in them and different colours in them. Chrysler was a violet colour. Actually, we did government formulations too. We used a black dye in that because that's how they knew it was government antifreeze. Nobody sold black antifreeze but the government. We used to buy the glycol from a company in Chicago. We used to bring it in in barges which we still did up to the end pretty well.

Chris: Barges?

Bob: Yes. Down the end of - I don't know if you are aware of this - Parliament Street we had our own dock.

Chris: Beside the Victory Soya Mill.

Bob: Yes, Victory had their dock on one side and ours was on the other side. There was lines for molasses and for glycol and the ships - barges, they looked like barges - would bring in molasses which would pump through the molasses line to the molasses tanks and other ships or barges would bring in the glycol which came up their own lines into the glycol tanks. There are two sets of tanks. You can see them. One is 1 million gallons the other is 300,000 [unclear]. We used to buy from this company in Chicago and then we got involved with Dow Chemical, who are a big manufacturer of ethylene glycol. We started working with them.

Chris: When was this switch?

Bob: I would say it was in the late 50's.

Chris: That you made this switch from this Chicago firm?

Bob: Yes. The Company was call Industrial [unclear].

Chris: So that's when the barging of glycol ended in the 50's?

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Bob: No, no. They still continued to barge glycol in but it was from Dow Chemical. The molasses was continued to be barged in until they stopped running the distillery

But what happened was small canners started popping up. You would get a guy that would have his garage as a canning operation. Basically, it was his garage. He would have a canning line and we were selling in bulk to these people through Dow Chemical. They would, say, ship something to Brad Penn. Maybe Brad Penn, at that time, was a garage. It is a big company now. The truck would come up to the guy's garage and sit there while they actually canned or bottled - they were using plastic bottles back then too - and they would bring in temporary help. They would say that they wanted the tank truck there at 10:00 a.m.. The temporary help would be there at 10:00 a.m.. They had to pay them for 4 hours. They would have that thing run and probably have that tank empty in maybe 4 or 5 or 6 hours but at least they got their 4 hours in and they were paying them peanuts. When their thing was done, they would say, "Goodbye, see you tomorrow", and there would be another tank truck come in. Well this killed us because we were paying top wages at this plant. We had the kids from the university and high school come in here during the summer. They were getting good bucks. They were working 24 hour shifts. We just couldn't compete with these small guys anymore so we just went into the bulk. That's when the canning operation shut down. It was costing us money, actually, to produce. We were losing money on every gallon we filled.

Chris: And when did antifreeze shut down?

Bob: I don't know. I couldn't even guess.

Chris: Even by a decade?

Bob: Well, it could have been the late 60's. I left here in '76 ... I sold all the equipment ... It could have possibly been the beginning of the 70's, somewhere around there.

Chris: So the line that you see up there, what is left of it on the top floor [of Buildings 58/59], you are saying that you got rid of the saleable equipment, is that it? The rest of it just sat there since it shut down.

Bob: You are talking about the conveyors?

Chris: Yes, the remains of the conveyors that [unclear] from the bottling.

Bob: There was a gallon canning machine and a quart canning machine. Then there was a rotary filler to do the plastic bottles.

Chris: There were three lines upstairs, is that it?

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Bob: Yes, first there was the gallon and the quart line and then when the plastic bottles ... Dow Chemical, of course, were into plastics which they still are, so they said "let's try plastics." Well that was a joke for a while. When this thing ... the rotary filler was an excellent machine when they finally got it figured out. What was happening was that there was little bit of plastics still in the bottles - they were coming up and these things, a little tube, went down into the bottle and would fill and when it would hit a certain spot it would shut off. These things would lift out and the bottle carry - you know, you have seen a bottle machine - these little bits were getting up and jamming. The things would continue to fill when they were already filled and the stuff was all over the place. We used bags and bags of sawdust. Finally, they said we should clean the bottles out first before you put them on the machine. That was a mess.

Chris: That is interesting because I always wondered when that line had shut down up there. It also makes it more logical because there is some kind of waterproofing asphalt underneath the machines, isn't there?

Bob: Oh yes. That's for spilling.

Chris: Is it asphalt?

Bob: Yes.

Chris: And it is just for those kinds of machines?

Bob: Yes. It wasn't built for that because it was there before that rotary filler was put in, that asphalt. That was right under the line. You are going to have spillage and you don't want it on the wooden floors, although they are not wooden floor up there. The whole thing is asphalt, I'm pretty sure it is.

Chris: That replaced the bottling line that was up there?

Bob: Yes. That was the bottling room but it was antifreeze when I came here.

Chris: I have often wondered what the difference between alcohol and glycol antifreeze. I've heard that alcohol can hurt the rubber hoses, it makes them brittle?

Bob: I don't know if that is true or not. You put inhibitors in. This is why you put inhibitors in antifreeze so it will protect the hoses, it will protect your rubber. We used to put in arsenic, which was bought from Chipman Chemicals. It used to come down in tank trucks. The tanks are still down there that we used to keep the arsenic in. The arsenic protected the components: your rubber hoses, the metal.

If you just put pure antifreeze -pure ethylene glycol and water ... our sales people used to do this. They would have a little container and they would put a nail in it. The

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nail would start rusting because it was water, ethylene glycol straight. It would probably ruin your engine. But then they would put it in with the proper inhibitors. There was dipotassium phosphate, borax and arsenic ...

Chris: A witch's brew?

Bob: All this. You could leave the nail in there forever and nothing would happen to it. There was rubber, mercaptomenzothiazal [spelling?] was used for, it was called nacap. There was a tank down there for that. I'm not sure if the tank is still there. We had to convert one of the tanks into sulphuric acid - no, no - I bought that tank from General Steelwares. The nacap was a rubber, it would protect the rubber hoses. You had these things in your both antifreezes. You had inhibitors in there. I imagine at the very beginning they used pure alcohol and water. You couldn't use pure alcohol because the alcohol boils off.

Chris: True, it wouldn't be much of a coolant. But there was a shift from alcohol antifreeze to glycol in, what the 50's?

Bob: They were doing both when I came here. It would be probably the beginning of the 50's. The first antifreeze was alcohol until they switched over to glycol.

Chris: For cheapness?

Bob: No, it doesn't boil off. The glycol doesn't have a boiling point. You can leave it in there all year. Alcohol would be gone. Actually, you can imagine leaving it in over the summer time, it would just boil right off. Which it did. Alcohol used to go to a lower temperature. We used to use it. We still sold alcohol antifreeze right near the end to some companies that were away up north. They had to put alcohol antifreeze in because the glycol only protected to -30 to -40 and this stuff would go even further. It would go down to -60 to -70. It depends how much alcohol and water you mix, of course.

Chris: The other chemical that Paul Allsop mentioned to me was as a result of the Chernobyl disaster that some company from Europe was looking for something zanthate. Did you ever hear that story?

Bob: I did and I didn't. I really never got involved. They may have been talking to him or talking to Walkers about it but I never knew anything about it.

Chris: They needed fusel oil, wasn't that it?

Bob: Yes, that's possible.

Chris: Because that was also a byproduct that always intrigued me. Was there anything you could do with fusel oil?

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Bob: Fusel oil was used in the plastic industry. There was a firm that we used to sell our fusel oil to that would come around with a truck and would go to the different distilleries and pick up the fusel oil. Walkers didn't do it because they used to burn it. They could burn their fusel oil with their burners because they had combination gas/oil burners down there. You could feed so much fusel oil in and burn it off.

Chris: And get cheaper energy, you mean?

Bob: Yes, I guess it was more economical to burn it than to sell it. It sold quite cheap. You would sell it for peanuts like \$.15 a litre just to get rid of it. There was nothing we could do, we couldn't burn it and the other distilleries couldn't burn it but Walkers, they have some pretty massive equipment down there, pretty high tech...

Chris: In itself, although I'm not sure I have ever seen any fusel oil, I hear it is sort of miserable...

Bob: It stinks. I bet you if you go into the distillery, you can still smell it. I don't think it ever leaves. It must permeate that wood in there.

Chris: So you mean that smell...

Bob: If I went in there now, I would smell fusel oil. There is a couple of cans of fusel oil sitting around here that I have to pick up, actually. We use fusel oil in our business [at Flavourchem Inc]. Very, very small quantities, in the flavouring business. You get artificial rum flavours and you use just a... like that [gesturing with his hand] ... but the parts the smell that is fusel oil into the product at which is part of the alcohol smell. If you drink, I don't know if you drink scotch, but there is fusel oil in scotch and that's why it tastes like hell. That's why I enjoy it.

Chris: Somebody else mentioned that. Like a single malt scotch is pretty much the smell of fusel oil. I don't know if that a crude way of saying it?

Bob: It all depends on which malt you buy. There are some that are pretty rough. Milton Duff is an excellent single malt scotch. It is like drinking cream, actually. But then there is other ones, I can't remember the name of them, but they are terrible, absolutely terrible. Like a scotch is a blend. They are single malts, of course, but you can get a blend of, maybe, 20-30-40 scotches. They go around to the different distilleries and they want so much Aird Bog [Spelling?] and so much that. They all had different names and they would blend them. They would put a half an ounce of Aird Bog [Spelling?] and two ounces of Milton Duff and so much of this and then they would come up with Ballantine's or whoever it happens to be. They would all sell them individually, too. As I think you know, Milton Duff, which is this company's [Hiram Walkers] product and I think they have a few others now. I think it is the Aird Bog [Spelling?] that is terrible.

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You can't drink it. A guy gave me a bottle of it, and I like scotch. And I opened it and the taste is awful. And yet people drink it. I gave it to my brother-in-law and I said that this stuff is terrible and I can't drink it but you can drink anything, like turpentine ... And he can't drink it - that's how bad it is.

Chris: You are tempting me to give it a try.

Bob: I should get the bottle off him and then we could have a shot of it.

Chris: You would never do blending here or did the rum base have to be blended?

Bob: No, the base is a base. We used to bring the heavy rums from Jamaica, from Guyana, etc., bring it in in bulk and barrel it off. What they would do, again this would be a blend, you would have your base of molasses spirit, we produced here, and then you would blend it with the different heavy blending rums. Demerara rum, Guyanes rums ...

Chris: But you didn't do that here?

Bob: No. Corby's used to do the bottling and Walkers did. They would say that they required so many of ... As you barrelled it and put it away, you would keep a record of it so they knew that there were 463 barrels of this in stock and so they knew what they were going to be barreling and they would say they want so much of this, so much of this, etc. They would give us a schedule because they would be bottling rum and their bottling gin and bottling vodka, so they have to have a schedule to bring it in.

Chris: What you sent out from here was then straight out of the still and aged if necessary, is that it?

Bob: Yes.

Chris: Now, some of the tanks, like there is tank storage down there, but that wouldn't be for aging though, would it?

Bob: No, you had to age it in barrels.

Chris: So what was the purpose of all those?

Bob: Just storage. The stainless steel tanks that were down in the bottom [of the property - Tank Houses 48-50], I think we sold some to Barcardi's, they were [unclear] but we had three tank houses with copper tanks in them. When you produce alcohol, it came off the still at about 96% alcohol, you could store it in these tanks. Obviously, you are not going to have it coming off and putting into barrels. You have to store it someplace. So, we used to store it in these tanks and then when it was time to barrel it, you would pump it to the pure spirits [department], across the street, and then they

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would barrel it off and put it into the rack warehouses. Or, Walkers would say ship us a tank truck of product that we just made and they would barrel it off and put it away. Or, Corby's would do the same thing. Then, this gets down to sending bulk spirit up here because of strikes.

You couldn't put low proof alcohol in because it would pick up the copper because there is too much water in it. The alcohol in there is 96% but the alcohol that they were sending down to us was maybe 70% or 65%. There was too much water in it and it tended to pick up the copper. The high proof alcohol never bothered it. So they said, all right, in case of strikes we are going to have to have a place to store low proof alcohol that we had down in Walkerville. So they sent it up to us. We tore all the copper tanks out of the very last tank house and put all stainless steel tanks in there for that.

Chris: Specifically for low proof alcohol?

Bob: Yes. And then there was alcohol that we brought in. The Demerara rum used to come in ship loads, a large ship would come in and it would be 80% for Barcardi's because that was their business and it still is, of course. But McGinnis and Gilby's and ourselves and even Corby's would say that they wanted so much Demerara, so much of various rums. We would have to have our tank trucks going down there. They would bring the ship in. You had to have a ship unloaded in so many hours, within 72 hours or something or they start charging you demurrage. So you would see tank trucks going down there all night, 24 hours a day, unloading this ship, mostly Barcardi's. We used to store some of it for Barcardi's as well.

Chris: You mean just help them out?

Bob: Yes, we had a bit of a time with Barcardi's. We owned a piece but then they sold it. Distilleries may compete but you try to work together as well.

Chris: Well, it is a small enough group, I would think. You mean, especially at the plant level. If you needed something, would you sort of phone up Bacardi?

Bob: Yes, Bacardi used to buy our spirit from us that we produced here. I used to go up there the odd time at night before I went home. I would drive up to Brampton with samples of the product that we were going to ship and then they would test it in their lab. They said that they redistilled it but I think that was a lot of nonsense. I don't think they redistilled it. We would take it up there and they said they redistilled it because it was not good enough. It was probably the best. Actually, somebody told us once that it was the best alcohol produced in Canada. Our alcohol really came off the stills very clean. It was really a good alcohol. There was really no off odors or anything. You get and off odor in some alcohols but ours was very, very clean.

Chris: Why?

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Bob: I don't know. It was the old, old copper stills and they just ... I have never really thought about it until now but the stills, you had to watch these stills because they were old. You had to be careful. All the new stills are automatic but ours weren't automatic. They ran, you didn't have to go and pump things to make them go but I imagine our guys were watching the needles and always making sure that everything perfect because if it went off, they had to run like Hell to shut the valves off. You know how the stills work? The product is fed in and it drops. It drops through the plates and then the steam drives it up. Well if you loose steam pressure, everything would go down the sewer, so you have watch all of this. The guys go crazy. If there is a power outage and your boilers go down and all of sudden you loose your steam, there is 125 pounds of pressure that is gone. You're finished.

Chris: So you mean, you have to jump to shut it all down?

Bob: Yes, there on the operating floor. They are just sitting there most of the night. There was an operator and there was a fermenter man who would make sure that the product was fermenting in the tubs and then he would weigh out the product and bring in more molasses and add yeast to it and ferment it and add water and then send it to the beer well and then send it into the stills. Well, he was busy all night long because he had his hoses that go from tank to tank and all this. The guy in the distillery had to have the knowledge to operate the still but he would sit in a chair all night and watch these things or go and turn them down or make sure that everything was perfect. If something went, he had to really hustle.

End of Side A

Chris: There probably weren't any automatic alarms, the person had to be vigilant.

Bob: There were alarms, if you lost pressure. But, you had to run and shut everything off manually. Nothing stopped. The alarm would get the operator to move.

Chris: So, something like steam pressure would be...

Bob: You would know your steam pressure everything would stop dropping. Actually, I will tell you, if you can get Pete Nicholson, he used to work in the distillery, he was a still operator and he can tell you more stories, he is a great one for stories. He is probably the best guy to talk to about the distillery. He was an excellent still operator. He ended up as a Manager of the pure spirits department, but as a still operator. He worked in the cellar, he worked on pretty well everything around here. He would be a great guy to talk to.

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I never actually worked in any of the departments. The paperwork, yes I did, if there was something wrong over in the denaturing. When I was working with Dick Martlin, who was the Plant Superintendent before me, I went around to the different departments just to see how they operated. I didn't actually do any work because I just had a heart attack. That is why I also came back here. If I saw people doing paperwork that wasn't necessary in a department, that was my bag. I would change it, because it would bother me. If one of the department Managers was sick, I would go over and try to fill in for him and by the time he came back he only had half as much paperwork to do because I didn't like the way it was being run. People get caught up in paperwork. This is one of the things that happened up in Walkers.

Chris: As a digression, I always think that the computers haven't made paperwork any less.

Bob: It has made it more. There is more paper in our little company that I am with now. I have tons of paper up there. I have cabinets full of paper.

Chris: All computer...

Bob: All computer paper.

Chris: Maybe this is another question to ask Pete Nicholson, but is the control panel there newer than the still equipment? It seems to me it looks like it is 1950s or even 60s, but you don't remember it going in?

Bob: I would say that equipment was there when I came. I would say it was there in 1951. I don't think that has changed at all. Well, it is possibly changed since the beginning, but the stills themselves have been updated since 1830 odd. Since it began, obviously. I still think the distillery was in this building [Building #25] at the very beginning.

Chris: The one we are sitting in?

Bob: Yes. When they built this place, they had to pour a concrete floor in here. Actually, what we are in now [Building #25] is an old ice house that had to do with the carbon dioxide production and there was a store room over there. They all had wooden floors and everything. All this was torn out. Underneath it was all arches. You don't put an arch under a foundation. That is for walking through. So, I feel, it was full of sand because I guess they filled it all up, but it looks to me like this was part of the distillery operation at the very beginning. I think the big grey building was built after.

Chris: Are the arches still under here? They have added...

Bob: Everything under here is full of sand.

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Chris: An you only noted it when you were doing the renovations itself, is that it?

Bob: Well, we noted a little bit, we had a problem with the washrooms backing up before they even did these renovations. This was even before I left here. We had to tear the front floors up to get at the pipe work. We noticed it then that there were arches underneath here.

Chris: Just before we started this interview, I was asking if you can get under the malt house from where the Board room is now, more or less and you remember those doorways there?

Bob: Yes, it is an elevator, actually. I don't know how it operates because I never used but it is up higher here than it is in those buildings. Do you want to see it? I don't know whether we can see it?

Chris: I don't know if there is any light?

Bob: But if you are walking along underneath, you can see that it goes up to the next level when you come into this building here. It is hard to explain, really. If you were walking towards this wall, for instance, you would see that the next building the floor is up here and the slanted doorway here. It almost looks like an elevator. Whether they used it by hand or not, I don't know.

Chris: But it went into those arches below the malt house?

Bob: Yes.

Chris: Well, all of this stuff is going to show up when the renovations are being done. That's the time to take another look at it.

Bob: Have your camera ready.

Chris: This site has been photographed to death. What about excise that went on here?

Bob: When I started here, I started off as office boy. Then after I had been here almost a year, the chap that was in the excise department, the company man that was in the excise department, they asked me if I wanted to take this job which I did, obviously, to move up.

Chris: This was in the late...

Bob: This was in the early 50's. Just after I started here. Now back then, there was an excise man in every department. In fact, there were two in some departments and in the

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distillery there were more because they ran a 24 hour operation. They had to have shifts. Denaturing had excise officers. I would say there were about a dozen officers here when I started working here. They did away with a lot of the officers. They got down to a point where they had one that stayed here and if there was a problem you went to him. If there was leak or something, he went to look at it. Now, they don't have any officers whatsoever. They come in and do an audit. You bought so many ton of molasses, in this case, and you produced one gallon of alcohol, now is that right. It seems awful low. Stuff like that. He would check the cases - case goods. You brought so many cases in, you shipped so many out. This is just a straight audit. That's what they do now. There are very few excise officers around.

Chris: It always struck me that being an excise officer, or being involved in excise at all would be a tedious job. There can't have been much...

Bob: It is boring. It was a government job, as all government jobs are. There was more people than you require and you have to have a certain type of person. I don't think a person with any goals can work for the government.

Chris: In any level of excise?

Bob: Yes, because if you have any ambition at all, you want to be moving along. I think that an excise officer, or any government employees, are happy to be making the money and get their wonderful pension when they retire.

Chris: I can also imagine that they could also be a real pain. Couldn't they?

Bob: Some were. Some of them went by the book. Some of them didn't go by the book. You have to use your sense. One guy says, the book says this, which they are supposed to do but if you use your noodle you don't have to... As a company employee, working in the excise department, I kept a set of books exactly the same as the excise department. The excise officer in the case goods warehouse, for instance, had a set of books. I had a set that matched his exactly. The guys in the denaturing department where they denatured the alcohol had a set of books. I had a set exactly the same as theirs. So I kept these books. Their departments kept their own books. At the end of the month, we had to compare them and make sure that they were exactly the same. All the excise papers, the K-50's, all the different papers they had away back then were all posted into these books.

Chris: You said a K-50? It sounds like it is burned into your mind.

Bob: A K-50 is a month end statement. They don't have all that. But there was one excise officer, who will remain nameless, who used to drink an awful lot, he would always be hammered. He used to keep a set of books and I would work late at nights, I shouldn't say this, but I would do his books for him because he was incapable of doing them. If I

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had been caught doing that I guess I would have been hung because doing government books which were supposed to match with my books, which they always did. Quite a few of them drank, but this guy really used to drink a lot.

Chris: I would think that with all this alcohol, there would have been a lot of temptations among employees.

Bob: It is amazing how many, I guess everybody had a drink, people didn't overdo it as compared to other businesses. Like printers are notorious for being heavy drinkers and yet in this industry, well I don't know about the industry, but about this plant, there were guys that drank and there were some alcoholics but there weren't as many as you could find in a print shop. It is amazing.

Chris: I guess, given the products and the way in which it was handled here, without a bottling line, it must have been very hard to get a hold of the product.

Bob: Well, we had tankfuls of this stuff. You don't have to drink it out of a bottle. Even if it is 96% alcohol, you can water it down. You can't drink it at that strength. It would close your throat.

Chris: That is an interesting point, though. You mean you could pour alcohol out of any open tank then and it would never be noted on the excise, so there really would be temptation.

Bob: If you were ever caught drinking ... As in any industry, you don't want to be drunk while you are working because you kill the person you are working with. They are moving a barrel which weighs 500 pounds. You get two guys lifting the barrel and one of them is hammered and he decides he is not going to lift it anymore when you are halfway up, the other guy's back get broke. I frowned on drinking at this place. That was one thing that really bothered me, if anybody drank at the plant.

Chris: I suspect their colleagues, I mean if you are working with somebody else you wouldn't want your work mate to be..

Bob: And yet there was a couple of drunks up here, real heavy duty alcoholics and the guys protected them because they didn't want ... There was one guy here who drank and we sent him away to the place up on Bayview. Its a rehab up by Lawrence and Bayview by Sunnybrook Hospital. It is where you go for a month. You dry out there. It is like a barracks. You stay there. You eat there. You clean the lawns and that. They watch you. You had Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and you come out. And this guy came out and he was great and looked great and everything was perfect. Then he got drunk again and we were going to put him back in again. Like the company pays for the whole thing. They pay his wages while he is in there - paid for the whole shot up there. It is not costing the guy. The only thing is, he is away from his family for a month. Well, this

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guy did it again. We wanted to put him in and give him another shot at it and he said, "no". I said that if you don't go, and this was near the end - you could almost see that things were going to shut down around here - so you don't want to fire a guy when he has maybe a year to go because then he wouldn't get any benefit at all from the company so you are kind of lenient with him. I guess I was a real soft, I wasn't a real hard Superintendent. I worked with everybody and I used to get hell from my superiors when I was younger because of this. You aren't tough enough with these people. Why do you have to be tough? Can't you work with them? They are just people like you are. We got along. Everything got done - what the heck.

Chris: How did you feel about the quality of plant as you knew it was getting near the end? In some ways, I get the sense that there was less maintenance done. That would make sense, over the last 5 or 10 years, there was a feeling that it would...

Bob: No, the last 5 or 10 years the plant was still operating. As far as we were concerned, it was going to operate forever. We were only notified that the place was closing, 6 months in advance.

Chris: So there was new development plans in the works?

Bob: Oh yes, before they told us it was going to shut down.

Chris: So, the plant was maintained as fully operational?

Bob: Yes.

Chris: Was there any expectation of what the life of the plant was?

Bob: Everybody felt that something was going to happen because if you are going to change, for instance, the rack warehouse into an office, they were talking about having a dummy distillery. Rather than bringing molasses in and manufacturing molasses alcohol, Walkers would send down alcohol and we would run it through the stills for tourist. They would come and see. The people would continue to work. Now you still need still operators because you have to run it through your stills, you still need maintenance people to look after the grounds. We would also continue, possibly, our industrial alcohol division which was at the other side of the plant. Then they were talking about putting in a liquor store for the "Wines of the World" type things where each, not all wineries, but you would maybe have a winery from Germany with a section to themselves and one from Italy and one from Spain. This was going to be so people could come and buy our products as well. But this was going to be a super wine store. People would come down, there would restaurants here. Everybody would be employed. They may not be doing what they were doing today but they would still be employed. This was how they were looking at. Then, they brought plans. They were showing us what they were going to do with these buildings. They were going to have restaurants. These

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were not really carved in stone type things but they were all thoughts and they were presented by people with knowledge.

Chris: This was during the 1980s?

Bob: Well, we shut down in 1990. Yes, in the late '88, '89, they were talking about all this. The guys were kidding. Well, he's manager of a department, what am I going to be, a tour guide now? They all felt that they were going to have jobs so who cares but that's not what happened.

Chris: So, in some way you knew that the plant as a distillery wouldn't be upgraded to a modern ... At some point its useful life was going to end as a distillery.

Bob: Yes, they even shut down Corby's. The whole thing was shut down. I didn't think they would shut down Corby's because they were putting in new equipment the year before - which was kind of strange. Paul and I went down there to look at some equipment that we were going to have brought up here to use in our museum. The whole plant was going to be a museum because there was going to be restaurants, shops. This was what they were talking about. We were going to bring up some of the old equipment to show people old bottling equipment. They were putting brand new equipment in Corby's and then they shut it down. I couldn't believe it. When I heard that, it broke my heart. That was a nice little distillery down there.

Chris: We went up to visit it in March of this year [1994], again to see if there was anything left over but totally gutted. In a way, Gooderham and Worts or Corbyville - it is all the same story.

Bob: The thing that really burned me is Allied Lyons [purchased Hiram Walker in the 1980s]. When it gets right down to it, the Reichmanns screwed this thing because they are the guys that tried to take over Hiram Walker and then we wanted a white knight by calling in Allied Lyons - not knowing that they were just as bad - although they are still running it as a distillery. The part that bothers me is that Paul was pushing and pushing for this to be a historical site, which he accomplished by the little plaque out there. The people over there [in England] say, "What do you mean, historical, so what. It is 150 years old. My house is 150 years old. These castles here are thousands or hundreds of years old." They had a different outlook over there. It is not 600 or 700 years old, it is not old. How do they expect anything over here to become old if they keep tearing it down. This is one of the oldest ... Actually, I understand that this is the oldest continually operated industry in North America. It started out as a mill, but a couple of years after it started became a distillery and its been a distillery every since. Now there may be buildings in Kentucky or distilleries down there but they probably started out as a distillery and then became a shoe factory. The buildings might be there but they aren't still doing what they started out doing.

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Chris: I have heard that too, that Gooderham and Worts have a strong...

Bob: It is a shame really. This place could have still operated as an industry and a tourist attraction. There is lots of room around here. All these buildings were empty. They could have done things.

Chris: I guess part of the history will be maintained the way the buildings looked but it won't be operating.

Bob: If it was operating, it would really be something. There was another problem, though. You have to remember that I think that our sewage is going into combination sewers around here. I don't think they have storm sewers and sanitary sewers. They are combination sewers down there. We had a deal, I won't say we were putting in garbage, we weren't anything into the sewers that were going to harm anything but you have spent molasses. It was quite acidic. We had to add caustic to it to level the Ph I think it was running around 6 or close to 7.

Chris: When you put it into the sewer?

Bob: Yes. They [the City of Toronto] checked the sewers out there because we were putting this stuff in and the sewers were beautiful. They were absolutely clean, spotless because, I guess, whatever we were putting into them kept them neat. They weren't destroyed at all. They would go out and be checking our sewers. But we had an agreement with the City because we were here before the City. We started making in 1832, the City started in 1834. I guess James Gooderham paid all the damn taxes for Canada, or for Ontario, or something - he was quite a guy.

Chris: What was the deal, though? You mean in flood time?

Bob: No, we could use We could put stuff into the sewer that other people around couldn't put into the sewers because they had an agreement with the City that we could discharge into the sewers the spent molasses where other companies can't do that.

Chris: That was kind of like a unique situation. You mean that another company that would have a similarly innocuous...

Bob: If they started now, they couldn't do it. In fact, if you started up right now, you couldn't do from here anymore. You couldn't operate that way anymore because we've stopped doing it so we are out of it now.

Chris: That's interesting. Let's stop for a sec ... One of the things that has always intrigued me is the aluminum paint throughout the building. Has that always been there? I have asked all the others interviewed about that.

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Bob: We used to use a lot of aluminum paint here by the metal drums. We just had lots of aluminum paint.

Chris: So when you needed to do interior painting...

Bob: In the plant, obviously, not in the office. We used to buy 5 gallon pails of aluminum paint. We would buy 30-40 pails at a time. Aluminum paint, as you know, is very thin, like water. We were in the industrial alcohol business as Consolidated Alcohol. When the drums came back, we used to clean them with chains - you have probably seen the chaining equipment over there [pointing] - and they would repaint them. Well, 30-40 5 gallon pails of paint would go a long way. But when the guys were doing nothing, and you wanted to smarten the place up: "Hey, go grab a bucket of aluminum paint." Why go out and buy some paint when you have got piles of it there.

Chris: That great. In some places it is practically a corporate colour. In fact, the same thing that I noticed was that one of the few places that seems to have missed painting of any colour is that scaling loft in Building 61 with the three big scale tanks. The bottoms are aluminum but the scale tanks themselves and the beams and that...

Bob: I would say that probably those tanks were not open top tanks, but you were walking around the top of those tanks and the tops of those tanks could be off quite often. Now, when the excise were there, the tops of those tanks were never off. There were always two locks on everything. You may have noticed double hasps on everything around here. They would have their lock on and we would have our lock on. Nobody could get in without the other. But, I imagine, and I am only guessing, that with those tops off or lifted even when the excise were here, the tops were lifted. They didn't people up there painting around and have it go down into those tanks. I would think so.

Chris: It is just that it is a really pleasing place to be in. I don't know if it is because it is one of the few places that has big tanks in a small area. I has really been cleaned out in the last while.

Bob: I understood that all the tanks were gone. In the tank houses, are they?

Chris: Well, yes.

Bob: I know the stainless steel ones went because I talked to the people that have them but...

Chris: The hardest one for me was in the pure spirits building where they had 24 of them. They took everyone out without...

Bob: Pure spirits are gone?

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Chris: Yes, all of them are gone.

Bob: When did they take them out.

Chris: Well, I guess when they took the tuns...

Bob: Well, I guess there isn't going to be a pure spirits building so they don't need tanks do they?

Chris: Well, no. But it always struck me as a shame is that for whatever you get for copper, I mean, sure they have recycling value but that they still would take them all out and not leave one to give a sense of that feeling. I remember going in and they were there and then going in afterward. It was a totally different...

Bob: I haven't been in since they have done it. I think it would break my heart.

Chris: Have you seen the fermenting tuns [in Buildings 6-7]?

Bob: No.

Chris: It is the same thing. It changes it into a big warehouse.

Bob: I remember one of the fermenters collapsed on us...on a weekend. Boy that was a mess.

Chris: One of the fermenting tuns? It was too weak?

Bob: Yes, what happened, I don't know if you saw them before they took them out but you may have seen them wrapped in fiberglass at the bottom. That was because of this. What happened, there was always fixing little pinholes. I mean, they are old tanks, and this one, we assume, acted like a zipper. It was full of water, fortunately because they used to fill them full of water when they weren't using them. I guess the weight and a bunch of pinholes, it just went zzicht and the water rushed out and the tank collapsed upon itself. That was it. It happened on a weekend. Dick Martlin was the Plant Superintendent at the time - he was a smart cookie. He got these people in that did fiberglass. The fiberglass on the bottom had to be 3-4" thick wrapped around and then as it got to the top it got to nothing. All your weight was at the bottom. We had everyone of those tanks fibreglassed. They were all copper but we just couldn't take a chance after having one collapse on us.

Chris: Is that why you kept them filled with a liquid all the time? Just so they would stay upright?

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Bob: They were weak enough. They had been there a long time. You are putting air to these tanks and bubbling them around and over the years it would act like an abrasive and start wearing the copper away.

Chris: So they were really quite thin, then? You could feel it?

Bob: Yes.

Chris: Well, that is probably another reason why they are not there, anyway.

Bob: Actually, if things had stayed, we would have had to remove everyone of those tanks and replace them because they were to a point where they were quite dangerous. Actually, the tanks probably wouldn't have collapsed because they had become fiberglass tanks. It just would have been the outer shell that was left. It was pretty rough. There was one that wasn't there. It was there when I started. It was a big wooden one. You probably saw the base for it. It was just by itself. It was wide open, that great wide open area before they took the tanks. There was one there that was wood. It was a great wooden tank. It was there when I started and they took it down because they weren't using it anymore. You had to keep it full of water all the time or something because exactly what happened, happened. They would dry out and then they would be useless. Apparently, the wood was cypress, so Dick told me anyway. He took some of these staves and ran them through a planer and he said the wood was just gorgeous, beautiful wood. He made a small deck out of it at the back of the house.

Chris: So there was nothing wrong with those tanks, it was just that it was harder to maintain.

Bob: Yes. You were always repairing them.

Chris: When did it come out then, in the 50's?

Bob: That tank. Yes, it had to be in the 50's. It came out shortly after I started. Dick started working there a year after I came. He started in '52 as Plant Engineer and it was shortly after that they took the tank down.

Chris: Any other comments? We haven't really talked about employees, although you mentioned about unions and that. How did you feel? Was it a good..

Bob: The company, as I was saying before, this company was probably one of the best companies in the world. It was a good company to work for. Oh sure, you had your bosses that you didn't like, but every company has that. The people, everybody, were like relatives, like brothers and sisters. You weren't numbers here. You were people here at this plant. You weren't that many. There were quite a few when I started here. I think there were over 100, 150 when I started here because of the stills and the shift work. You

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had so many things going but it cut down to, well when we left, how many were left? 30 I guess. We could still operate our rack warehouses and our pure spirits department and our case goods warehouses and our stills. Maybe the 150 people weren't necessary.

Chris: Like your paperwork?

Bob: That's right. It was really a great place to work.

Chris: Was it a social? Were there picnics and such?

Bob: Not picnics. It sort of deteriorated because I guess as people left, there became fewer and fewer people. When you have a lot of people, there are more picnics, more this, but when you have 30 people left in a plant, you really can't justify a picnic or a dance or something. We had a long time, anyone with other 10 years service, we had a dinner at the Royal York Hotel every year or whatever hotel it happened to be. Usually it was the Royal York and that was always good because you got the old timers, the guys that retired, the guys in their 90's. It was good talking to them. We would talk about the old days.

Chris: That's when you really got the stories?

Bob: Yes. It was a great company. I was always treated well. I worked my way up. I went back to Ryerson and took Business Administration - not the full thing but ... That's what got me where I was for a while and then took accounting although I never did like that. I went through every administration area of this plant except in the case goods. I never worked on the case goods desk. It's strange. I was the office boy, inventory, purchasing, order desk, excise, Plant Superintendent and then as far as Walkers goes, Manager of Administration.

Chris: The other thing that intrigues me is how many buildings were vacant by the time the place closed. In particular, something like the malt house. There was really no reason for its existence for the last 60-70 years.

Bob: It was empty when I came here. Actually, it was for drum storage. We stored drums in there.

Chris: Was that partly a feeling? There was just no need to take it down. It wasn't costing anything?

Bob: I shouldn't tell you this. This will kill you. You know how this building [Buildings 25,28] is a low building then a high building [Buildings 32-33] and then a low building [Building #34] then there is the rack warehouses [Buildings 35-36] beside it which are taller. I was going to have them torn down. All the ones from this low building, this was before it was made into this office. I was going to have them all taken

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out and put in a level parkette in there with benches and fountains for the employees or anybody who really wanted to use it. I even had the permit to do and we were going to have it torn down. We had the wreckers in and they told us what it was going to cost and that they would like to keep the lumber. They worked it all out, but the historical people started fighting it. I will tell you why we wanted to tear it down. Obviously, number one, as you said, there was no use for it. We weren't using the buildings. It needed a new roof. It was leaking and you had to put a new roof on. You couldn't let it leak in because the building eventually rot and fall down so you had to look after it. We had to keep it heated because we had sprinkler systems running through this thing. All of this was an expense for no reason at all. So we were going to have it torn down, but the historical people fought pretty hard and they talked to Cliff Hatch [Chairman of Hiram Walker] down at Walkerville. He said that it really wasn't worth the aggravation so we kept it.

Chris: And this was the 70's, wasn't it?

Bob: Yes, just before I went up with the sales people, as a matter of fact.

Chris: To me, I think that malt complex is one of the more interesting buildings.

Bob: It is. It is fantastic. Back then I don't feel that way now. Now I wouldn't tear it down. It really bothers me to think that I could have done this. Dick and I were all raring to go. We had it all planned how we were going to do this. We had the blessing. It was going to go, but it didn't happen.

Chris: The other thing is, I can see why it would go because it is a useless building in many ways, isn't it?

Bob: Yes, it is. Yes, they made a bunch of movies in there. The fellow that was more dinners, what was it, an ad, Oliver, I can't think of the name. It was going back to "more dinners, sir"....

Chris: Oh, "Oliver Twist"?

Bob: Yes, and they did that upstairs in the building next door to us. You know, where it is wide open and a very high ceiling. They did that in there and then they did, downstairs in the malt house at the far end where the kilns are, they did the "Whiteoaks of Jalna." There was supposedly a military hospital or something and they were down in there. The actor, I remember the actor, he was a red-headed guy, it was the officer's bath. He was in a bath tub. The poor guy. He must have spent 2-3 hours in this bath tub, shooting and shooting. God! It was funny.

Chris: These were movies that were made while the plant was still in operation?

Bob: Yes.

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Chris: I keep hearing now about [the TV programme] "Robo Cop"...

Bob: Back then, we didn't like them doing it during the day. In fact, we didn't let them do it during the day unless they could keep out of the way. We had trucks coming in here all the time and we didn't want them stopping trucks and all this jazz. The odd one we let do it because they had to have daylight but, I remember Dick used to charged them peanuts to come here. I got talking to some of the people. They were only charging like \$30. He was charging what it cost to have one of our guys stay at night to supervise in case anything went wrong. So if they had one or two, that's what he would charge them. So, if the guy was making \$20/hour, or for overtime say \$30/hour, that's what he was charging them. I was talking to one of the people from the television studios and they said that this was awful cheap. If they had gone to so and so, they charge us \$2,000. I told Dick that I was going to do it, to let me figure this one out. So, we made a pretty good buck while I was doing it. It was silly. Why should we allow them to come down. They were happy.

One guy almost got away without paying us, so we started asking them for \$1,000 down. "Give us a cheque for \$1,000. We are not going to cash it." If it mounts up, like they did with "Three Men and a Baby" here, well it went on for several days so it got to be a few thousand dollars because guys were here day and night. They had to work then. We would say give us a cheque for \$1,000 now and if it is \$2,000, give us a cheque for another \$1,000 when it's finished. If it is \$800, we would give them back their \$1,000 and they would give us \$800.

One guy almost didn't pay us and we were going to stop allowing anybody in here because of this. So, there was a woman by the name of Robin Rocket. If you have ever seen the "Friday the 13th," the television thing? It is still on, they call it something else now but it is the same thing. It was made here. It actually showed the front of the building. It started on CFTO. Well, Robin used to really enjoy coming down here because she had the run of the place and she had a lot backdrops. She was the location manager. She got mad when I said we weren't going to allow movie shooting and you could see why. I told her what happened and the people that had stiffed us and she went and got the money for us. She was very, very ... I don't know.

Chris: It was the best collection agency you ever had...

Bob: Oh, yes. She really got mad.

Chris: Well, thanks a lot.

Bob: I don't know what else there is. I guess that's it.

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Chris: After listening to the tape, if something comes up again would you be interested in talking some more?

Bob: Sure.

Chris: Thanks very much.

End of Tape