INTERVIEW NUMBER TWO: Jim White

Interview With: Jim White, formerly millwright on maintenance staff for Gooderham & Worts; now on maintenance staff for Allied Lyons to look after property.

Conducted By: Christopher Andreae, Historica Research Limited

Location: Former offices of the Hiram Walker Sales Group in the Gooderham and Worts plant, Toronto.

Date of Interview: February 3, 1994; interview ended at 1:55 p.m.

Start of Interview

Chris: Thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule to do this oral history tape with us. Could we being by just having you say your name? When you started with Gooderham and Worts? What your job title was and so on?

Jim: OK. My name is Jim White. I started July 24, 1984. I had my first interview June 5, 1984.

Chris: Interview?

Jim: Yes, my job interview. It was through my plumbing and welding school teacher. He was friends with Dick Martlin, who was the Superintendent at the time, and although the two never met, they talked quite a bit on the telephone. Our steam fitter is also from the same school and was represented by our same teacher, Mr. Franklin Delonaire Degenova from Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute in Scarborough. What he would always do, not necessarily the highest standing student he had in his class, but the one with the right work ethic, would be to call around industry and see if he could place someone that graduated. He got lucky with Mike Fenton and five years later he got lucky with me. He would call up and say he had a really good guy, I just happened to be at the top of the class and was the top student for that year, and do you have a place for a guy down there. He could weld, he does work with sheet metal, he's a plumber, he's a welder, he does lathe work and everything like that. It just so happened that one or two of gentlemen, the older tradesmen here, had retired and they had been limping by with just Mike doing a lot of the day to day routines. With all the shipping and industrial work going around and the

still running and the boiler room to operate, it was just too busy for the small crew that they had.

Chris: So you went straight out of school and into this job?

Jim: Yes.

Chris: Lucky you.

Jim: Yes. I had my interview June 5 over the phone and there was a couple of first questions asked like, "What colour was I? Where was my ethnic background from?" As soon as I said from the UK, it was like, "OK, come down for an interview.". They liked everything British. They liked to keep everything British.

Chris: Gee, you can't ask those kind of questions today.

Jim: He was a funny man, but he liked the fact. He said, "Do you want a pair of safety boots?". "Yes". "Okay, then you can come down for an interview." So, I came down and I tried to be as calm as I could because I got lost getting here first of all and I got here and I sat in this little office. It was small office with two desks facing each other so you are looking straight on to him. It was very intimidating and I really didn't notice at the time, I was trying to be very good and very polite, eye contact, the whole bit, but I was making him very uncomfortable and I didn't realize why until I went and spoke with Bob Morrison and he told me that he had a glass eye and it didn't click in. I made him very uncomfortable but he said, "Well, I am going to interview others.". I heard through the grapevine that he didn't. Too impressed with me. He made bring my entire four year transcript from High School.

Chris: What building? Where was this interview?

Jim: Within this office [in Buildings 33-34].

Chris: You mean this complex?

Jim: Before it was renovated, his office was where the centre doorway is. Right across from the boiler room. That was his office.

Chris: Jim, I want to spend a lot of time talking about your work here but just a few general other types of questions you might have more information on it. The one thing I have always been curious about, and I asked Paul Allsop about this as well [See Interview #1], was the fact that there was the Hiram Walker sales office here surrounded by a production plant. Did your work involve the maintenance of this as well or did they run separately?

Jim: Everything. Everything above and beyond the call of duty. Unplugging toilets, redoing sewer system lines, moving furniture, you name it. Hanging pictures for executives.

Chris: So, this Hiram Walker operation was a tenant then of Gooderham and Worts?

Jim: That's right. That's the simplest way to put it. It is the same thing, we have film companies here as different tenants now. You do the exact same things again. If they need furniture moved, you move furniture; pictures hung, constantly changing light bulbs. You supply the washrooms with toilet paper and paper towels. They had cleaners that clean. You don't have to do that.

Chris: Why did the Gooderham and Worts office take the smaller stable building and Hiram Walker get the big, huge office building?

Jim: There was more of them. They were higher up the pay scale, higher up the executive ladder.

Chris: In terms of the production at Gooderham and Worts, you didn't need a bigger space?

Jim: No. I think there was 11 people in the office. They weren't busy every single day of the week. It is the same as everywhere else within the plant. You had your really busy times and you had your slow times.

Chris: What was that based on: the fast and slow times?

Jim: Product demand. The product demand for shipping and receiving. When the still was running, it always seemed like half of the plant wasn't though, but half the plant was in the distillery on shift. It left a skeleton crew to do the rest of the shipping, drumming within the plant for all the industrial sales. There were still tank trucks rolling in and out of here.

Chris: So, you would move around? The staff would increase in the distillery when that was busy and then it would increase over in the...?

Jim: When the distillery was down, the plant was at its full strength. There was constantly, in the denaturing department, filling 45 gallon drums or four litre cans or 25 litre cans of alcohol. You had pure spirits, they were also filling five litre or 25 litre cans and 40 gallon drums - 210 litre drums - of alcohol both industrial - hydrous 100%, anhydrous 95%. They had so many customers like Coca-Cola, Pepsi, 7Up, Park Davies for cough medicine, the list goes on and on: Heinz for vinegar/ketchup - ship them different alcohol strengths they give you. Different processes through different industries required different amounts of alcohol or specific mixes. For anything like shampoo - it

would be Alberto VO5 and they would take 1B which is 95% anhydrous with a solution of a powder mix called Bitrix. [Bitrix] is a very, very bitter substance; it is #8 on the world's most bitter substance list.

Chris: Then, does that mean that you could fill in for any job description on the property?

Jim: Maintenance didn't have to fill in anywhere else in the plant. But the whole ideal working situation here was, from Dick Martlin, that the philosophy was that if he could do any job in the plant, his maintenance force had to be able to do any job in the plant. They had to know every area of the plant; every square inch for all piping, all the sprinkler systems, all the different processes that went on because we had to repair them. So, in order to repair it, you have to know the day to day routines of how everything goes.

Chris: So, in fact, I don't know if you did any drumming or working in the denaturing plant, but you had to know what was going in there?

Jim: That's right. You had to know what was going on everywhere. The whole plant was set up on a family basis. You knew everybody by their first name. There is a little funny story there. I grew up with this guy, Glen Haliday, and his dad was Bill Haliday and he worked in the boiler room. So, when I first started here, he was still working here but everybody else around the plant I would still call by their first names except for him it was Mr. Haliday. I didn't go, "Hey, how's it going?". I would say, "Mr. Haliday". I would still give him that respect. Everybody was a tight knit family. Everybody knew everybody's wife or children; it was pretty close.

Chris: Was it social? Were there picnics or parties or more just social on the plant itself?

Jim: Social on the plant. For a lot of them, it was the highlight of their day to come down to play euchre at break time and at lunch time had their tea. It was pretty good. Some of them would hang around together socially but it was most of the time you were at the plant, your 8 hours, that's your social time. Home was your time for your family.

Chris: What about things like Christmas parties? Were there many activities like that?

Jim: There was a long service club and you had to be here over 10 years, I think, and then you could be a member of that club. It met once a year for a party.

Chris: That the company would put on?

Jim: The company would put on and they would bring back a lot of the retirees. Christmas parties? Well, the guys in the plant would get together. You would have a

couple drinks in one department. We would bring in a little bottle of something and everybody would have a drink and raise a toast and then you would be on your way.

[Interruption]

Chris: I would like to ask about the Excise crew. Were there still a group of Excise people on the property when you started?

Jim: We had one. The gentleman's name was George Koshen. He was a very funny man. He was bald like Kojak [a movie actor] but he would never really come right out and say things. He was always beating around the bush. He was the Excise officer here and I think he retired and they didn't replace him right away. They let the company go on its own merits and then what they did was send one officer down once a week to go over the books.

Chris: But, when he was here...?

Jim: He appointed two deputies in the office to look after things.

Chris: Two company people?

Jim: Right. Excise had their own special keys. They were in charge of the keys. They would keep track of all the weights and everything. It is pretty fool proof. They take the weight right off the scale and there is a stencil there. It stencils the weight, so you can't cheat that way.

Chris: But, all of the Excise rules were still in place when you started here, like the double locking, and so on or had that already disappeared?

Jim: Most of the doors are still double locked. It has always been that way so we never changed it. I don't think it was as strict in the end. If the company wasn't honest, I think they could have probably gotten away with a lot.

Chris: But, it was a relatively small plant towards the end.

Jim: That's right. I think we were still producing, the last time our still ran was June 5, 1990, on the average about 1 1/2 million litres of molasses spirits.

Chris: Per run?

Jim: Per run, yes.

Chris: How long did a run last for?

Jim: A run could last for three months - four months - five months - six months. It depended on the demand. You would get your orders ahead of time. One of the largest ones was Bacardi's and they would order a certain amount and that is what you produced.

[Interruption]

Chris: You were talking about how long a still run would be and Bacardi being the major customer.

Jim: One of the major customers, yes. I would probably say about 70% of product we distilled would be sent to them. The other 30% would go into storage and then to aging. What we would usually do is run through the winter time so we would have the summer time to do all of our repairs. The lab man, the distillery foreman, would go through and make a list of about 30 or 40 points that would need repair within the building so he could do another run successfully. We would run in the winter time because all our condensers were cooled with lake water. Lake water is really cool in the winter time but once it warms up in the summer time, you have to supplement it with City water and which is too costly. All in all, it worked out pretty good.

There was always lots of repairs in there. The distillery was pretty well falling apart and that was one of the key interests that caught me when Dick took me around the plant. He said that you had to be able to adapt in every building if you had to fabricate a part, you had to know how to do it. He said, "If you could come up with something better, something that would work better than what was actually in place, feel free, express yourself, go ahead."

Chris: So, that was the challenge for you that you liked?

Jim: Yes. There was lots and lots to do around the plant like that.

Chris: You had a chance to tinker and experiment and come up with a better way of doing something?

Jim: Lots of different ways. My foreman, a little later on, Dave Seller and I experimented with making pumps. We made a pump for pumping caustic soda into the solution, into the sewer. The distillery discharge was acidic so you had to use caustic to balance it out. The City got upset with that. They were cracking down on all the pollution that was entering the City sewer system. Which was kind of funny in itself, because we were on the acidic side and just down the street, Leaver Brothers was on the bland side, so they had to dump sulphuric acid to balance their's out and we had to dump caustic. We should have just got together but you know ....

Different things, we made pressure regulators for the boiler room chemical system, for feeding the chemicals into the heater. Lots of things. You would just go around the plant and if you had an idea and you wanted to do it somewhere, go ahead.

Chris: But with something like this caustic pump, you probably could have bought one but there was just no money for new equipment, is that it?

Jim: Well you would call around and get some pricing and get some pamphlets and information but not everything meets the requirements. You had to be able to adjust it for a certain amount that had to go down there like a gallon a minute or a gallon a hour. A lot of pumps just run constant. They do have pumps that we were looking at that was all rubber tubing and it was for dialyses machines - pumping your blood out and back in - that's the size of pump that we needed but with caustic you can't do that. When it is exposed to air, it solidifies - the water evaporates out of it and all you are left with is caustic powder. It plugs up all the pipings. It was fun. It was trial and error but eventually we got something that would work.

Chris: In terms of looking around the plant and just what I have seen over the years, I get the feeling that there hasn't been anything new done or new equipment go in since probably the 1950s. The rum still was probably the last major new equipment. Is that true?

Jim: Let me see. I'll go building by building. Building 50, they put stainless steel tanks in. They took the copper tanks out and put the stainless steel tanks in. That was there key tank house for Tank House #10, for doing all the shipping of product. What they would do is dump barrels in the dump trough there and put it in a tank until it was ready to be sent off to be bottled. They would send it to Corby's or Hiram Walker to bottle.

Chris: Why did they go to stainless steel from copper? They needed new tanks?

Jim: Well, if you were to interview Pete Nicholson or somebody like that or Bob Morrison probably knows too, who deal with alcohol, once you get below 80% proof or 80% alcohol, it will pick up the copper taste. So what you have to do is put your lower proof spirits into a stainless steel tank where it can't pick anything up.

Chris: Why was there still so much copper around the plant?

Jim: High proof. When it is in a barrel, it is cut down from 95 or whatever to 64 [proof].

Chris: But all the tanks in [Buildings] 60 and 61 were copper, weren't they?

Jim: That's right. Most of them held industrial alcohol. They were all 95 or 100%. Molasses spirits they stored in there also. That was at 96%.

Chris: But those are old tanks. They must have been in from the 19th century probably?

Jim: They still put lower proof spirit in there but that's what I was told that it picks up the copper if it is in there over a greater period of time. You could put something in there for a short period of time. Use that tank as a blending tank and then barrel the whole tank. There is lots of ways to get around that. I have seen it before. It kind of discolours the alcohol. What they would do to show me, they would put some stuff in a pail and just let it sit there for a day and you could see it picks up ...., it picks up a colour.

Chris: What that is really saying then though is that there wasn't much new stuff going in. So the decision must have been made ....?

Jim: Our boiler room, we had three package boilers put in in 1972 because we had two other boilers in there, 1956 Babcox and Wilcox.

Chris: That's that big square one in Building 4?

Jim: In Building 4. We have one remaining but those were a lot of maintenance. They required an engineering staff, three shifts. They plugged up a lot. They were running on oil. There was a lot of problems with them so they decided to spend the money. They bought an experimental system. Bob Morrison and Dave Sellers were sent to Chicago to study the boilers and they got a trial system here. I think they paid $75,000 for all three boilers. At the time, it was very good. Right now they are about $75,000 each, between $75,000-$100,000 each but, those boilers are over 20 years old now.

Chris: You mean they would fetch $75,000 now or that is what it would cost to replace them each?

Jim: To replace them, brand new, I forget. I had a gentleman come down and quote me some prices on it and I think he said $75,000 each. He would buy them right now and take them off our hands for $49,000.

Chris: For all three?

Jim: Each. He would recondition them and turn around and sell them. They are worth money still because they are still used. They are a very good boiler. They are very low maintenance. We had very few problems with them other than the usual bearings. You replace a packing and the typical wear and tear parts go but other than that, because we use soft water, we don't have problems with the boilers plugging up or anything like that.

Chris: The other thing that amazes me about the boilers is when I see that big Babcox boiler that is there, when you had two of them, the size they were, now you have three tiny ones. It is just amazing the change in efficiency.

Jim: That's right. When the still was running, we had to run all three boilers because our steam load was around 24,000 pounds per hour which is a lot - a lot of water, gas. They wouldn't be running wide open but they would be pretty close to it. Now with no production going on, we have minimal heating in the building, the steam load has dropped from 24,000 pounds per hour to about 6,100 pounds per hour.

Chris: What were you doing on those really cold days this winter?

Jim: You crank them up.

Chris: Were they getting close to the...

Jim: A couple buildings got very cool and, this being an exceptionally cold winter, I've actually had to turn on a lot more heat in more of the buildings than I've had to.

Chris: Were you getting close to 24,000 pounds of steam?

Jim: No, no. Instead of 6,100 pounds it would be 6,500 - 6,700 pounds but having to turn on more steam rads in the buildings than they have had in previous years. It has taken a beating this year. This year is our record year for leaks; for pipe leaks, for steam leaks, return line leaks, for freeze ups. This has been a year for us to remember. Busy, busy. We fix, like yesterday, five steam return line leaks but we found two new ones.

Chris: Why does a leak suddenly happen? Why would this cold weather bring on a leak like that?

Jim: Well, the piping is old and everything runs in cycles. You pretty well get to know which pipes are going to wear out quicker because you have to keep replacing them. So, long stretches of pipes are starting to go now. Running water, obviously, wears metal. It wears the pipes over a certain amount of time. When you thread a pipe, the threads dig into the pipe and that's the thinnest area and that's where 90% of the leaks will be. Trying to be the recycler I was when I first came here, I've learned that lesson since, quite a few times over. What I would do is cut the end off the pipe, rethread it and put it back in. In a day or two, it leaks because the pipe is paper thin. It is not just the thread that goes, it is the whole length because it runs a groove. The pipe may not be full of water the whole time, it may only be half so it wears a groove into the pipe. Steam condenses in the rad and with the steam traps, it allows the water to escape so there is water hammer and that causes a large vibration on some of the pipes. If the steam traps wear out, which they do, live steam can run through and it puts live steam constantly flowing through the return lines and that adds to wear and tear also.

What we've done, when I first came here, my foreman at the time, Bob Cane, he knew how to use our lathe just for turning down drill bits. He would take a 1/2" drill bit and take the end down to 3/8" so he could use a 3/8" drill instead of the big 1/2" one.

Other than that, there hadn't been anybody to use the lathe in about 20-30 years. No one knew how to use it. I sat down it him for about 10 minutes, one time, cleaned it up a little bit and I spent 3-4 hours when we were in slow time. I took it all apart, figured out how it went because it is a lot different than today's modern day lathe. I figured out exactly where everything went and then I brought over my foreman, Dave Sellers and started showing him. It took me a few hours to learn how to use it and then I taught him how to use it. It was an ongoing process to teach him because I was learning how to use more and more on it. That way, the both of us could use it. I showed him how to put threads on so we could thread 2 1/2" pipe or something because our pipe threaders could only thread up to 2". There is all kinds of things; for making bolt threads.

Chris: Is this the lathe in Building 8?

Jim: [Yes,] the machine shop.

Chris: That's the belt driven? That must have been fun to...

Jim: Oh, yes. It is very accurate. It is very old but very accurate. It is 2,000th of an inch out over 48 inches. It is very, very accurate.

Chris: Does that mean that whole machine shop was hardly used then?

Jim: Most of the equipment there is probably in very good shape.

Chris: Because it wasn't used for 20-30 years?

Jim: That's right. Nobody knew how to use it. The drill press constantly got used. I think the drill press is the oldest equipment in there and I think it's the one that has been used and abused. It is very good. Where I would hesitate to drill an 1 1/2" hole with a hand drill bit, that one works fine. It is slow but slow and steady. If the drill bit jambs, the drill bit doesn't break because the belt slips. The equipment is hard to break. It is the same with the lathe. If your tool bit jambs, it just jambs up and the belt slips. You can't get hurt and you can't get killed with it. The only way you get killed is if you have long hair and winds in and it winds in very slow and you panic; or a tie or a loose shirt or something. Just the obvious safety rules.

Chris: That's really interesting about that machine shop. I will have to...

Jim: I was taught on all the newer equipment in the machine shop: milling machines, lathes, shapers, the whole bit. But, it is like, what do we have here? It is so ancient, but that is part of the draw to it because it is to old and so simple.

Chris: Another challenge for the site? In terms of the steam fittings and things like that, the plant is suffering from deferred maintenance? Normally, there would have been a program for replacing the steam pipes, steam traps and so on?

Jim: Well, that's why we are here. It is an ongoing job. It is not a deferred job. It is ongoing.

Chris: But, if what you are saying is that there are sections of pipe going and what if this plant was still operating? You would just said, "Well, this year we are going to reinstall 500 metres of new steam line."?

Jim: Well, that's not the way we work. If it isn't broke, you don't fix it. Where you find a leak, that's where you fix the leak. You don't replace the whole thing because there is miles and miles and miles of piping. So, what you do is you have a little 4" nipple or 6" nipple that is leaking, you have long runs but you break it up between unions and couplings so you just have to replace one length rather than replace the whole because there are different bends; 90 degree bends cause a lot of wear. The more times you change the direction in a single run, the more turbulence there is in the water and you are more prone to leak.

Chris: Coming back to the furnaces, why are those new gas furnaces so much smaller than the Babcox? There seems to be capacity...?

Jim: They are high efficiency. They are the same steam pressure. Where the three package boilers are now, I am not sure whether if there was one boiler in there or two boilers. I am not sure. They were just oil and inefficient. There are a lot of coil tubes in there and there was a lot of plugging up problems with them. They didn't run soft water so it was all the minerals and the water would bake on the insides so they had a lot of down time. They have this little auger and it went through with the water hose attached to it and the water would spin the drill bit - almost like a drill bit - gear teeth and it would chip away at the stuff on the sides.

Chris: And chip away at the pipe too?

Jim: Probably. They would plugged up so bad they would just hammer a wooden block in - cut the pipe and hammer a wooden block in. Different things like that, cap it off or weld it so that coil wasn't used any longer.

Chris: Let me ask you about scales, weigh scales around here. Again it was interesting in talking with David Nasby [historian working on this G&W study] how important he seemed to think weighing was for the whole alcohol industry. The most obvious question to me is why are those three scale tanks in the loft of Building 61 in such good condition when so much of the rest of the plant has been painted over with that aluminum paint and

generally, doesn't seem to be in as good a condition? Is that a fair observation? It sure looks different than say going to Building 5 or into the still area.

Jim: There are a few reasons for that. One, it is a small, confined space so it gives you the illusion that it is a lot cleaner because there is less space to put junk in. Of course, it takes time to fill a tank. It is an hour to pump up for a tank truck. What the scale man would do is to pump up from the storage tanks below, pump it up, weigh it and then pump it into a tank truck. He may do four tank trucks a day and that's his day. So, you read, you do your crossword puzzles - idle hands - so some of them would polish valves or do something along those lines.

There was always something to do. You could be doing other things not just pumping one tank car. There are three tanks up there, so he could be getting the next day's. If you were having four or five tractor truck loads today, he could be having all three tanks filled. Filling one, get it empty and then denaturing would need a shipment of alcohol for one of their mixes so he would have to bring up another batch of alcohol and then feed it over to denaturing. Because it is high up, you can get away with gravity.

Chris: So it provided gravity feed to....?

Jim: To loading tank trucks, to denaturing. You had your choice of pump or gravity. If your pump was busy, you had gravity.

[Interruption]

Chris: Does it sum it up that the fellow would have had the time to look after the space? How many people were responsible for that scale office? Was there just one person?

Jim: One. Patrick LaChapelle, that was his domain. He was our scaleman. He was a real nice guy. Still is a nice guy. Very healthy, very happy. He is one of the happiest guys I know who is happy he is retired. He got out a couple of years early. He is single, he has lots of money. He has lots of fun with a lot of the retirement groups around. They go on skiing trips. It was the best thing for him, he said.

Chris: That must of, in some ways, been kind of a lonely job?

Jim: Yes.

Chris: All by himself?

Jim: All by himself. It was always fun because no intercom phones so the foreman was on the floor below and you would be walking on the ground floor and you would be walking in there and you would hear him, ... [the phrase at this point was not clear on the tape] .... He would rhyme off some order. "Yeh, Yeh, OK". It was pretty fun. You

would go walking in there and you would hear Pat yelling down at you and you would be like "where are you at" because he would yell so loud it would sound like he was beside you. The scale tanks are in very good - the ones that we were still using - condition.

Chris: Throughout the plant?

Jim: They are very accurate. I know, that was one of my jobs. Having to test them, we would get a Weights and Measures Officer and he would bring in - we used Aurora Scale as our company - 5,000 pounds of 50 pound weights and that was the job.

Chris: To carry them up into the loft, up there?

Jim: That's the young kid. Get the young kid to do it. What we would do is, you notice when you look in that the tank platforms are square and the tanks are round. On a lot of the tank platforms, you will find little hangers with boards, that's for storing the 50 pound weights. So, what we would do is put 1,000 pounds of weight on, check the accuracy of the scale, if it was OK, you would put 5,000 pounds of water or alcohol into the tank and then check it to see if it was OK. Take the 1,000 pounds back off, see if you had your 5,000 pounds original. If that checked out OK then you would move on. You would put 2,000 pounds of weight on. You would put the original 1,000 pounds back on and then an extra 1,000 pounds and it went on like that until you reached the scale's maximum capacity of 60,000 pounds.

Chris: How long did that take?

Jim: A day per tank. So by the end of the day you felt like your arms were 10 feet long and your knuckles were dragging on the ground because you are lifting 50 pounds weights constantly, up and down, up and down. For the pure spirits [Building 61], for the scale loft there, it was pulley.

End Tape One, Side One

Jim: For particularly for the loft, what we would do is jerry rig a support beam out of the top roof, off the roof line inside of the building. We put a pulley on and one guy stays down, one guy stays up in the doorway and it is pull, pull, pull and that takes about 2 1/2 hours to pull 5,000 pounds of weight up. So you start walking around like a wrestler. You walk all the way up the stairs, get up to the top of the scale loft and you say, "let's get going" and then you have a tough time picking one of them up. Your arms are just so totally tired. I think, if I remember right, it is about two weeks to do every scale in the plant because even the little portable 210 litre drum scales - they are like 1,000 pounds capacity - have to be checked. What you do is put the weights on the corners and the scale has to be able to read accurately wherever the weight is on the platform. It doesn't have to sit in the middle. It can sit on a corner and it has to read.

Chris: What happened if, in fact, they weren't accurate? Then you would have to....?

Jim: That's why we have a scale company here also. Scaleman doesn't help you lift the weights. That is your job. The scaleman is there to adjust the scale to make it accurate. The Weights and Measure Officer is there to make sure there isn't hanky panky going on - no fixing the scales.

Chris: So, there is a Weights and Measure guy and then when he is satisfied he put a...?

Jim: He puts a seal of approval on and it has to verified every two years.

Chris: So, this was a process every two years not annually?

Jim: Every two years they had to come in and check.

Chris: And you tended to do all your checking at once?

Jim: That's right. You bring the guy in for two weeks and then you do it and then you don't see him again for another two years. You make your appointment ahead of time.

Chris: What always gets me about those stickers is putting them over some of the wonderful paint jobs.

Jim: Some of them really didn't take the care. It was like it had to be displayed in a very visible fashion so it catches your attention if an Excise Officer was to come in and see that this scale is due, it is four years due.

Chris: So, they would be responsible for reporting?

Jim: Yes, because it has to be done. It is the company's responsibility to have it done. I am sure the Government would be sending out reminders.

Chris: I meant to ask you, where was the Excise officer's office? The last guy you were talking about?

Jim: George Koshen? When I came here, he was just down the hall from Dick Martlin's office. He had a small, very small office. It was six feet by eight feet with a little desk in there. That's was all he needed.

Chris: Would his day be walking around or would his day be in the office?

Jim: It would be in the office. If they were bringing alcohol up to tank, if they dumped barrels, or they were doing mixes or something, something that was in the scale tank, had to be recorded and he would go over and verify and initial their weigh tickets. So, scales

are accurate. You know the scales are accurate because they have tested by Weights and Measures. They know exactly how much alcohol spirit is in there because you have specific gravity and you have temperature. When you have specific gravity and temperature and you have a weight, you can tell exactly how much your gallonage is. They know exactly. What would happen is, it would tested, weighed and checked in the distillery and then it gets pumped over to the scale loft where it gets double checked or verified to make sure there is no leaks or sideway lines tapped off somewhere else within the plant. They can double check the figures between the two and they know exactly. Then the figures are recorded.

Chris: So, that was the actual flow then within the distillery? It went straight from Building 5 into the scale loft and then from the loft either into the tanks or..?

Jim: Either into [Buildings] 61 or 62 storage tanks or it would get rerouted to Tank House #10 or 4 or 9. Four or nine were generally industrial alcohol storage or not very good product. It would be called "heads and tails". It would be like island rums that are coming up but there are a lot of impurities in it, a lot of sticks or twigs or stuff floating in it and it would have to be run through the still to purify it to clean it up.

Chris: Did the scale loft [in Building 61] handle industrial alcohol as well as beverage alcohol?

Jim: All alcohol.

Chris: How did you keep the tanks clean enough for beverage use?

Jim: Industrial alcohol is drinkable. It is just pure alcohol.

Chris: Not denatured?

Jim: No denatured alcohol goes in the scale loft. It is only pure products, unmatured. Industrial alcohol is unmatured alcohol. It is not aged in any way, so it could come from grain or corn. It could come from anything. It is unmatured alcohol. It is high strength. Denaturing has its own scale tank that has the capacity of having impurities and everything like that, being pumped from one of their isopropyl tanks or something. They would pump it up to their scale loft, weigh it and then it could be dumped from their into a truck.

Chris: So, that little scale loft in the mezzanine of Building 47 is a miniature version of this one?

Jim: That's right.

Chris: I see. So then, once it went from Building 61 scale loft, it would go over to Building 47 [and] straight into the tanks or into the scale loft?

Jim: Either way. They had that capacity up there. They had a manifold system up there. You have your choice of dumping straight into the scale tank because what they would do is: you have "tank 13" or "tank 4" or whatever. It doesn't matter; any number. It is a certain mix and if they needed 95% isopropyl or something and they only had 60% on hand, you had to increase the alcohol content so they would dump unmatured alcohol in there to raise the content. But there is different mixes like 1B or 2A. There is quite a few, 1G. There is lots and lots of a variety of mixes that deal with wood alcohols or methanol or anything like that. All that stuff is poisonous and harmful for human consumption so that is why they have their own scale loft because the transfer from tank to tank and some mixes are a combination of part of this tank, part of that tank so they have an empty tank which is their blending tank.

Chris: What prevented an accidental pumping backwards of a denatured alcohol back into say, Building 60 or 61?

Jim: Denaturing doesn't have a pump. Denaturing scale tank is lower than the loft scale tank so it is fed by pump or gravity from pure spirits to denaturing and then from denaturing it fills its tanks within the building through gravity. There is one pump in denaturing and it is an air pump but it is mainly used for transferring from tank to tank. They had a portable electric pump that they used for transferring from tank to tank or from tank to tank truck. So, there was no way that it could get back up into a scale tank upstairs because even in pure spirits there is a manifold system and the hoses have to be hooked back up. So, there is a panel a cam-lock hoses and the scaleman has the choice of where to send it. Whether he wants it to go to this group of tanks or Tank House #4, 9 or 10 or Denaturing [Building 47] or the scale loft [Building 61] goes to pipeline along the front of the Cannery [Buildings 58/59] out to fill railway cars on the railway tracks down in the front of Building 60, right at the foot of the brick road. We could fill molasses spirits or we had whiskey from tank house 10. It could be pumped all the way up through the lines through a bypass in the scale loft and then down to fill a railway track. Whiskey had its own line, molasses had its own line because whiskey contains charcoal and you can't contaminate unmatured or molasses spirits with charcoal. They want a clean, pure spirit.

Chris: Coming back to the denatured spirits then, how could they leave Building 47? Could they also be pumped out to the railway line?

Jim: [Building] 47 can't go to the railway lines.

Chris: Could it go into a tank truck?

Jim: It could go into a tank truck.

Chris: How would it go into a tank truck?

Jim: They would pump their own portable electric pump from a tank up to their scale loft [in Building 47] and then through gravity from their scale tank into a tank truck.

Chris: So, it wasn't using the tank filler in the bridge between Pure Spirits [Building 57] and the Distillery [Building 2,4,5]?

Jim: No, between the main office and the cannery bridge there is a filler tube and you could fill whiskey trucks there also, or all trucks there from the scale loft. That is another system also. We were mainly using that for demineralized water. What they would do is pump demineralized water from our storage tanks there up to the scale loft where one tank would weigh out a certain amount and then dump it into a tank truck and then you could use that to blend alcohol. Cut the strength of alcohol or they were using that for antifreeze. Diluting the concentrate for antifreeze, giving it a 60/40 mix. We had a lot of customers like General Motors, or Ford or Mac Truck and they wanted their antifreeze premixed. So, it would just go into a vat or tank and right into the rads of the cars. They didn't have to worry about doing all their little mixing.

Chris: Why would you be moving demineralized water into a tank truck, though?

Jim: We had different buyers for it.

Chris: So, one of the things you actually sold was demineralized water?

Jim: It wasn't worth very much. It would be like inter-company. We had like Brights Wines or something. Their demineralizer broke down. They couldn't buy demineralized water so we were already running their wine spirits through the stills for them. They would send us impure wine like the all the bottom dredgings and everything like that, send it to us and we would run it through our still and give them back 95, 96 or 97% wine spirit. It is a clear, neutral spirit; no smell, no taste, no colour but almost clear alcohol but it is derived through wine. They would, in turn, use that to blend that into an 8% wine like [not clear on tape]. They could increase the alcohol content to 11% just by blending. It keeps a common thing like you could get 8% or 11% or 13% or you can go up and down. I don't think that wine is very accurate. That's how I was told that they would use it to blend up alcohol strengths.

Chris: So, they would keep it in reserve for their own use and you were then doing it as a custom job when you had some capacity?

Jim: They use wine spirits sometimes for making liqueurs rather than normal alcohol because it is a fruit product, alcohol from fruits and most liqueurs are fruit based.

Chris: Also, it seems to me that sherry is fortified but then, I think you have to use brandy or something?

Jim: Brandy is sherry, yes. G&W "Electric Schnapps," they had a whole line there of six different flavours made with wine spirits that we ran off our still. It wasn't a very big seller. It was very strong. It tasted very strong.

Chris: It met a certain market?

Jim: Oh yes. Some of it tasted like cough medicine, that's how bad it was. One of their cherry flavour's tasted like cough medicine. It was very strong.

Chris: I am not sure I would like to meet the sort of person that would like that sort of stuff. Jim, the other thing is, what about the different legal names that were on some of the tanks and stills? I guess, in particular, is it Consolidated Alcohols and G & W and I think there were some other names around as well?

Jim: Like Barclay still?

Chris: Well no, I guess I am thinking more about right now, right at the end. Did you have to be careful as to whether this alcohol was literally going into a Consolidated Alcohol's tank?

Jim: They had tanks reserved for an amount of percentage. OK, so you would have this row, Consolidated Alcohol's, this row here of unmatured product. Then you would have a row of molasses spirit. They new and they had these charts and each tank had a label on it for what was in that tank or for what it could be used for. They knew all of the time. We had a Jewish Rabbi come down and he blessed two or three tanks and that was for kosher alcohol. He had to come down and do a whole service on the tanks to make sure that it would be OK because they wanted alcohol for pickling or something like that and it had to be kosher.

Chris: Then, you would have to watch or ...?

Jim: Sign the documents and everything stating that these three tanks were for your product only and one of their representatives had to be by when they were canned or shipping.

Chris: In general, what happens if Consolidated Alcohols needed more capacity than there were tanks?

Jim: That was easy. It was all the same company. Consolidated Alcohol and Hiram Walker and Gooderham and Worts there are all owned by the same. It is just like it is two licences. It is like another distillery that the company bought and they bought it for their

licence. So, Consolidated was all industrial alcohols or Gooderham and Worts was all the unmatured and drinkable products, the beverage.

Chris: But, why go through the joke or the show of having the tanks labelled differently?

Jim: You had to produce a certain amount in order to keep a licence valid. You had to run, I think, two weeks out of a year. So, what they would do in order to keep Consolidated Alcohol's licence valid is they would run the still for two weeks out of the year but it would be running during a G & W run. What they would do is take one licence off, hang a Consolidated Alcohol's licence on the still saying that for the next two weeks this still is producing Consolidated Alcohol spirits. So, anything that came off for that was written over to Consolidated Alcohol.

Chris: And properly and duly recorded by Excise?

Jim: Everything was recorded. All the transactions, all the weights, everything was charged to Consolidated Alcohol. That way the licence could still be in effect. On distilling licences, about $1 million, last I heard. They only grant so many and there are only so many of them out there, so, they are as good as gold.

Chris: So, they would want to keep hold of them?

Jim: That's right. I'm sure Windsor still has G & W licence and Consolidated's licence, McGinnis' licence, Corby's licence.

Chris: And they, as you say, hang a different sign on for a certain amount of time?

Jim: In our still right now are two stills. They could, theoretically, run two stills at once.

Chris: Right.

Jim: Some of them both share common systems, common parts of the still but basically they are the same. One of them is in half decent shape and the other one is all rebuilt. They spent hours and hours rebuilding it because they were going to run it and they never did.

Chris: Which one is the...?

Jim: On the second floor on the panel board, it is on the southwest corner [of Building 5]. The bare column there is all renovated.

Chris: The southwest corner?

Jim: The southwest corner, yes. All renovated still.

Chris: So, it is that little unit, the little control panel...?

Jim: The little control panel up against the wall. That controls that still.

Chris: When was that rebuilt?

Jim: Late 60s, early 70s. It hasn't been run since.

Chris: So, you were only using the big panel?

Jim: The big beer column and that was it.

Chris: So, the other one has literally sat there for...?

Jim: Yes. As some pieces are needed, a couple of pieces have been taken off here and there, but it is still relatively complete.

Chris: But, you are saying that on the big panel and the big set of stills, that in itself was two sets of stills or that was just 5 column still?

Jim: One 5 column still and then on the other half of the room, you have smaller columns. It is set up different. It is a much smaller still, but the beer column is large.

Chris: Was any of that equipment used then, in conjunction? Could you tie back and forth?

Jim: Oh, yes.

Chris: And did you?

Jim: Oh, yes. We use a dephlegmator, the exhaust column. That is common to both of them. I have never seen the other still run.

Chris: That beer column, never ran?

Jim: Yes, I have never seen that run. I have been here 10 years. I doubt that Mike has ever seen it run and he has been here 15 years. Dave, my foreman, was here 25 years, I sure he probably saw it when he first came here. I think they were still running. He came in 1968.

Chris: And they just didn't need the capacity, I guess?

Jim: They weren't producing 200 million gallons. They were 1.5 million gallons? or 1.5 million litres? I think it was 1.5 million litres that they were producing. They weren't producing a large amount. It was large enough for us because that was all we could produce. Our stills could run every day of the year but we would have a lot of down time. We could probably run for two months and then be down for one month for repairs because it is old and falling apart. Different things would have to be done. We could only run the beer column for two months before it had to be shut down and cleaned out because the steam from the bottom bakes the molasses on all the plates so you would have to send a crew in there and that is two days; two 8 hour shifts.

Chris: Of chipping molasses?

Jim: With a little bit large than an ice pick, punching out the holes.

Chris: Reaching in through those inspection...?

Jim: You climb in to your waist. They give you a trouble light and you climb in to your waist and you punch and you punch and you punch. Then you take the down pipe out and then chip that out outside. It is two days. For two days you are soaking wet and you smell of molasses because you are chipping away on your one holes and for that beer column the openings are staggered; one east side one west side and then you go down the next one. It is flowing straight through so, you are punching your holes onto the guy below you and he is scrapping up everything that you are dropping down on him and then you give yours a rinse with the hose and then it constantly drips. So, after you do the first one, water is constantly dripping down on you. The steam valves don't hold so steam is still coming up through the bottom. You hear all the bubbling and percolating of it down in the very bottom. If you are claustrophobic, it is no where that you should be.

Chris: It would be hot and humid, then?

Jim: It is very, very hot and humid. That was one of the first jobs I had when I came here. They said, "This is our distillery. You are going to get to know it very well. Do you know what you will be doing today?". "What?" "This is Al McPhee. You are going to be his helper. Al, take him away." He pops off the manhole and says, "You go in there. Here's your tools you have to choose from." They had these six or seven different types of bits the guys would custom make. "This would work pretty well for here." "Gentlemen, arm yourselves and away you go."

Chris: Did you want to stay on after doing that for a while?

Jim: That wasn't a fun job but a lot of the time they would pick cellar men to do it but because I was new here, you have to be introduced to it. It did it once.

Chris: You were never asked to do it again?

Jim: Maintenance is too high paid help to be doing a lot of the little jobs. I was always told that I was too high paid. I am a tradesman not a grass cutter to go cut grass.

Chris: Sounds good to me.

Jim: My carpenter did it. I was an apprentice and I was here to learn so I served my five year apprenticeship here and then I went and got my licence. I got my licence after six years or so because you pass your licence exam in school. I went to George Brown College. You pass your inner, classroom licence and that gave you everything. You were free and clear of all the responsibilities that you were supposed to know what you were doing. All your safety features and then if you wanted an interprovincial licence or to work elsewhere in Ontario other than your company, you went and you wrote a three hour exam. If you got over 80, you got your interprovincial.

Chris: And you have that?

Jim: Yes, I can work anywhere in Canada that I like as a licensed millwright. A millwright is basically a jack-of-all-trades. I can do carpentry work, I can do plumbing, steam fitting, air conditioner, refrigeration. I started taking courses in that. I can do boiler work. I called up to get my Stationary Engineer's licence. They won't give it to me because of the boilers I have here at the plant and I said, "What licence can I get that will enable me to work it confidently?" I already know how everything on it but I went through a phase where I still want to get as many licences as I can while I am young. The more you know, the more you are a valuable employee for somebody. I don't know the full features of what is going to be going on down here. What my place will be in this, if there is a place. I am hoping there is a place. I have a lot of connections but the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Affairs said, "Well, the next thing we can say to you is get a millwright's licence.". Well, I have a millwright's licence. "Well, there you go. Work away at it." "OK", I said. If you insist on getting an Engineer's licence, they said, "Take it through night school or something like that." I have looked for some courses but I haven't had convenient time with all the filming and everything going on, to be taking the time to go in there. Going through the management company, they said, "Well, if you want to get that licence, fine. We will stick you in one of our other building's boiler rooms.".

Chris: So, you mean that is the problem? In order...

Jim: You need practical experience.

Chris: On different boilers than these ones?

Jim: Yes.

Chris: You mean that a month or two of experience would then enable you get your Stationary's Engineer's licence?

Jim: Yes. There are four separate classes. That would give me the Fourth Class.

Chris: It seems like a joke in one sense that you are doing all the work and you are just not licensed to do it.

Jim: That's right because they say it doesn't need an operator. All a Fourth Class Stationary Engineer would do is mix chemicals, regenerate water softeners. Well, I regenerate water softeners. He would do simple maintenance on it. Well, I do more than simple maintenance on it. I rebuilt all the pumps. I replace all the fan bearings and belts and the whole bit. I reseal the back doors that like a cement mortar mix, replace orifice nipples, the whole bit. I do everything to keep the boiler running that a normal engineer, more than what a normal engineer would do. But they say it doesn't need an engineer station to pat it 24 hours a day, to keep it running. Most boilers have a manual blow down valve that has to be depressed once an hour. What that does is remove any sediment off the bottom of the drum. Ours have automatic blow downs so you don't need it.

Chris: So, you are not learning that skill, is that it?

Jim: I am not learning the skill of sitting at a desk, watching the clock and saying, "Well, OK, it is time for this hour.". Bang. Depress the pedal and away you go.

Chris: Why did you stay on? I guess, with Mike as well. Were you given a choice or were you asked to or did you want to stay on?

Jim: When the word came down in April, of 1990 that the plant was shutting down, it was like "Oh, no.".

Chris: It was a surprise?

Jim: It was a surprise for most everybody here but they knew it was coming because everyone that was here had been told that for years and years and years. "Well, we may have another year left, we may have two years left." There was always that threat of being shut down and then it became a reality and the axe man who came was George Chandler. [See Interview #1] I don't know what his title is anymore. He may even be retired now.

Chris: From Hiram Walker?

Jim: From Hiram Walker. He came down and said, "Listen, this is the way it is going. The plant is going to be shutting down. I am giving you your four months notice. August

31, 1990 is the last day anyone is going to be here.". Before he gave that presentation, Paul had strong an associates, I think, down for a little presentation and he was doing renovations that they had been working on for the plant and Paul had promised most of the employees here. "Don't worry. There will be lots of jobs. You can be cutting grass or changing lights. You don't have to worry about it. The company is going to look after you." I think it was a week later that George came in and dropped the axe and a lot of them were really shook up. 90% of the employees here won't ever come back to the plant.

Chris: They were really hurt?

Jim: They won't call. They don't want to come back to the plant. I guess they feel betrayed.

Chris: How many employees were there at the end?

Jim: It think there was 33. That's the number that comes to mind. Off hand, I can't tell you. [See Interview #1]

Chris: Then were you asked...?

Jim: OK. Prior to the meeting, before everybody, the three maintenance had a meeting with George Chandler. He said, "We were going to keep two but Paul [Allsop] decided that we should have three down here. They convinced us that we should have three down here, so we are offering you guys a chance to stay on here. Same pay. Business as usual but you will be here by yourselves keeping the buildings up. What do you think?" I said, "Ok, sure." He said, "OK, go get lost for a couple of hours. I don't want you here when I break the news to everybody else." So we left. He broke the news and then we came back. It was a major shock for a lot of people because a lot of them still had mortgages or something like that. A lot of them got good severances. Hiram Walker treated their employees very well for severances.

Chris: One thing I keep wondering about is the plan to call that area "Farewell Court." [See Interview #1]

Jim: That was our last party we had in behind the production office, in behind [Building] 52. We had a barbecue there, the maintenance guys and a couple of other guys. We got a little party organized and they brought in some retirees and they had a cake. So at the end of the barbecue, we were still employees so the three maintenance guys were left to clean up while everybody left at noon or one o'clock but we had to stay until 4:30 p.m. We had an 8:00 - 4:30 schedule. The next day, I think that was a Friday, but the next working day was a shock for about 5 months because every department was if the next day was coming. All the coats were still there, lockers were still there, work boots, sweaters hanging up as if the next day was a working day and it was holiday and we were in on a

weekend or a summer shut down or something. We left it exact same. We didn't touch anything for five or six months.

Chris: At the risk of sounding cynical, was it the employees' idea to call it "Farewell Court" or was that a management idea?

Jim: Management.

Chris: How do you feel about it being called "Farewell Court?"

Jim: That's fine with me. I tell everybody the story of who was there and who was crying their eyes out and who had too much to drink, who got sunburned too bad. It was a hot day and most of the people almost had sun stroke.

Chris: My suspicion is that morale must have just plummeted after the announcement came through. Did things just sort of fall apart then for those couple of months or did everybody keep working?

Jim: Everybody kept working exactly the same way they were. They had been going on and on. I think everybody thought that maybe it was a joke or something could change between now and then, but it didn't.

[Interruption]

Chris: The last question I had for you is that I have always been curious about how many buildings must have been abandoned even during the time that you were here. The malt house, some of the rack houses and the mill building, for example. What were these spaces used for? What did it feel like to have that abandonness around?

Jim: It was always a reminder that nothing is forever. Jobs aren't forever.

Chris: What were they used for?

Jim: The buildings, themselves, were in reasonably good shape. They were empty. We still had to keep them heated because of active sprinkler lines within the buildings. Mainly they were just used for storage. Building 35 was used for lumber storage, that was it. First floor lumber storage for some old rack houses that they had taken down and they saved the lumber from them and that was just some spare blocks for our bridge supports out on the streets.

Chris: The upper floors were empty, then?

Jim: Empty. Well, there was rubble up there. Just old lumber. Building 36 totally empty, not used for anything. Building 3, all the way up the five stories, empty. Just storage of some old machinery, 45 gallon drums of oil storage, next to nothing.

Chris: Did you every use them to hid, get a sleep? Have a drink? Read?

Jim: The newest guy and the youngest guy in the plant was 17 just turned 18 didn't want to hide anywhere. Just trying to learn the ropes. I didn't very easily communicate with most of the people here when I first started because I was very shy, everybody was so much older and really didn't know what to say. You had to learn the ropes. You learned how everybody reacts to different situations here and you know when people have their good days and their bad days. After I learned that, it was no problem at all. One big family. Barclay's still, Building 54, 55, 56 and 57 totally empty. There is some old still equipment in there but that is like a ghost town.

Chris: Don't you think people were tempted to use those as places to hide from? I guess there were so many places you could hide and you were so busy...

Jim: Maintenance was usually, usually busy.

Chris: Wouldn't there also be a fire hazard? I may be days or weeks before you go into one of these places or was there always inspection?

Jim: You always had to go through. Once or twice a week, you would go through and make sure everything is fine in there. Especially through the winter time, you have to go in every couple of days to make sure the heat is going and there is no leaks. You don't want pipes freezing up on you. Other than that, Building 4 has an old boiler but the distillery, we were still using a majority of that except for the grain part. Everything else was still used here.

Chris: What about Building 46, the old boiler house?

Jim: That was still used.

Chris: For?

Jim: Salesmen. Salesmen had all their lock ups in there. They had all their promotional stuff and it was for storage of old flyers and advertisements from years gone by. It was just in there for storage. It was like a treasure hunt. Look around and you find. Slowly, one by one the buildings stopped being used. One of the first ones was Rack J, Building 65. They stopped using that rack house for storing finished product, for aging. They would put empty barrels in there. The next one to come was probably Rack H, the next farthest one, north of Mill St. Then came Rack D, Building 42. They condemned the elevator and that meant taking everything out of there and putting it into M. Since I

started, there has always been a decline in the amount of barrels that we had. They would gain a little bit but then that was it. They would start shipping out because everything was due to be bottled and everything goes on a prediction of what is going to be happening four, five or six years from now. So, if they over produce one year, they have a surplus left over and they don't need to produce as much the following year. Right now, the only shops that are used is the pipe shop, the carpenter shop, and ...

End Tape One, Side Two
Start Tape Two, Side One

Jim: It is a large change from having full production going to being totally empty now. There is not a whole lot to do within the buildings other than normal maintenance for leaks: steam or sprinkler leaks. But, to offset that we have film companies coming through using our different spaces now that we have cleaned up. It is used quite extensively now. They call Gooderham and Worts, "Hollywood North."

Chris: How many films?

Jim: Roughly, I think about 130-140 within the last 2 1/2 years. This is the most film spot in Toronto right now.

Chris: I like it. It has a nice architectural feel to it but how can 100 plus films need this type of location? It is only a certain kind of architecture.

Jim: Well, there is quite a few things. Number one being that it is isolated from the City. There is no public access. Number two, they have lots of ample parking. They can control the people. They don't have to worry about city people. Number three, they have any different type of look that they want. Whether they want horror films or they period pieces like "Anne of Green Gables" or "Road to Avonlea" or that's 1800s or yet "Return of Elliot Ness" which is 1930s and they bring in all of the 1930s cars. We get quite a few of the older stuff. We get either Chicago or Boston, anything like that. We have different countries represented. Buildings 53-58 often gets used as France or for "Kung Fu" it is going to be Kiev, they are turning it to Kiev next week. We have a lot of facilities available. It is such a large drawing attraction that there is such a variety of architecture that even if it doesn't have to be period pieces, it is very interesting for foreground.

Chris: Are the large spaces, like in [Buildings] 61 and 62, just used for sound stages?

Jim: Everything. They get used as that. They get used for music videos. There is very little dressing. They like the large windows. They like the absence of equipment. They like the columns, wooden floor, sky lights, all that is a bonus for most of them because they put it, to put manpower hours for carpenters, for painters, for set decorators, it is just so expensive. If they can come into a place and make something work for little, it is such a large drawing attraction. So far, it is paying off.

Chris: Without being specific, I suspect it helps pay for the heat and the upkeep of the place?

Jim: We are not in the business to gouge. Canary Restaurant [a nearby restaurant with an old fashioned interior], they get a film crew in there say for three days and they may charge $15,000-$20,000 for three days of filming. What we charge is $500 per day for prep day and $2,000 per day for film day. We are not in to get rich off of it, we are in to get public awareness alive. They want as many people to come through the site. We are trying to rebuild the image of the company as a place to come. It can only be more of a drawing attraction if people come to the plant and say, "Hey, I saw that in 'Three Men and a Baby'. I know that Building. I saw that on 'Kung Fu'." It can only help company image.

Chris: You think that is a deliberate policy? To make this part of Toronto again because it is so isolated?

Jim: It has been forgotten and now we are trying to revive that image. Of course, the little bit of money that we do get has helped pay for some of the heating. It pays for about 2/3 of the heating bill. So, like I say, they are not in it to make a killing.

Chris: Just as an aside, you are saying that the Canary Restaurant, the little restaurant at the corner, they get used as a movie set?

Jim: Oh, sure.

Chris: They must lose business, though, when they close?

Jim: That's why they jack it up. They probably don't make that much on sales but that's what movie companies are willing to take because they want that old style of country cafe. The last one that I can think of that went in there was with Bette Midler. I think they paid $17,000 for two days. There are so many famous people that come through. The old past people like Al Capone, presidents or who ever we had like that. A large variety of movie stars that come through. I am surprised that we don't have people trying to break in or anything like that.

Chris: Were movies made here before it closed down?

Jim: Very, very few because with all the alcohol on the plant, we had very, very high restriction and all we allowed was exterior and it was only for a very, very few and no small companies. Only big ones. So, for years, General Motors came here for their new car lines, those cars weaving in and out of buildings or around turns. Most of all that was done here. One of the biggest ones they had was Red Skeleton's Christmas Special; just a little bit over ten years ago and even that was exterior. It is quite a nice change from the

first year. We had very few people here on site to going to full blown production studio having 100-200 people here on a given day. It makes our jobs very challenging because we have all of our Building maintenance to keep up. This has been a bad year for that, for trying to get ahead of the game because we must be in one of those 20 year cycles where the pipes are wearing out quicker than we can change them. We have that to deal with. We have historical tours going through. We have a lot of historical archives, material. Trying to sort that out and make everybody's life a little easier by having some kind of an inventory system and a storage system so everybody can just come in and take a look.

Chris: I was going to jump back for just a second about the emptiness of the buildings. One of the things I remember when I was here in 1990, I was looking back over some of the notes I made and it was saying specifically in Building 46 that there was a lot more stuff in there than there is now and similarly a lot of tanks have been scrapped. There must have been a clean out done after the plant was formally closed. Is that right? There was bottling equipment or something over there that has been moved.

Jim: In Building 46, there was a lot of furniture, a lot of old broken pieces of equipment, left over sales promotional items, lots and lots of stuff that wasn't worth saving.

[Interruption]

Chris: I was just asking about Building 46 and where all that stuff has gone.

Jim: We took any half decent furniture that was worth saving and put it in Building 74, on the ground floor. Everything else that we decided was junk, we threw out. We threw out four 40 cubic yard bins of old paper and cardboard boxes and you name it. We were just trying to clean up the place because it was a fire hazard with only three of us here. We didn't want to have any unforeseen problems coming or something going on in the buildings. Besides that, we thought we would call the bins in as we didn't know when the renovations would start. We can only be helping by getting rid of the garbage now then for them to have to pay somebody to do it years from now. A lot of the equipment that was in there was gone. For bottling or canning, there is a couple of conveyors in there from when it was used for canning antifreeze. The tanks all got cut out.

Chris: I was going to ask you about cutting out the [fermenting] tanks [in Buildings 6/7]. Did you do that?

Jim: In 1991, Greenspoon did it.

Chris: Greenspoon came in and...?

Jim: That was little bit on the sly. We got a phone call from Paul [Allsop] in Windsor saying, "I'm coming down. Go to the hardware store. Buy me three cans of green fluorescent paint and three cans of orange fluorescent paint. I will be coming down with

George Chandler." "Oh, OK Paul." He came down and my foreman, Dave [Sellers], Paul and George Chandler went around and put 'X's on what was to be removed.

Chris: Which tanks?

Jim: Which copper tanks were to be cut out and sent to scrap. As far as I know, to the best of my knowledge, no one was ever contacted through historical [societies]. It was just something that was done inter-company on the spur of the moment. That happened on a Friday and Monday Greenspoon was here with a whole wrecking crew. They has plasma cutters. [The tanks] were cut into two foot squares. It think they removed either 125 or 128 tanks. I last heard it was an estimate of 400,000 pounds of copper. Grade A copper is pure copper, no tin, no lead, or anything like that. Ours was third grade because it was coated with linseed oil on the outside. It was tin with solder and lead on the inside so, of course, Greenspoon tried to get a good price on the Canadian foundry market and they kept requesting samples so, they would come in and cut out a sample, give it to them and then it would be rejected because it had lead. Canadian standards forbid lead being smelted, so the best price they could get in Ontario was $.17/lb. for melting it down. They called one of their subsidiaries, Heckle Recyclers, in Buffalo. They came, picked it up and charged them $.03. We are down wind anyway, so the Buffalo foundry melted it down and it came across the lake and got us anyway.

Chris: So, they had it smelted in Buffalo and then brought it back into Canada?

Jim: Yes, all the raw copper.

Chris: Well, it seems almost like peanuts in one sense if all you were going to get was... I know it was 400,000 pounds, but..?

Jim: 400,000 pounds at $1.00 per pound, so that was $400,000. Greenspoon probably took about 1/3 of that for labour costs. They were here for two months maybe.

Chris: It is interesting that in one sense it is probably just as well that the tanks were taken out before any real decision was made because then it would have been harder to decide which tanks to leave but on the other hand, I agree with you, it seemed like it happened, to take them all out...

Jim: I have photo records of where they were, what the buildings looked like. The scale tanks were saved. Most of the scale tanks were saved. Three or four of them didn't get saved.

Chris: The ones in the Cannery [Buildings 58/59]?

Jim: The Cannery, on the top floor and then the high wine scale in the distillery didn't get saved. I don't know why they cut that one out but they did. We have problems where

they took the tanks out now. It is just a void where people could get hurt. It is not very cosmetically appealing now. It looks like it is totally bombed out where when the tanks were there, you couldn't do anything with the building but it was attractive. It think they should have left them in [Buildings] 61 and 62. It think they should have left pure spirits alone until it was decided what was going to be done with it.

Chris: Or at the very least, one or two?

Jim: One row would have been sufficient.

Chris: The same with the fermenting tuns [in Buildings 6/7]. They were all copper too?

Jim: The fermenting tubs were all copper, but they were fiberglass 3/4 up green. They were not in very sound condition to store liquid in. We were still using it for that but that was one of our jobs to go inside and resolder the seams every run. A lot of the time we would go in there and solder the seams and the tank wouldn't make the full run. It wouldn't make the four to five months of running. We have to get it in its cycle where it would be empty and washed and go in and solder the tank. Some of them, the tanks are so thin they would solder and if we applied too much heat, the tank would start to buckle on the opposite wall. We had to start putting support rods from the top of the tanks into the ceiling joists to help hold the tanks up. We also had to make sure they were full of water and not left empty. If they were left empty, we thought for sure they would cave in.

Chris: But, you wonder why they wouldn't have left a couple of those?

Jim: And yet we had proposals early on for the renovation proposals. We had people coming in [looking] for tanks 19, 20 and 21. They were about 40,000 gallon tanks. They wanted to put classrooms inside of the tank.

Chris: These were in the fermenting...?

Jim: In the fermenting cellar [Buildings 6/7]. They wanted to put classrooms in there. History classes. They would be teaching history classes or something like that. Totally ridiculous. That would never be safe.

Chris: Why was the beer well left [in Building 6]?

Jim: The beer well is steel.

Chris: And nobody wanted it?

Jim: It is not worth anything. It is not worth anything for scrap. It shows you a little bit of an idea of how the size tanks were but it is not a very good representation because

it mild steel. Even that, the acid ate away at the insides so badly, I had to redo the entire seams, reweld the entire seams, one year. I think I was in there two months. Two months of constantly welding because, where the weld was, metal had turned to fibre - one inch either side - and it all just turned to dust.

Chris: Well, that is an interesting one because we're not even recommending that they bother to keep that tank because it seems to me, you right it does give a sense of how big the tanks were but since it is steel, since it is larger than the fermenting tanks, we're just saying, "If you need the space, take it out.". What is your feeling on that?

Jim: One fermenter tank can fit inside of the beer well. So volumemetrically, they are the same.

Chris: They are taller than the fermenting tank?

Jim: Yes, it is taller. But that beer well is also supported on a frame. There is a two foot space below the frame, so theoretically, they are very similar. It just doesn't have a top on it. It doesn't have a vent on it. It is an open tank compared to a closed tank. One of those beer well tanks will last four hours running through the still. So, that is how they always judged it. One tank in. They knew how far along they could go.

Chris: So, there is some argument then for maybe keeping that tank as an example?

Jim: It is really hard to say.

Chris: It is an ugly thing, though.

Jim: It is not very cosmetically appealing. It was always painted copper to foul everybody but then again, it is not a realistic thing because the copper tanks here were rivetted. The cellar tanks? I think the bottoms were rivetted on the cellar tanks. At least we have some examples of some copper tanks.

Chris: In fact, those ones in the scaling loft give that sense of how big some of the tanks were. But, they are now the biggest tanks left, aren't they?

Jim: Yes. They are the biggest. I try to help as many people as I can so as to helping the architects. My idea suggested to Mark [Langridge; architect in Roger du Toit Architects office] that the three tanks [in the scale loft of Building 61] come down to the ground floor. [Chris made a facial expression at this point] No, no, hear me out. They were wanting to make apartment buildings and hallways and everything up there and they needed that for access so I figure, the company was thinking on entombing it. Therefore, no public access, so I thought that you have the mazes down below. If you kept one whole row along that wall and you kept the row there and you had the mazes, they could take out 2/3 of the floor there and you had a section of all the brick arch work for all the

supports for the tank; you had the wooden floor for the wooden bases for the tank and then you had the copper scale tanks. They are not in their original location. They are dropped down 20 feet but they are all in the same area and I could hook all the pipe everything back up how it was. But that way, if you were using it as a hall, the first thing you see when you enter that room is BAM' those tanks. Look at those scale tanks. Isn't that nice. I would rather see that than have them entomb it and nobody go up and see it. You can't have tours walking through there because it is only one foot wide, unless they expanded the roof out.

Chris: That is what we are trying to suggest. Because they are so distinctive in their setting up there, the best place would be to leave them but the question is as you say, "How can you bring people in there?".

Jim: Safety: you can't bring people in there. The only other way to do it is to take off that back wall and expand out and have a roof garden or a patio garden. That's conceivable.

Chris: Jim, this interview has gone on far longer than I thought. I have really enjoyed it, but I do have one last question. What and where did all that wretched aluminum paint come from? When did that become Gooderham and Worts colour?

Jim: We have our own colour. The green you see around the plant is actually called Gooderham Green. You can go to a paint store and buy it. It has other names now too because other people have copied it but it is Gooderham Green or its Shooter Green or Hunter Green. It is all the same, basically. Some different companies have different colours. The aluminum came from in the 20s when they started to produce their own steel drums for industrial alcohol. Aluminum, I think at the time, was colour coded for alcohol. It is either that or else it is the colour that the company chose and during the summer time shut down and slow periods through the year, they would hand guys in different departments paint brushes and say, "Go to it.". Paint, paint, paint. They painted all the wood, ceilings, walls, doors. They painted anything that wasn't moving. They didn't paint the floor. Everything else though. In turn, it is not that bad. It is kind of a shocking colour when you first see it. Everybody always says, "Why aluminum?". I always tell them that originally it was white wash. Why would you paint a wall white? I always wait for people to answer and well, "It's clean, white reflects light.". So, aluminum is also a very good light reflector. You don't need any hydro in the buildings. Most of the buildings have very minimal hydro for lighting, anyway. For as much natural, day time lighting as you can, it is reflected around.

Chris: You think it actually started back in the 20s?

Jim: 20s and 30s. I'm sure that is when it started.

Chris: Literally, it became the interior colour for every building. Which is again, what makes it so remarkable that the scale tanks survived as well as they did that they didn't get a coat of aluminum.

Jim: All denaturing tanks were painted aluminum. [In Tank Houses] #4 and 9 the tanks are still copper.

Chris: So they had painted some of the copper tanks? But just in denaturing?

Jim: Just in denaturing. All the distillery tanks were copper too. The fermenter tubs, the top half was painted aluminum because they needed as much light in there as they could get.

Chris: Interesting. It certainly is distinctive.

Jim: It is very hard to say. There is nothing in writing so you have to go by what people tell you. What retired people tell you. You can go up to a wall and there is a 1/4" of paint on it. You can break it and you can see the layers.

Chris: Layer after layer of aluminum?

Jim: Yes, you can see aluminum, aluminum. You can see white. You will see aluminum a couple of years and then a white over it and then maybe something else and then it always comes back to aluminum.

Chris: Actually, the other place I have noticed is not painted is the back of one of the floors of the grain bins in Building 3. You can go back and see the original red wood and the plaster wall and there is no aluminum paint on that. Have you ever noticed that? It really stands out and you get a sense of the...

Jim: In Building 3?

Chris: Building 3, on the grain bins on either the second or third level of the grain bins. You know how there is those narrow walkways, one of them is unpainted with the aluminum. It is just interesting that it managed to survive.

Jim: Yes.

Chris: Jim, I very much enjoyed this interview. Thank you very much.

End of Tape