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**Historical Overview and Oral Histories  
Josephstown/Monaca Smelter  
Potter Township  
Beaver County, Pennsylvania  
1930-2014**



*Sponsored by:*  
**Shell Chemical Appalachia LLC**



*Prepared by:*  
**AECOM**

**In association with:**  
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## Table of Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
<b>2. ST. JOSEPH LEAD COMPANY COMES TO POTTER TOWNSHIP: 1926-1930 .2-1</b>	<b>2-1</b>
<b>3. JOSEPH TOWN .....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
Land Acquisition.....	3-1
The St. Joseph Lead Company Picnic Grounds.....	3-2
<b>4. THE EARLY YEARS: 1930-1940.....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
<b>5. THE ZINC SMELTER: PEOPLE, PROCESS, AND PRODUCTS.....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
Roaster Plant .....	5-6
Acid Plant.....	5-8
Sinter Plant.....	5-10
Leach Plant.....	5-11
Furnace Plant .....	5-12
Bag House (Zinc Oxide Department) .....	5-15
Secondary Materials Plant .....	5-17
<b>6. THE WAR YEARS: 1941-1945 .....</b>	<b>6-1</b>
<b>7. MID-20TH-CENTURY EXPANSION: 1946-1969.....</b>	<b>7-1</b>
<b>8. DECLINE AND MODERNIZATION: 1970-1986 .....</b>	<b>8-1</b>
<b>9. THE FINAL YEARS: 1987-2014 .....</b>	<b>9-1</b>
<b>10. A TRADITION OF INNOVATION.....</b>	<b>10-1</b>
Earl C. Gaskill (1895-1930).....	10-1
George Frederic Weaton Sr. (1886-1959) .....	10-2
Herand K. Najarian (1889-1978) .....	10-3
Research Department.....	10-5
<b>11. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS.....</b>	<b>11-1</b>
<b>12. COMMUNITY RELATIONS.....</b>	<b>12-1</b>
<b>13. SHELL COMES TO POTTER TOWNSHIP: 2015.....</b>	<b>13-1</b>
<b>14. REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>14-1</b>

## Appendices

**Appendix A.** Historic Architectural Survey/Building Inventory (2014)

**Appendix B.** Oral History Interview Summaries and Transcripts (on CD)

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b>	Gaskill’s patent #1,743,886 for the electric smelting of zinc ore. ....	2-2
<b>Figure 2.</b>	Gaskill’s patent #1,743,964 for zinc oxide and manufacture thereof. ....	2-3
<b>Figure 3a.</b>	Gaskill’s patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. ....	2-4
<b>Figure 3b.</b>	Gaskill’s patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. ....	2-5
<b>Figure 3c.</b>	Gaskill’s patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. ....	2-6
<b>Figure 3d.</b>	Gaskill’s patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. ....	2-7
<b>Figure 4.</b>	Site Location Map.....	2-9
<b>Figure 5.</b>	Jeffreys farm, May 11, 1930. ....	2-10
<b>Figure 6.</b>	Yard track work and 300-foot stack under construction, July 15, 1930. ....	2-11
<b>Figure 7.</b>	Furnace plant construction, September 2, 1930. ....	2-12
<b>Figure 8.</b>	Acid plant and roaster plant under construction, September 18, 1930. ....	2-12
<b>Figure 9.</b>	Office building nearing completion, October 15, 1930. ....	2-13
<b>Figure 10.</b>	Oxide department, October 15, 1930. ....	2-13
<b>Figure 11.</b>	Main office building and oxide department, October 29, 1930. ....	2-14
<b>Figure 12.</b>	Construction of the sinter, coke and residue building, November 15, 1930. ....	2-14
<b>Figure 13.</b>	Former picnic grounds and Josephtown. ....	3-3
<b>Figure 14.</b>	Aerial photo of zinc smelter after relocation of S.R. 18, August 1963. ....	3-4
<b>Figure 15.</b>	Aerial view of Josephtown Smelter, 1930s. ....	4-1
<b>Figure 16.</b>	Condensation of metallic vapors, the “Weaton-Najarian condenser,” patent #2,070,101. ....	4-3
<b>Figure 17.</b>	Pouring cadmium in the leach plant, constructed in 1937. ....	4-4
<b>Figure 18.</b>	Residue from the furnace tables worked with hand-bars before the “Cam-O-Tactor,” 1930s. ....	5-3
<b>Figure 19.</b>	General Plant Flow Sheet, 1941. ....	5-4
<b>Figure 20.</b>	Diagrammatic Flow Sheet of zinc smelter operations, 1956. ....	5-5
<b>Figure 21.</b>	Ore storage bins at the roaster plant. ....	5-6
<b>Figure 22.</b>	Hearth, flash, and fluid roasters. ....	5-7
<b>Figure 23.</b>	Drying hearth in the hearth roaster. ....	5-8
<b>Figure 24.</b>	Acid tanks. ....	5-9
<b>Figure 25.</b>	Loading sulfuric acid into a barge for transport on the Ohio River. ....	5-9
<b>Figure 26.</b>	Muffle for igniting charge on Dwight Lloyd Sintering Machines, 1930s. ....	5-10
<b>Figure 27.</b>	Weighing cadmium balls in the leach plant. ....	5-11
<b>Figure 28.</b>	Cooling water lines to furnace plant. ....	5-13
<b>Figure 29.</b>	Casting zinc metal, c. 1964. ....	5-13
<b>Figure 30.</b>	Blowing air into the oxide furnace with tuyeres, 1930s. ....	5-14
<b>Figure 31.</b>	Pouring zinc anodes in the refinery. ....	5-15
<b>Figure 32.</b>	The oxide department bag house, 1930s. ....	5-16
<b>Figure 33.</b>	Zinc oxide packer. ....	5-16
<b>Figure 34.</b>	Zinc oxide storage building, 1930s. ....	5-17
<b>Figure 35.</b>	Secondary materials plant, 1955. ....	5-18
<b>Figure 36.</b>	Army-Navy “E” Award, 1943. ....	6-2
<b>Figure 37.</b>	Army-Navy “E” Day Committee. ....	6-3
<b>Figure 38.</b>	Mary E. Cavric, one of dozens of women working during the war years. ....	6-4
<b>Figure 39.</b>	Acid plant expansion, c. 1948. ....	7-1

<b>Figure 40.</b>	Dracco conveyor system. ....	7-2
<b>Figure 41.</b>	Auditorium, 1952. ....	7-3
<b>Figure 42.</b>	Storage of zinc slabs. ....	7-4
<b>Figure 43.</b>	Pin shaper in Direct Reader Spectrometry Laboratory. ....	7-5
<b>Figure 44.</b>	George F. Weaton Station, St. Joe’s power plant, 1957. ....	7-6
<b>Figure 46.</b>	Coal for the power plant. ....	7-8
<b>Figure 47.</b>	Power plant controls. ....	7-9
<b>Figure 48.</b>	Main offices and laboratory space (former Beaver County Home and Hospital). ....	7-10
<b>Figure 49.</b>	New instrument repair shop, 1962. ....	7-11
<b>Figure 50.</b>	Environmental ductwork between furnace and sinter plants. ....	8-2
<b>Figure 51.</b>	St. Joe’s Larvik furnace, producing zinc oxide and zinc dust. ....	8-4
<b>Figure 52.</b>	George F. Weaton. ....	10-2
<b>Figure 53.</b>	Herand K. Najarian. ....	10-4
<b>Figure 54.</b>	Carleton C. Long. ....	10-6
<b>Figure 55.</b>	Joe Reising working in the microscopic lab. ....	10-7
<b>Figure 56.</b>	Samples testing in the laboratory, 1930s. ....	10-7
<b>Figure 57.</b>	Paint lab’s sampler for paints made with St. Joe oxide. ....	10-8
<b>Figure 58.</b>	Chemist operating the research spectrophotometer measuring zinc oxide color, 1960. ....	10-9
<b>Figure 59.</b>	Hydrometallurgical pilot plant facilities. ....	10-12
<b>Figure 60.</b>	Tug of war at the 1934 Corn Roast. ....	11-2
<b>Figure 61.</b>	Safety training. ....	11-4
<b>Figure 62.</b>	Ira Sullivan at furnace chute, 1946. ....	11-4
<b>Figure 63.</b>	“Safety Sam,” St. Joe’s safety mascot. ....	11-5
<b>Figure 64.</b>	St. Joe’s first registered nurse, 1950. ....	11-6
<b>Figure 65.</b>	Clifford A. Conklin instructing foremen and supervisors in “Fundamentals of Accident Prevention,” 1959. ....	11-7
<b>Figure 66.</b>	Book of meal tickets for the St. Joe Cafeteria. ....	11-8
<b>Figure 67.</b>	Cafeteria crew, 1949. ....	11-9
<b>Figure 68.</b>	St. Joe farm. ....	11-9
<b>Figure 69.</b>	Downstairs activities in the auditorium building during the 10 Year Club Dance, 1954. ....	11-10
<b>Figure 70.</b>	The auditorium decorated for the annual Christmas party, 1950s. ....	11-11
<b>Figure 71.</b>	Children’s Christmas Party, 1954. ....	11-11
<b>Figure 72.</b>	The Yard Department, duck pin bowling champs, 1955 and 1956. ....	11-13
<b>Figure 73.</b>	St. Joe Lead softball team, 1940. ....	11-13
<b>Figure 74.</b>	Patch for St. Joe trap team. ....	11-14



## List of Tables

<b>Table 1.</b>	Zinc Smelting Division products, c. 1960 .....	5-2
<b>Table 2.</b>	Comparison of the simplified smelter (1980s) with previous practices (1970s). .....	8-5
<b>Table 3.</b>	Najarian’s individual patents. ....	10-5

## 1. Introduction

The St. Joseph Lead Company, Zinc Smelting Division, came to Potter Township, Beaver County, Pennsylvania, in 1930 at a site along the Ohio River approximately 28 miles west of Pittsburgh. Other than a brief period of time (late December 1979 to October 1980), and throughout several changes of ownership starting in 1981, the smelter—a facility for extracting or separating base metals from ores—operated continuously until 2014. The various units that comprised St. Joseph’s 263-acre site transformed zinc ore (or concentrates) into zinc products and other metal byproducts that fueled diverse industries and supported national defense. In the eight-plus decades the smelter’s furnaces fired around the clock, thousands of people and generations of families made their livelihood. They also made a way of life, steeped in loyalty to the company and each other.

The smelter operated under several names and owners. Throughout its first four decades, the St. Joseph Lead Company, Zinc Smelting Division was known familiarly as “St. Joe.” It continued as some form of “St. Joe”—St. Joe Minerals Corporation and St. Joe Resources Company—through two rounds of corporate reorganization and the first change of ownership in 1981. Following acquisition by Horsehead Industries in 1987, “St. Joe” became Zinc Corporation of America (ZCA) and, finally, Horsehead Corporation in 2003. The location of the smelter was originally referred to as “Josephtown”; by the 1970s the location was more commonly referred to as “Monaca.”

The smelter closed in 2014, and with the removal of the facility by Horsehead Corporation in 2014-2015, the physical reminder of St. Joe and Horsehead was removed from the landscape. Appendix A presents the historic architectural survey/building inventory conducted prior to the removal of the smelter. Horsehead Corporation sold the property in 2015 to Shell Chemical Appalachia LLC (Shell) for the construction of a petrochemical complex.

Just as the operation of the smelter was comprised of several components—plants, shops, laboratories, and support functions—so, too, is this document an assemblage of parts. It surveys chronological development, smelter processes, innovative technologies, and industrial relations among other topics, any one of which could be a study unto itself. Documentation for this report came from archival records, sourced locally in western Pennsylvania, from former St. Joe and Horsehead employees, in libraries from New York to Alabama, and on the Internet. An oral history program contributed significantly to the research process. The project was managed by AECOM Project Manager David Lingle and the historical overview was prepared by Carol Perloff of Carol A. Benenson & Associates.

The St. Joseph Lead Company issued several commemorative publications and annual reports that proved extremely valuable in assembling the history and identifying photographs and graphics to illustrate this document. Key sources included: *Notes on Josephtown Smelter* (1941); *The Josephtown Story 1931-1956* (1956); and *A Growing Enterprise 1931-1964* (1964). Excellent technical descriptions were found in *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc* (1964); Long’s “Josephtown Smelter, St. Joe Lead’s Electrothermic Zinc Plant” (1965); Lund, et al.’s “Josephtown Electrothermic Zinc Smelter of St. Joe Minerals Corporation” (1970); Bounds’ “Modernization of the Monaca Electrothermic Zinc Smelter” (1983); and Williams’ “The

Monaca Electrothermic Smelter – The Old Becomes the New” (1990). Nearly a full run of the *President’s Annual Report to the Stockholders of St. Joseph Lead Company* and the *President’s Report to the Employees of the St. Joseph Lead Company and Subsidiaries* were found between the Science Industry and Business Library, New York Public Library, in New York City and the Angelo Bruno Business Library, University of Alabama Libraries, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. A diverse and growing collection of St. Joe materials exists at The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (PA): first Horsehead’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and more recently, former St. Joe and Horsehead employees donated much of this material. The St. Joe records include numerous issues of *The St. Joe Catalyst*, an employee newsletter, donated by John Murtha, and a substantial photograph collection donated by Terry Frank.

Documentation of the Joseph town/Monaca smelter included oral history interviews of 21 former employees, called “narrators” for the purposes of the document. Several criteria influenced the choice of narrators: number of years of employment, period of employment, representation of different jobs/departments at the plant, and perspectives from management and laborers. Geographical accessibility, in this case, western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio, also factored into the selection process. The oral historian on the project, Carol Perloff, obtained names of prospective candidates for interviews from several sources: newspaper articles about company alumni gatherings, former St. Joe as well as current and former Horsehead (now American Zinc Recycling LLC) employees, and Shell staff. Speaking with one person often led to suggestions for others. Approximately 56 people received prescreening calls to assess their areas of knowledge, clarity of communication, availability, and willingness to participate.

The interviews, conducted by Ms. Perloff, took place between September 2016 and May 2017. Interview sessions, lasting from 90 minutes to 2½ hours, typically were conducted in people’s homes or workplaces. Several narrators shared photographs, documents, and memorabilia pertaining to the facility. For those eager to divest themselves of these items, donations were facilitated to the Senator John Heinz History Center. Interview questions, tailored to individual interviews, reflected information gathered from the prescreening calls. In addition, narrators responded to a common core of questions. Transcripts were made of the interviews and narrators had an opportunity to review and comment on transcripts of these full-length interviews. Brief, informal interviews of nine former employees were also conducted at a St. Joe/Horsehead Alumni Breakfast in Beaver, PA. Appendix B contains the oral history interview summaries and transcripts (on CD).

While the historical narrative report for the Joseph town/Monaca smelter accounts for the development, chronology, technology, key figures, and culture of the facility, the oral histories enrich the document with personal experiences and perspectives. Narrators provide more details about the tasks and technology involved in running the various operations, as well as the daily—or nightly—experiences of working there. The camaraderie among the employees and the loyalty to the company for most of its duration come through in the interviews. Narrators share reminiscences of fellow employees, from plant managers to cafeteria ladies; their first day on the job; working conditions in the furnace plant; round-the-clock shifts; training, safety, and hazards; and the role of women at the smelter. The oral histories also provide additional insight into the roles of industrial relations, government relations, sales and marketing, and environmental affairs

in plant operations. All narrators share their thoughts on the closing of the zinc smelter and Shell's coming to Beaver County to build a petrochemical complex in its place.

Before delving into the narrative history of the zinc smelter that prominently figured in the industrial landscape of Beaver County, it is helpful to reiterate the various company names and owners under which it operated:

- **1930** St. Joseph Lead Company, Zinc Smelting Division;
- **1970** St. Joe Minerals Corporation;
- **1980** St. Joe Resources Company;
- **1981** Fluor Corporation purchases the company, which continues to operate as St. Joe Resources Company;
- **1987** Horsehead Industries acquires St. Joe Resources and combines with New Jersey Zinc to form Zinc Corporation of America;
- **2002** Bankruptcy, Sun Capital acquires ZCA; and
- **2003** Plant brought under Horsehead Corporation name.
- **2015** Shell Chemical Appalachia LLC exercised land option and procured the site from Horsehead Corporation.

The Shell petrochemical complex was subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which required parties to consider the effects of the project on historic resources. The smelter was located in the project's area of potential effects, and was determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It was determined that the project would have an adverse effect upon the smelter, and a Programmatic Agreement was entered into between the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office and Shell to mitigate the adverse effect. This report addresses one of the mitigation stipulations in the agreement.

### **Acknowledgments**

This report would not have been possible without the interest and availability of a variety of individuals. The authors wish to extend thanks to former employees of the Joseph town/Monaca Smelter for providing oral history interviews: Chuck Andrews, Bob Beatty, Terri Belczyk, Don DeChellis, Mike Deelo, Terry Frank, Victor Hall, Thomas Janeck, Fred Knight, Bruce Megill, Sam Mullin, John Murtha, John Pusateri, Jim Reese, Earl "Butch" Shamp, Ted Simmons, Gary Specht, Herman Specht, Joe Strupek, John Wakeley, and Thomas Weyand; as well as those former employees who provided abbreviated, informal interviews: James Allen, Daniel Bucan, Michael Cochran, Randy Contray, Harry Eder Jr., Bob Hanne Sr., Richard Romisher, Perry Tice, and Edwin Zinkan. A debt of gratitude goes to Ginger Carpenter and Terry Belczyk for graciously tracking down contact information for potential interviewees. Special thanks are also due to Carly T. Lough, Heinz History Center Archivist, for her assistance from start to finish.

## 2. St. Joseph Lead Company Comes to Potter Township: 1926-1930

The St. Joseph Lead Company was founded in New York City, New York (NY) in 1864. The company's only asset was a large tract of mining land in the lead region of southeastern Missouri—uninhabited and lacking adequate transportation facilities. Its mining and smelting business grew slowly, but by the 1880s, the company was netting greater profits thanks to the rail line it built. In 1890, St. Joseph Lead Company began construction of the nation's largest lead smelter, located along the Mississippi River in Missouri (MO), naming the smelter and resulting town, "Herculaneum."<sup>1</sup>

In the early 20th century, the St. Joseph Lead Company launched a program of property acquisition, new plant construction, and equipment improvements under the leadership of Clinton H. Crane (president, 1913-1947; chairman of the board, 1947-1957). On August 26, 1926, the company expanded its interests into the zinc mines of St. Lawrence County, NY, purchasing the Edwards mine as well as an option on the unexplored "Balmat" property. After testing the latter and finding it rich in zinc, St. Joseph Lead acquired the Balmat property and an adjacent one known locally as the "Dominion." The company developed the mines, built a mill, a railroad spur, and a town for the workers to extract and process the concentrates for the zinc market.<sup>2</sup> The rich zinc deposits posed an opportunity that Crane seized upon. He could either sell the zinc ore to New Jersey Zinc or another smelter, or, build a St. Joe smelter and market the zinc metal, as well as the sulfur-rich ore in the form of sulfuric acid.

Just two months after the Edwards mine purchase, Crane hired inventor and engineer Earl C. Gaskill, along with consultants George Frederic Weaton Sr. and William T. Isbell, to develop a process for the electrothermic smelting of zinc ore (see Chapter 10). The challenge with smelting zinc was developing the thermal energy requirements for the process, which are greater for smelting zinc than for other metals. "The basic concept comprised a moving bed—composed of approximately equal volumes of sized coke and zinc oxide sinter—as the dynamic resistor in a vertical shaft electric furnace."<sup>3</sup> Building on Gaskill's patented ideas, between 1926 and 1929, the team assembled and operated a pilot facility at Herculaneum for their electrothermic smelter (Figures 1-2, 3a-3d). The furnace produced 540 tons of zinc oxide before the pilot plant was closed on May 14, 1929. Though St. Joe had not yet solved the problem of how to condense large quantities of zinc vapor into liquid metal to create slab zinc, the company was ready to build a large-scale electrothermic zinc smelter to commence the commercial production of zinc oxide.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), "Bonne Terre, Missouri—Survey Report. Bonne Terre, Missouri—An Historical Overview," Architectural Survey Report filed at the SHPO and available online, <http://www.dnr.mo.gov>, accessed July 1, 2014; St. Joe Minerals Corp., Employee Relations Department, "St. Joe Headframe," Special Edition (Bonne Terre, MO: St. Joe Minerals Corporation, Fall 1970): 7.

<sup>2</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1929 President's Annual Report to Stockholders of the St. Joseph Lead Company* (21 March 1930), 3, Angelo Bruno Business Library, University of Alabama Libraries, Tuscaloosa, AL.

<sup>3</sup> R.E. Lund, J.F. Winters, B.E. Hoffaker, D.M. Fusco, and D.E. Warnes, "Josephtown Electrothermic Zinc Smelter of St. Joe Minerals Corporation, Monaca, Pennsylvania," *AIME World Symposium on Mining & Metallurgy of Lead & Zinc* (January 1, 1970), 550.

<sup>4</sup> "How Applied Research at Josephtown Stimulated Production and Markets," *Engineering and Mining Journal* (April 1964), 114; Lund, 550.

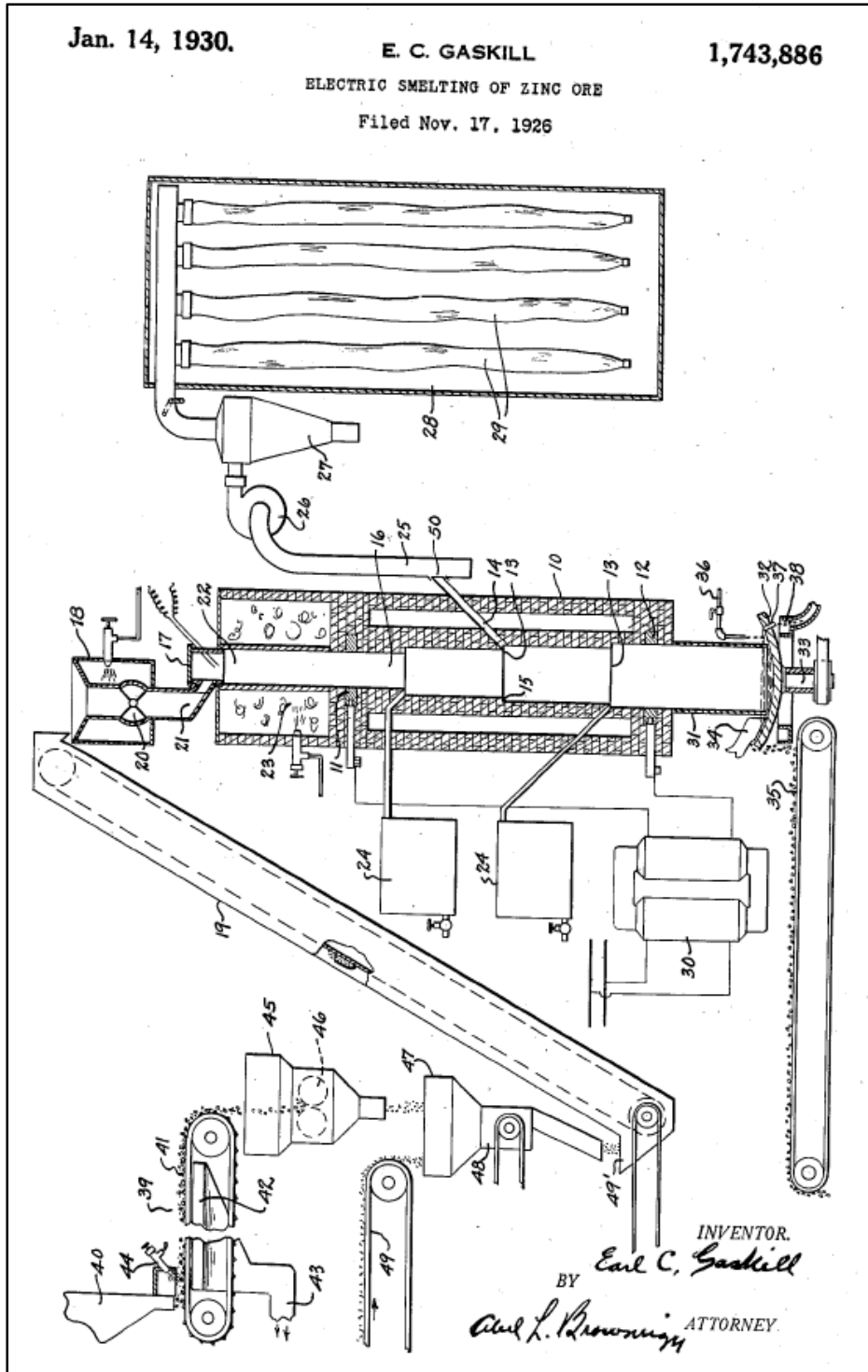


Figure 1. Gaskill's patent #1,743,886 for the electric smelting of zinc ore. The patent was filed November 17, 1926 and granted January 14, 1930.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed February-March 2016, <https://patents.google.com/patent>.



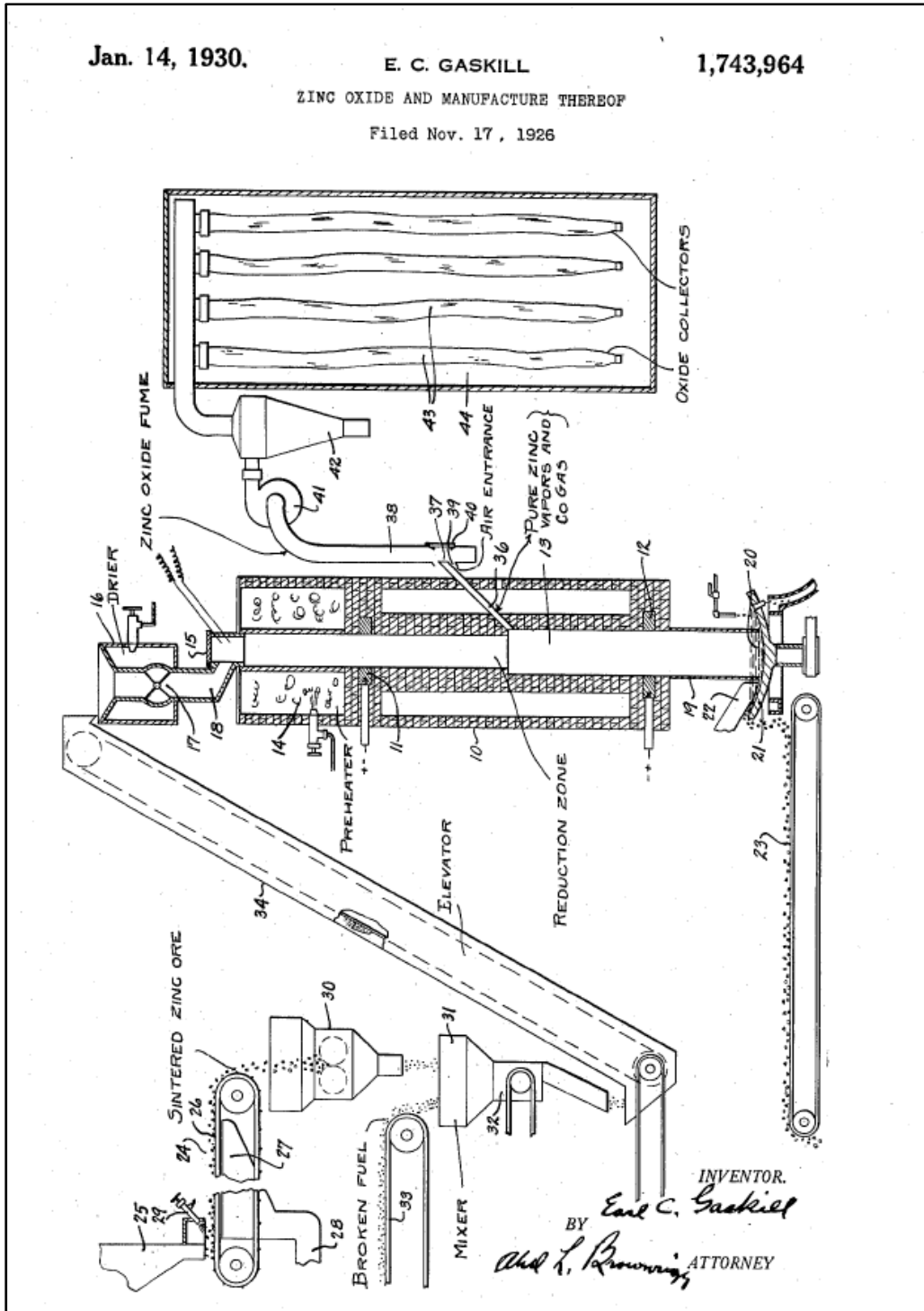


Figure 2. Gaskill's patent #1,743,964 for zinc oxide and manufacture thereof. The patent was filed November 17, 1926 and granted January 14, 1930.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed February-March 2016, <https://patents.google.com/patent>.

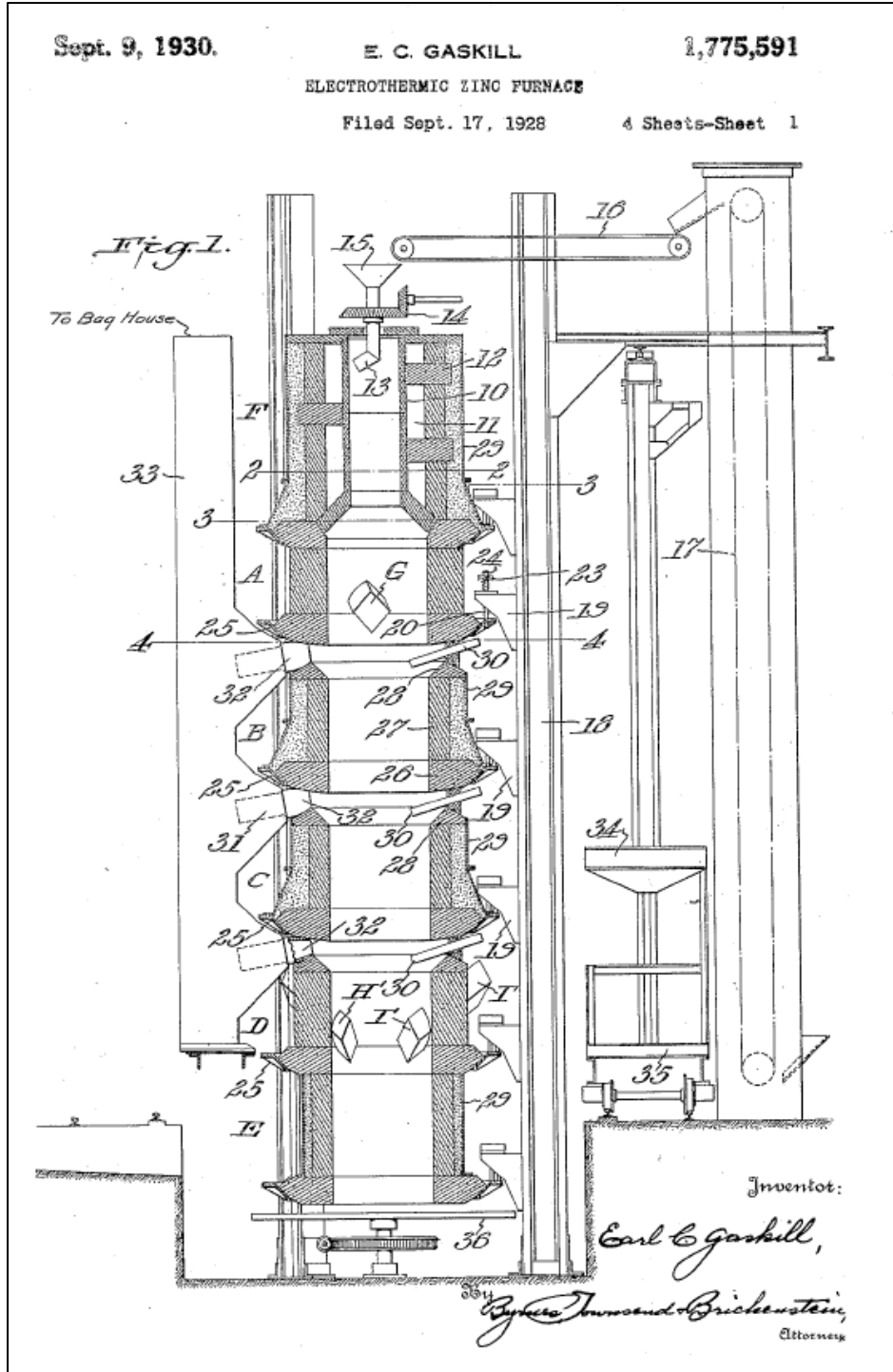
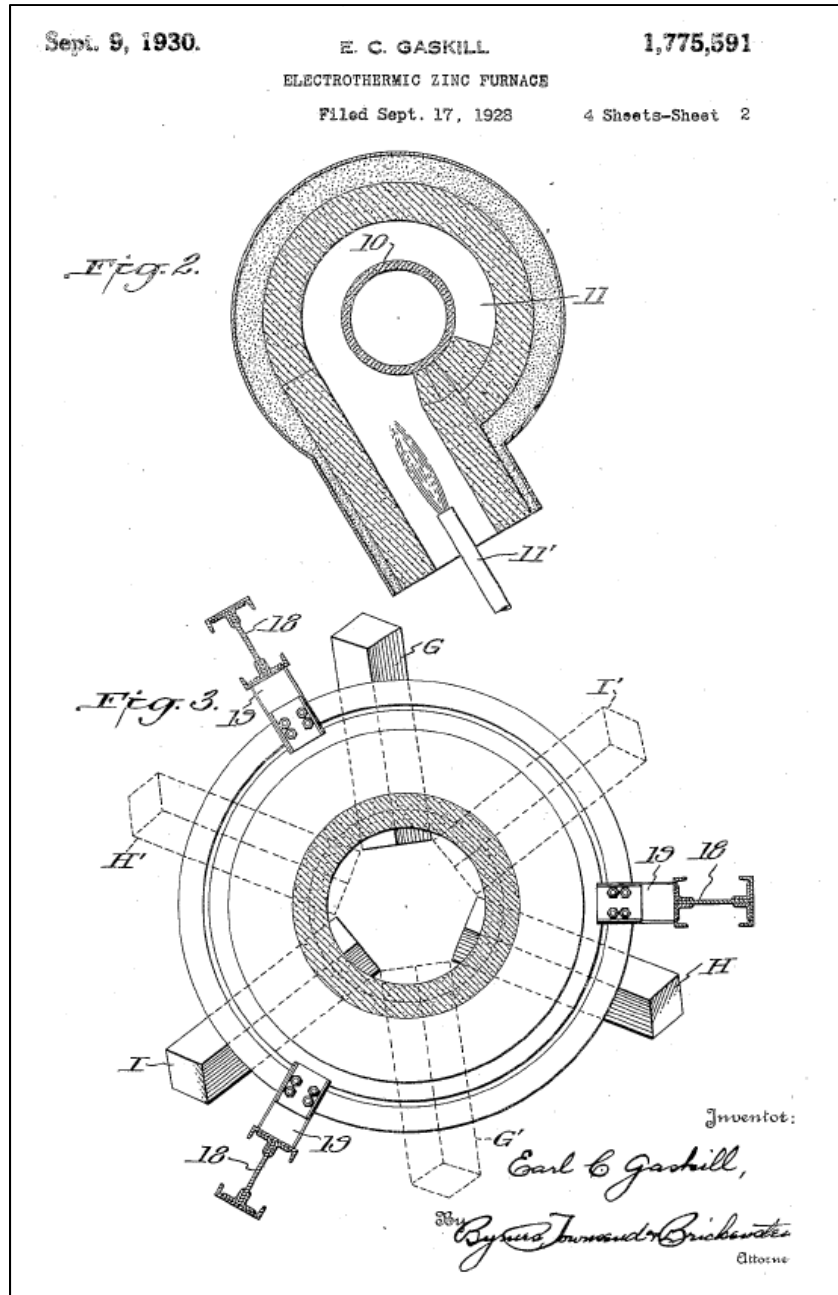
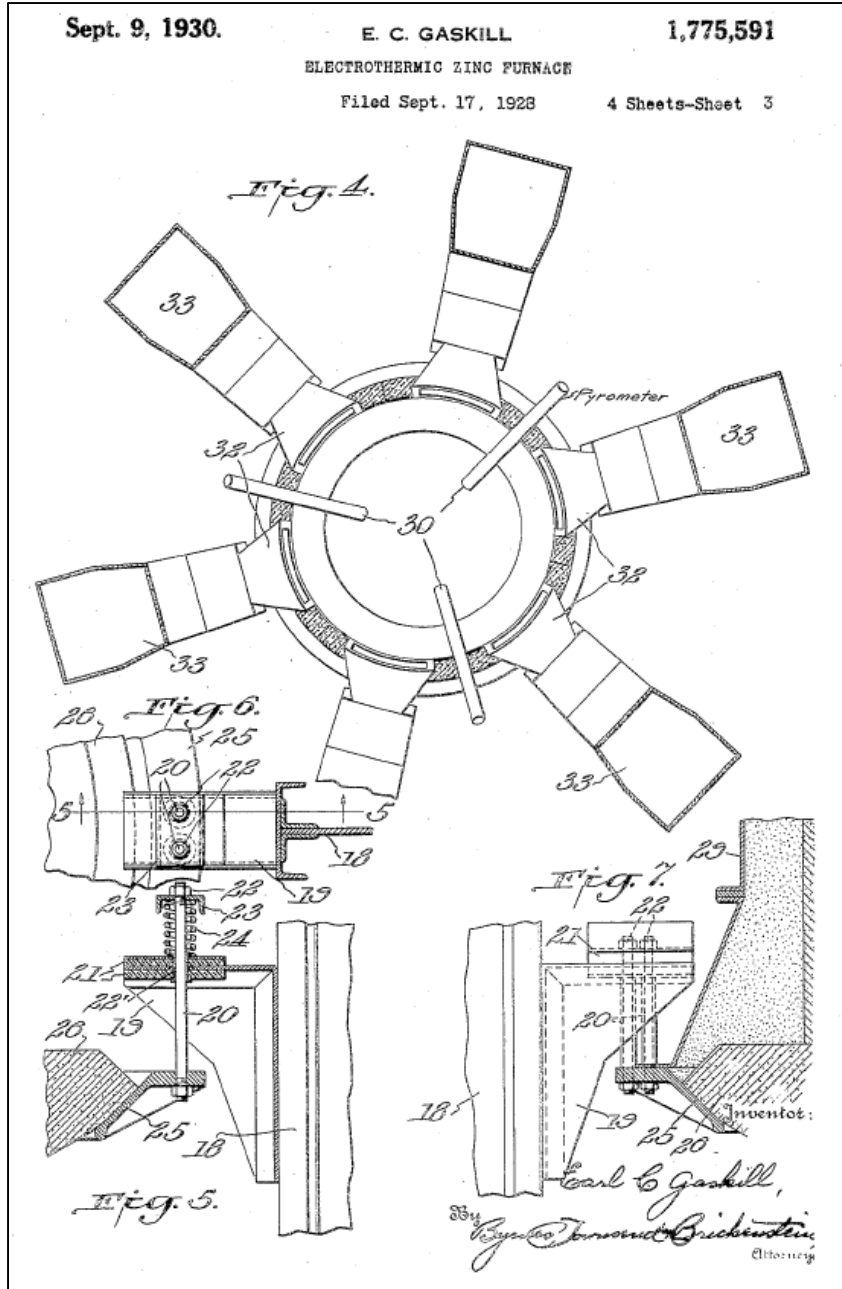


Figure 3a. Gaskill's patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. The patent was filed September 17, 1928 and granted September 9, 1930, sheet 1 of 4.<sup>7</sup>

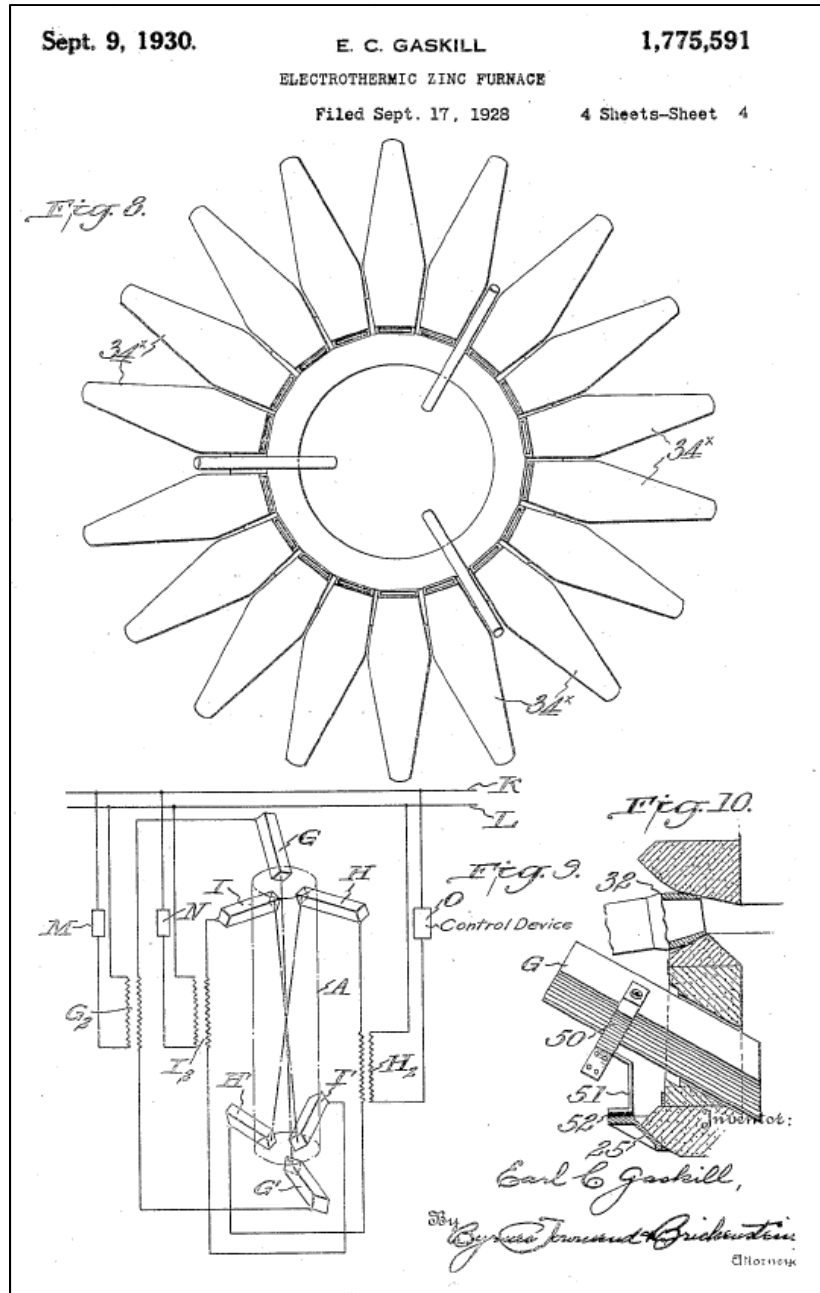
<sup>7</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed February-March 2016, <https://patents.google.com/patent>.



**Figure 3b.** Gaskill's patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. The patent was filed September 17, 1928 and granted September 9, 1930, sheet 2 of 4.



**Figure 3c.** Gaskill's patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. The patent was filed September 17, 1928 and granted September 9, 1930, sheet 3 of 4.



**Figure 3d.** Gaskill's patent #1,775,591 for electrothermic zinc furnace. The patent was filed September 17, 1928 and granted September 9, 1930, sheet 4 of 4.

The company moved forward with its ambitious venture to build a smelter despite the recent stock market crash that precipitated the Great Depression. Crane considered Rochester, NY, and Cleveland, Ohio, as sites for the smelter, but chose the Pittsburgh area, "from the start with the idea of possibly building their own power plant."<sup>8</sup> The search for a location culminated on May 5, 1930, with the purchase of 263 acres in Monaca, Potter Township, PA, forming the largest

<sup>8</sup> Clinton H. Crane, *Mining Memories* (St. Joe Minerals Corporation, 1987), 111, original manuscript written early 1950s.

parcel for the zinc smelter site (Figure 4). The location along the Ohio River—28 miles below Pittsburgh, four miles from Beaver, PA, and 12 miles from the Ohio state line—provided access to rail and water transportation, fuel for production, a power supply, and a skilled labor force in the region. It also offered proximity to ready markets for the smelter’s immediate and anticipated products—sulfuric acid, zinc oxide, and slab zinc—in the nearby steel, paint, and rubber industries of Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Akron. “Initially it is expected to treat approximately half of the present mine production, but ultimately, as markets are developed, to handle the full production of the New York Mines.”<sup>9</sup>

The 263-acre farm property the St. Joseph Lead Company purchased had belonged to W. Raymond Jeffreys and his wife, Ida, who spent their winters in Florida and considered the Potter Township farm their summer residence.<sup>10</sup> The farm was part of an area known as “Bellowsville” that developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a village around the site of a ferry across the Ohio River to Vanport; Raymond Jeffreys reportedly transformed the farm into the showplace of the Bellowsville neighborhood. A newspaper article about the Jeffreys property went on to say that, like other landowners in the area, Jeffreys had endeavored to develop the rich natural resources found on his land. Ever the entrepreneur, Raymond Jeffreys made quite sure to realize the maximum value of his property.<sup>11</sup> In 1927, the Jeffreys farm had 142 acres under cultivation. It was operated as a general farm with a concentration on egg production.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1930 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (February 13, 1931), 4.

<sup>10</sup> “Rabies Feared in Potter Township,” *Daily Times* [Beaver and Rochester, Pennsylvania], March 12, 1928: 1; “Mrs. Jeffreys Home,” *Daily Times*, February 22, 1930: 7.

<sup>11</sup> “Valuable Sites for New Plants on South Side,” *Daily Times*, February 22, 1929:13.

<sup>12</sup> Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service, 1927 Pennsylvania Triennial Farm Census, Potter Township, Beaver County, The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission’s Pennsylvania Agricultural History Project, available online <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us>.



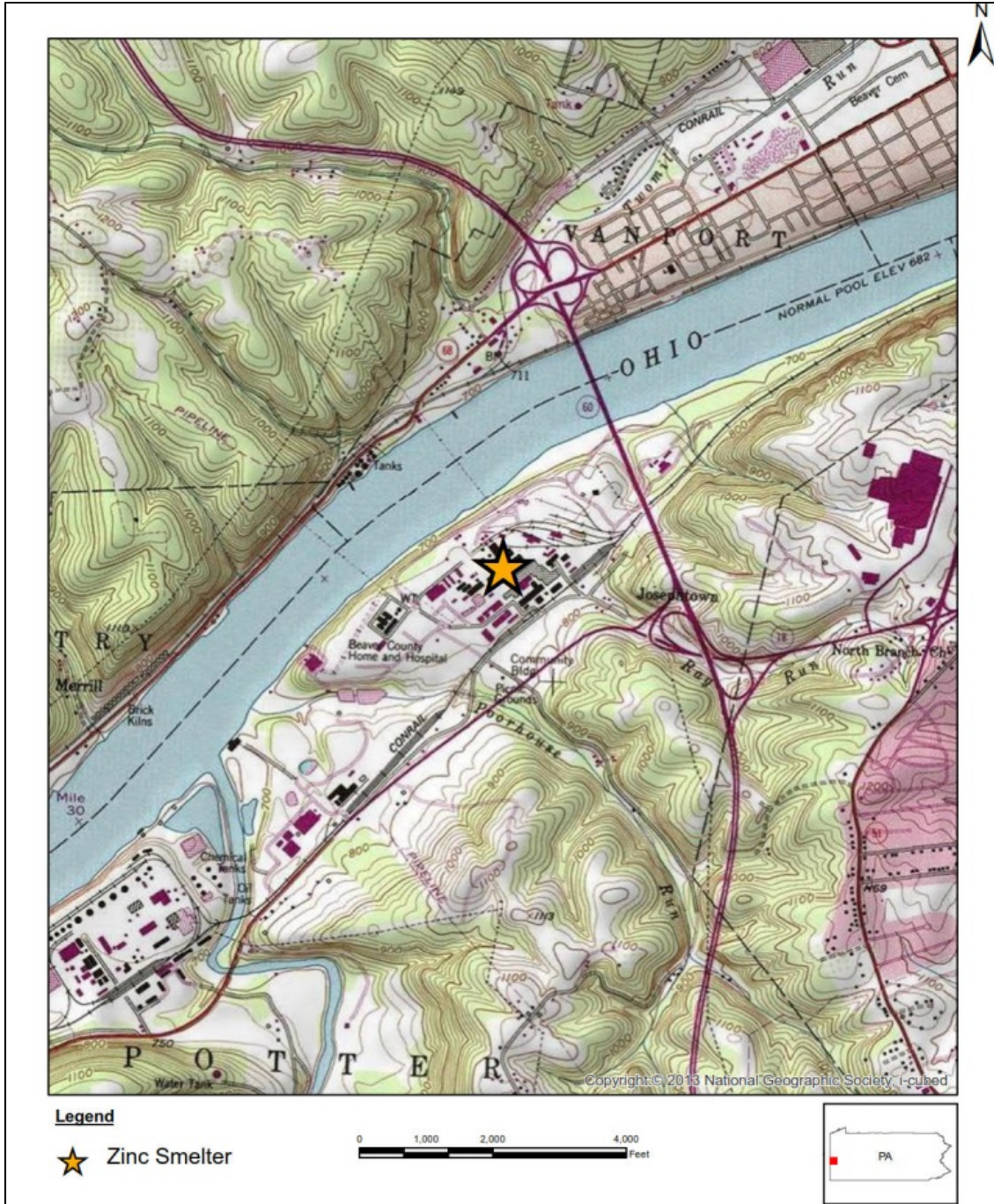


Figure 4. Site Location Map

Within a few days of St. Joseph Lead Company's acquisition of the farm, surveyors and photographers were investigating the new site. Ground was broken for the office building on May 9, 1930. Two days later, a photographer stood on the former Jeffreys farm looking southwest across fields and the Frankfort Grade Road toward the Beaver County Home (a poorhouse) and the Ohio River beyond (Figure 5). At the left side of the image is the Independent School House. Looking to the right one can discern a house surrounded by trees.



**Figure 5.** Jeffreys farm, May 11, 1930.

The St. Joseph Lead Company hired the United States Engineers and Constructors Company of Philadelphia to build what would become their \$4-million Joseph town plant; the Leonard Construction Company of New York and Chicago was also involved with at least the acid plant.<sup>13</sup> Construction began with a crew of 75 men in mid-May. Construction headquarters was established in a Rochester hotel and Bellowsville became the staging area for the project. Negotiations for electric power and railroad service via a spur track off the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad were completed by the time of groundbreaking. The initial plant construction consisted of the administration building (used for offices, laboratories, and research facilities), sinter plant, furnace plant, roaster plant, acid plant, oxide department 6 (oxide storage building), shops, and railway facilities (Figures 6-12).<sup>14</sup> When the plant and the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie spur track were nearing completion in December 1930, the company selected "Joseph town" as the name for the plant's location and the railroad station (see Chapter 3).<sup>15</sup> Railroad tracks

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<sup>13</sup> "Work Is Begun on Zinc Mill," *Daily Times*, May 22, 1930: 1; Construction photo of Contact Sulphuric Acid Plant, September 18, 1930. Terry Frank, photograph collection, donated to Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, PA. MSS 833.

<sup>14</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise 1931-1964, Zinc Smelting Division, Anniversary Issue—The Catalyst* (1964): 3.

<sup>15</sup> "Work Is Begun On Zinc Mill," *Daily Times*, May 22, 1930: 1; "P. & L.E. Seeks To Extend Line," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 20, 1930: 12; "May Start Production At Lead Plant," *Daily Times*, December 3, 1930: 1.



through the plant grounds would be used to move New York ore into the ore sheds, an operation that would come to involve a foreman, eight men, two locomotives, one diesel crane, and a few stock cars.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 6.** Yard track work and 300-foot stack under construction, July 15, 1930.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *The St. Joe Catalyst*, October 1956: 15, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, PA MSS 833.

<sup>17</sup> Gary Specht, personal photograph collection, Aliquippa, PA.



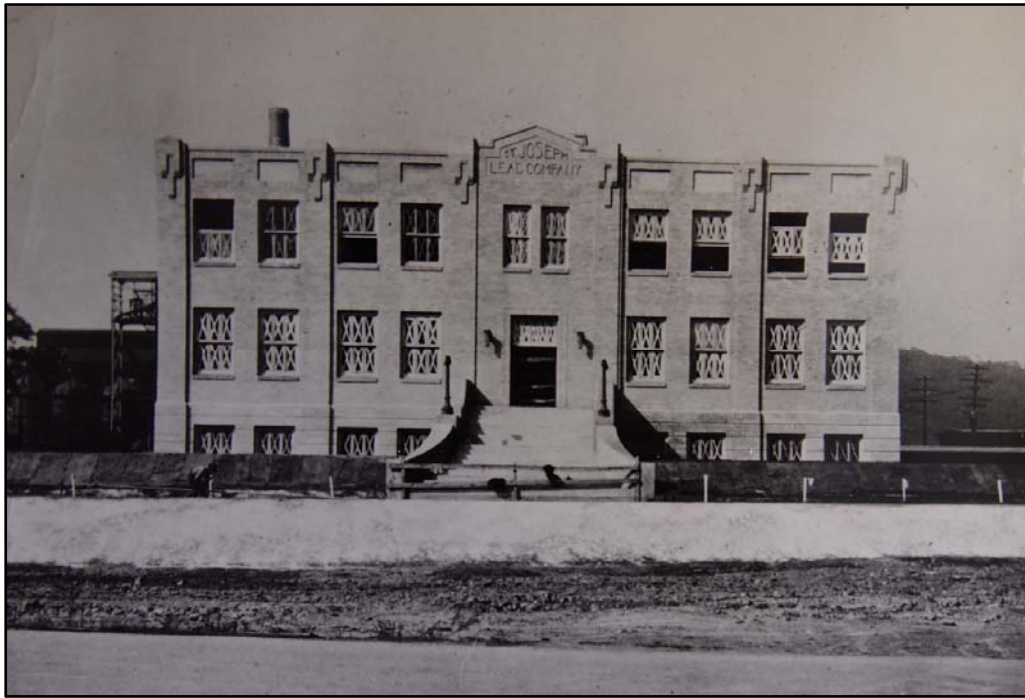
Figure 7. Furnace plant construction, September 2, 1930.



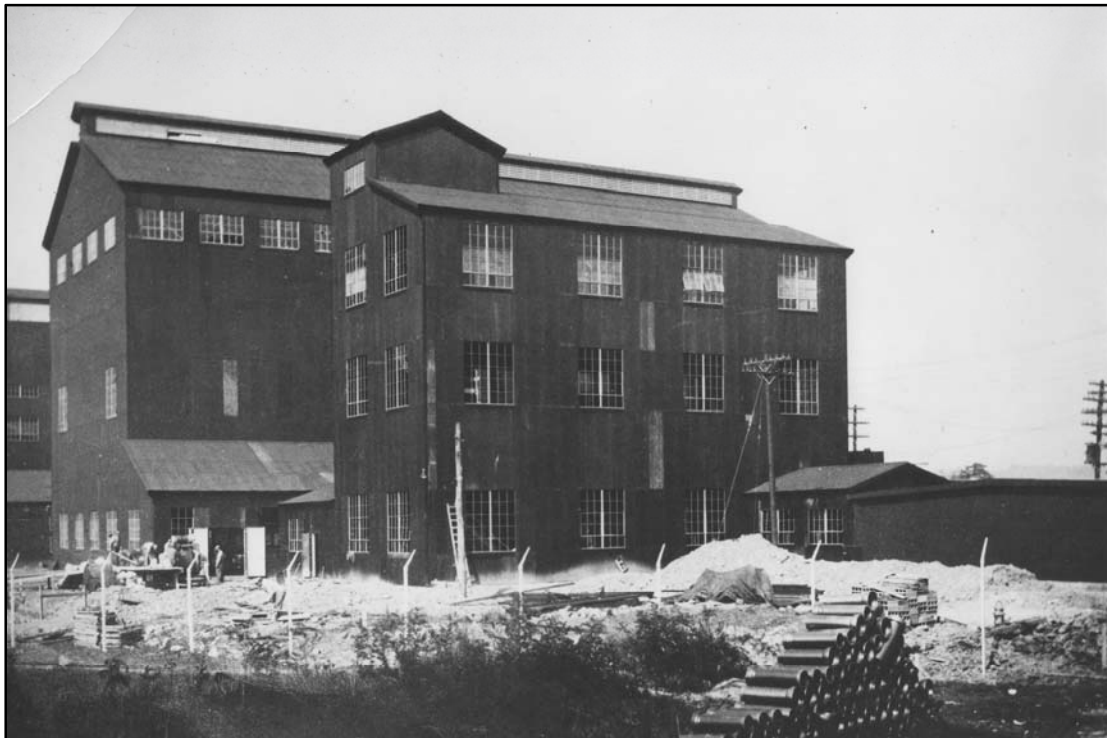
Figure 8. Acid plant (left) and roaster plant (right) under construction, September 18, 1930.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Terry Frank, photograph collection, donated to The Detre Library at the Senator John Heinz History Center. Pittsburgh, PA, MSS 833.



**Figure 9.** Office building nearing completion, October 15, 1930.



**Figure 10.** Oxide department, October 15, 1930.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.





Figure 11. Main office building (left) and oxide department (right), October 29, 1930.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 12. Construction of the sinter, coke and residue building, November 15, 1930.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Jim Reese, personal photograph collection.

<sup>21</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.



### 3. Joseph town

Immediately after the St. Joseph Lead Company acquired property in Beaver County, newspapers throughout PA began announcing the impending construction of a zinc smelter and continued to publish updates of the plant's construction, referring to its location as "Bellowsville" until its official naming as "Joseph town" or "Joetown" as Clinton Crane called it.<sup>22</sup> The plant would offer job opportunities and the St. Joseph Lead Company chose the site, in part, because of the skilled workforce that lived in the plant's vicinity. As the plant neared completion, a bus route was established from Monaca and surrounding suburbs to Joseph town.<sup>23</sup> A large employee parking lot was created on the plant grounds for the many employees who arrived by automobile. The mobility of its workforce made the creation of a company town unnecessary.

"Joseph town" also became the name for a short-lived, fourth-class post office established at the plant on July 3, 1931. Miss Ethel M. Anderson, a telephone operator at the St. Joseph plant, served as postmistress. However, a post office could not be sustained with an industrial plant as its sole customer. The office was discontinued on September 15, 1933. Thereafter, all mail was delivered through the Monaca post office.<sup>24</sup>

The closure of the post office did not eliminate the popular usage of the place name "Joseph town." The St. Joseph Lead Company continued to use the name when referring to its plant's location and it remained a station on the railroad. During the eight decades of the plant's existence, residents in the surrounding area commonly referred to their location as State Route (S.R.) 18, Potter Township or Monaca RD 1. When a person was described as a resident of Joseph town, it indicated he lived very near the plant or in fact, on company land. The mid-1970s appears to be when the plant was more commonly referred to as being in "Monaca" rather than "Joseph town" in company publications.

#### Land Acquisition

The acquisition of hundreds of acres of rural Potter Township land in 1930 brought several farmhouses into possession of the St. Joseph Lead Company. The one acquired with Raymond Jeffreys' property would factor into life at the smelter.<sup>25</sup> The company remodeled Jeffrey's "rambling old farmhouse" into a modern clubhouse with sufficient living quarters to house six unmarried management and clerical staff.<sup>26</sup> It was a large, two-story colonial-style building with clapboard siding, huge pillars in front, and a drive-through portico.<sup>27</sup> In 1940, 60-year-old widow

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<sup>22</sup> "Work is Begun on Zinc Mill," *Daily Times*, May 22, 1930:1; "P. & L.E. Seeks To Extend Line," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 20, 1930:12; "May Start Production At Lead Plant," *Daily Times*, December 3, 1930:1; Clinton H. Crane, 111.

<sup>23</sup> *Indiana Evening Gazette* [Indiana, PA], December 30, 1930: 15.

<sup>24</sup> "Beaver Post Office Closed," *Evening Review* [East Liverpool, OH], August 31, 1933: 2; *Indiana Evening Gazette* [Indiana, PA], September 1, 1931: 12; United States, Post Office Department, Appointments of U.S. Postmasters, 1832-1971, Beaver County, Joseph town, National Archives & Records Administration, Record Group 28, available at Ancestry.com.

<sup>25</sup> Beaver County Deed Book, 634:466, on file at the Recorder of Deeds, Beaver, PA.

<sup>26</sup> "May Start Production At Lead Plant," *Daily Times*, December 3, 1930:1.

<sup>27</sup> Earl Shamp, interview by Carol Perloff, Monaca, PA, October 13, 2016, transcript, 4.

Lois Sawyer was the resident housekeeper of the clubhouse. She shared her quarters with her daughter and son-in-law. Sawyer's boarders included the plant foreman, a research engineer, and an ordinary plant worker.<sup>28</sup> The clubhouse, which had "a duck pond full of gold fish surrounded by beautiful weeping willow trees," also provided accommodations for summer employees.<sup>29</sup>

The 1940 Census enumerated another rental unit immediately after the clubhouse. James Michels, a 62-year-old engineer at the zinc plant, and his wife occupied the house.<sup>30</sup> Both the old Jeffreys house and this one appear on a 1939 aerial photograph of the project area and a 1941 Beaver County highway map that indicates two farmhouses were present on the southwest side of S.R. 18 where it curves past the zinc plant. That map also shows two residences that were not farmhouses located on the northeast side of S.R. 18 at the curve. The St. Joseph Lead Company retained title to its property on the southwest side of S.R. 18, but did sell a small number of building lots on the northeast side of the roadway. All of this area had been part of the farm Raymond Jeffreys sold to the company in 1930. Local newspapers sometimes identified the people living along this section of S.R.18 as residents of Joseph town.<sup>31</sup>

The company sold four lots to employees between 1937 and 1941, putting deed restrictions on each property that forbade the sale of liquor and the erection of billboards. These employees included: Charles "Scotty" Allan, an integral part of the plant's safety program; Claude E. Walker, a painter, and his wife Iva Doutt Walker, who managed the clubhouse; electrician Taylor McMahan; and William Hohage, a utility man and later a supervisor. St. Joe bought back three of the properties between 1958 and 1962.<sup>32</sup>

### **The St. Joseph Lead Company Picnic Grounds**

St. Joseph Lead Company property contained picnic grounds on both sides of Poorhouse Run. Although it is unclear exactly when the picnic grounds were established, research has conclusively proven that the project area was dedicated to recreational uses by the time the state highway department made its survey in 1941.<sup>33</sup> The picnic grove itself included a picnic shelter, a concrete dance floor, a swing set, and fireplace grills. Steps led up to the Potter Township community building, formerly the township school. The picnic grove was located about 250 feet south of the narrow Frankfort Grade Road (a.k.a. L.R. 115). The St. Joseph Lead Company owned all the woods and fields between its plant and the picnic grove, area that was once a part of the picnic grounds (Figure 13).

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<sup>28</sup> 1940 U.S. Census, Beaver County, PA, population schedule, Potter Township, 1938B, digital image, Ancestry.com, <http://ancestry.com>.

<sup>29</sup> "Frankfort Road Then & Now," ZCA newsletter, June 1993: 1.

<sup>30</sup> 1940 U.S. Census, Beaver County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Potter Township, 1938B, digital image, Ancestry.com, <http://ancestry.com>.

<sup>31</sup> "Potter Twp: English Visitors Returning Home," *Beaver Valley Times*, November 10, 1953:8.

<sup>32</sup> Beaver County Deed Books 447:29; 456:96; 459:445; 474:452; 496:72; 729:466; 773:437; 819:411; *Beaver County Times*, May 24, 1985:A4; *Beaver Valley Times*, August 1, 1949:1; *Daily Times*, June 27, 1936:1; May 29, 1936:3; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Potter Twp., Beaver Co., 1940, 4-118:1A.

<sup>33</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Highways, *General Highway Map, Beaver County, Pennsylvania* (Pennsylvania Department of Highways, 1941).

In 1957, S.R. 18 was realigned and turned into a 4-lane road, cutting the picnic grove off from the rest of the recreational grounds. The St. Joseph Lead Company was awarded \$60,000 in damages due to the highway relocation.<sup>34</sup> The relocation of S.R. 18 away from the plant's main gates had an added benefit. Old S.R. 18 became a less travelled local road making it safer to establish a large company parking lot opposite the main buildings (Figure 14). A few years later, the company asked Potter Township to abandon old S.R. 18 and Pleasant Drive between old S.R.18 and the new S.R. 18 alignment. The township agreed and the vacated roadways became plant access roads.<sup>35</sup>

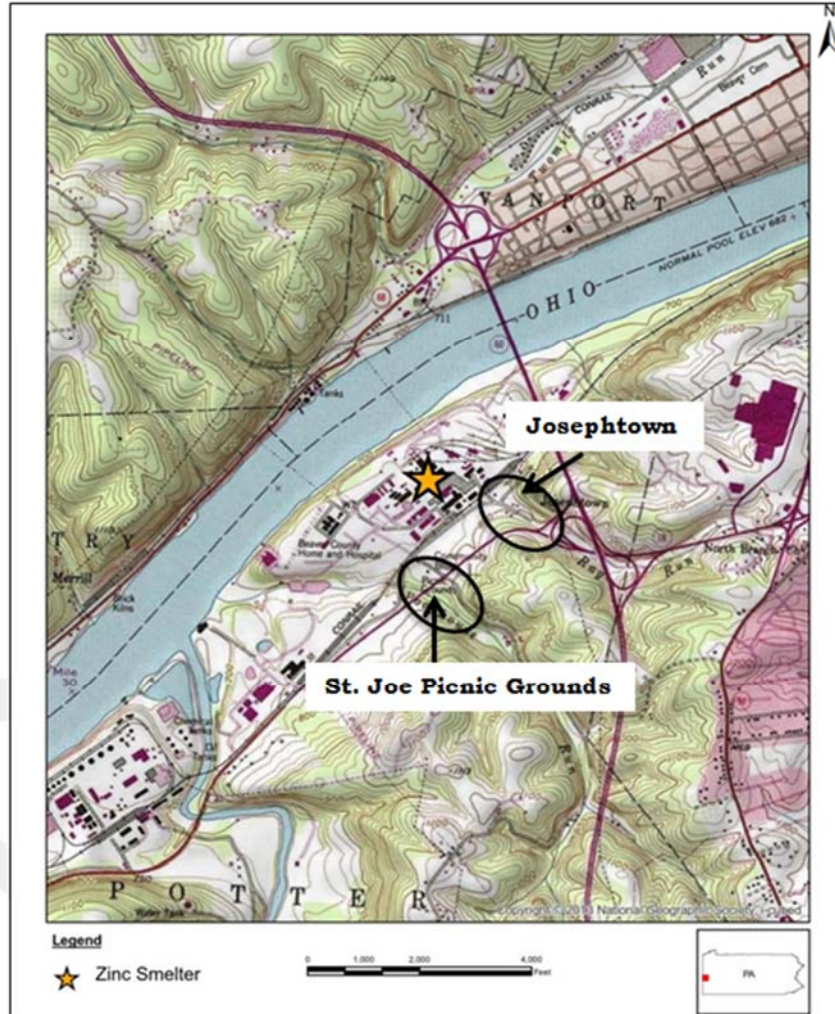


Figure 13. Former picnic grounds and Josephstown.

<sup>34</sup> “St. Joe Lead Gets \$60,000 In Condemnation,” *Beaver Valley Times*, November 13, 1957:1; Pennsylvania Department of Highways, “Drawings for construction and condemnation of right of way, Route No. 115, Section No. 11 in Beaver County from Station 796 + 50.16 to Station 948 +21, 2.83 miles – L.R.115 Sec.11. Project No. F-247 (10). On file PA Dept. of Transportation, Engineering District 11-0, Bridgeville, PA” (Pennsylvania Department of Highways, 1956).

<sup>35</sup> “Tax Money Must Be Refunded,” *Beaver County Times*, February 16, 1967:1.





**Figure 14.** Aerial photo of zinc smelter after relocation of S.R. 18, August 1963.

#### 4. The Early Years: 1930-1940

With completion of the acid plant in December 1930, the Josephtown zinc smelter generated its first commercial product, sulfuric acid. On January 12, 1931, the furnaces began to produce zinc oxide, a product in high demand in the paint and rubber industries. For 1931, the first full year of operation, the plant, with a workforce of 150, produced 10,402 tons of 100 percent sulfuric acid (roughly 30 percent of capacity), 5,638 tons of zinc oxide, and 75 tons of zinc metal as a by-product of the oxide process (Figure 15).<sup>36</sup>



Figure 15. Aerial view of Josephtown Smelter, 1930s.<sup>37</sup>

The Josephtown smelter got its start during the Great Depression. George F. Weaton, manager of the new facility, was allowed to continue production on the condition that expenditures did not exceed income of the plant, which did not operate at full capacity from 1931 to 1935.<sup>38</sup> Given the poor state of market conditions, the plant fared relatively well as its zinc oxide products, including the initial superfine “St. Joe 20” (then called “Black Label 20”), were superior to its competitors.<sup>39</sup> In 1932, St. Joseph Lead Company’s Edwards and Balmat mines in upstate New York operated with a 50 percent reduction in work hours and a 10 percent reduction in wages;

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<sup>36</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 4; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1931 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (February 16, 1932), 4.

<sup>37</sup> G. Specht, personal collection.

<sup>38</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

construction at the mill to expand its daily capacity from 500 tons to 1,000 tons was placed on hold.<sup>40</sup> Less zinc output from the mines meant temporary salary cuts and reduced work hours at Joseph town.

However, in a continuous tradition of innovation, St. Joe engineers and researchers developed new technologies and new products that helped propel the zinc smelting division forward (see Chapter 10). With the expertise of Robert S. Havenhill, a rubber chemist recruited from B.F. Goodrich, St. Joe developed slow-curing, fine particle zinc oxide products for the rubber trade. Further experimentation yielded larger particle oxides useful for white sidewall tires, heat resistant tires, and high-quality white paints, as well as “Jozite,” an iron-bearing zinc oxide “developed as a substitute for certain zinc oxide uses” and suitable for paint primer, brake bands, and other products.<sup>41</sup>

The “Weaton-Najarian” condenser (Figure 16), which was designed and patented by George Frederic Weaton Sr. and Herand K. Najarian, at last fulfilled the initial vision for the plant to produce zinc oxide, sulfuric acid, *and* slab zinc, which would soon dominate sales. The first experimental condenser ran on the #2 furnace on 3 October 1935; improved production models went into operation in 1936. A vacuum condenser, it drew zinc vapor and furnace gases through molten zinc heated nearly to the boiling point to produce slab zinc. Weaton and Najarian solved two key problems: (1) developing lining materials for the condenser that could withstand molten zinc at extreme temperatures; and (2) devising systems to handle the carbon monoxide gas involved in the process.<sup>42</sup> Their innovation was “without a doubt, the most important single factor in the growth of our smelter.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1932 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (February 10, 1933), 4.

<sup>41</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 12; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1934 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (February 21, 1935), 4; St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc* (1964), 3.

<sup>42</sup> Lund, 551.

<sup>43</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 5.



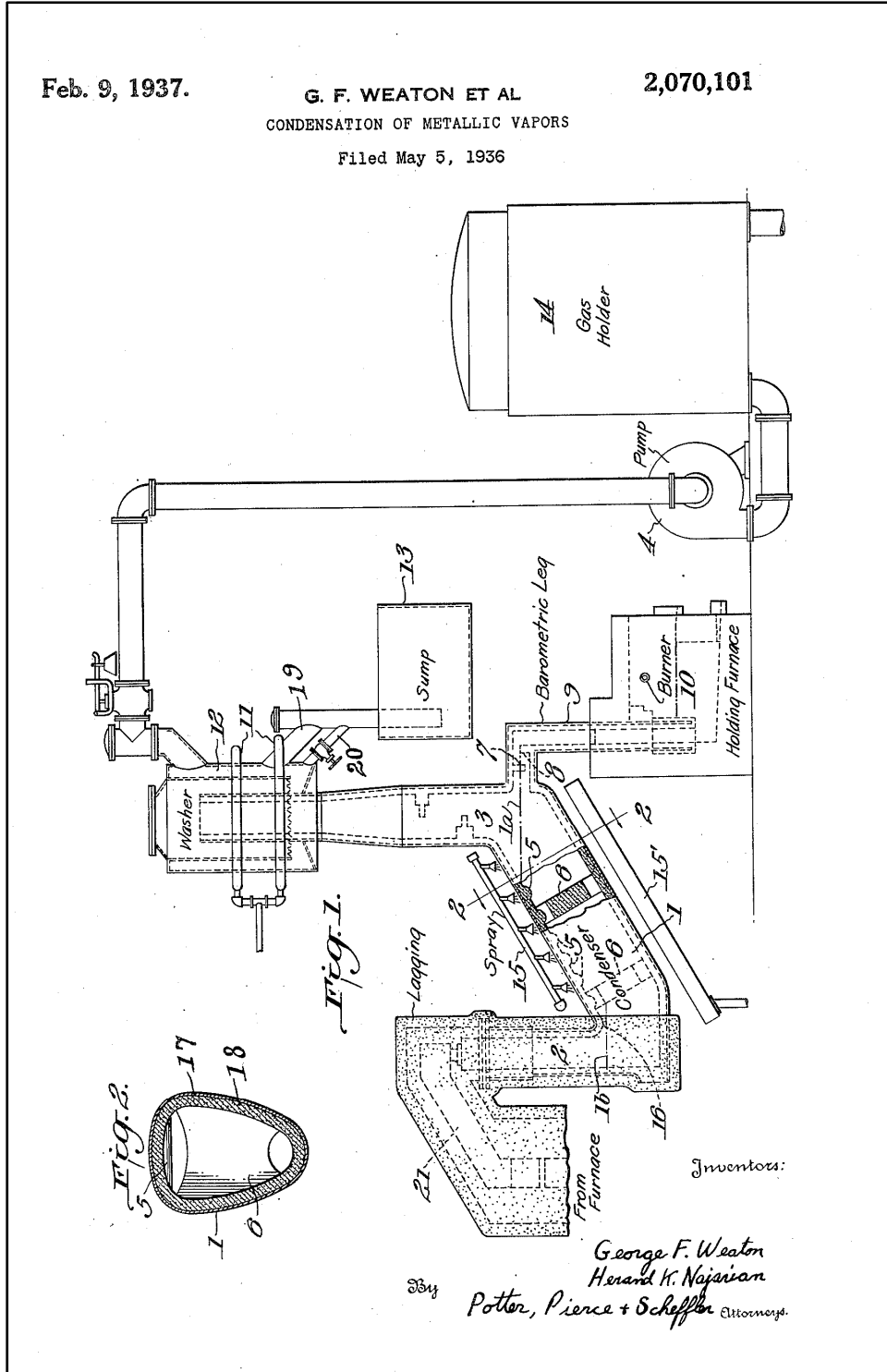


Figure 16. Condensation of metallic vapors, the “Weaton-Najarian condenser,” patent #2,070,101. The patent was filed May 5, 1936 and granted February 9, 1937.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed February 2016.

Market demand for St. Joe products boomed after 1936, increasing to a point where sales exceeded production. Part of this surge came from the U. S. Government, building up zinc stockpiles for defense purposes as early as 1939 when “war psychosis in September [Germany’s invasion of Poland and the start of World War II in Europe] created an unjustifiable demand.”<sup>45</sup> Needing more concentrates than its New York mines could provide, the company sourced zinc from additional domestic and international sources, including Quebec, Canada, and Argentina. As British-blockaded areas cut off access to a large percentage of the world’s zinc smelting capacity, pressure increased for facilities like Josephtown to increase production.<sup>46</sup>

The company executed substantial expansion plans at Josephtown, completed through 1941. A leach plant was constructed to treat fumes from sinter machines and recover lead, mercury, zinc, and cadmium—putting Josephtown in the cadmium business (Figure 17). Facilities expansion during this period also included two new hearth roasters, waste-heat boilers, two additional sinter machines, furnace plant and shop building additions, an employee cafeteria, a laboratory, a garage, and a thaw house. A St. Joe-devised system for palletizing zinc metal into unit loads and installation of the “Cam-O-Tactor” for removing furnace residue further improved operations.<sup>47</sup>



**Figure 17.** Pouring cadmium in the leach plant, constructed in 1937.<sup>48</sup>

The original management team, several of whom had participated in development of the zinc smelter at the St. Joseph Lead Company in Herculaneum, MO, certainly contributed to the

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<sup>45</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1939 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (February 21, 1940), 3.

<sup>46</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1940 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (February 21, 1941), 3.

<sup>47</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

successful launch and operation of the Joseph town smelter during a decade when so many businesses failed and people lost their jobs. That team consisted of:<sup>49</sup>

- E. C. Gaskill, division manager, who died October 11, 1930.
- George F. Weaton (“The Old Man”), division manager 1931-1954. He had been a consultant on the Missouri smelter experiments.
- W. C. Dowd, superintendent of Acid-Roaster-Sinter Plants, 1931-1943. Dowd had assisted in sinter and feed development at Missouri.
- L. W. Trudo (Louie), superintendent of Furnace Plant, 1931-1956. Trudo had been foreman in the Missouri project.
- James J. Rankin, head of Bag House for Zinc Oxide Department operations and plant laboratories, 1931-1957. Rankin had been the chief chemist at Herculaneum and in charge of refractories and pigment development on experimental work.
- W. B. MacBride, chief engineer at Joseph town, formerly in charge of engineering design on experimental work.
- A. B. Capron, experiment and development engineer.
- G. N. McClure, chief clerk, 1931-1955.
- T. Earl Halbrook, in charge of purchasing.
- Robert S. Havenhill, director, Rubber Laboratory, 1931-1957; director, Product and Service Laboratory, 1957-1964.
- Karl F. Peterson, director, Director Analytical Laboratory, 1931-1937; superintendent, Sinter-Leach Plants, 1937-1958.
- William G. Dow, superintendent, construction, 1935-1949.
- Everett E. Ryan, superintendent, yard, 1931-1961.

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<sup>49</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 3-4.

## 5. The Zinc Smelter: People, Process, and Products

The Joseph town plant grew and changed over time, reflecting new and improved, or abandoned technologies and products. These processes are described in detail in several company publications and professional journals.<sup>50</sup> Many of the facility alterations and additions are mentioned in the chronological sections of this report. This chapter seeks to provide a basic understanding of the manpower and technology that made the plant work, the products made, and as outlined in Table 1, the commercial market for St. Joe zinc metals and zinc oxides.

The yard, essentially a labor group, was the point of entry for most workers at the smelter, many who followed in the footsteps of family members. Assignments could vary from one day to the next: digging up rocks known as “St. Joe potatoes,” shoveling briquettes on the sinter incline, cleaning off sewer cleaning cables, railroad cleanup, cleaning out the furnace basement, among other tasks.<sup>51</sup> Within a few days to a few months, a department needing to fill a position pulled a laborer from the yard, or converted someone’s temporary assignment into a permanent one. St. Joe’s reputation as a good place to work attracted a constant influx of laborers to replenish the yard; the smelter’s round-the-clock, 365-day-a-year operation required a sizable workforce (1,200 employees in 1965 and a peak of 1,700 in 1978). Workers rotated weekly across three, eight-hour shifts: daylight, 6am-2pm; evening, 2-10pm; and night, 10pm-6am.

Jobs abounded in the smelter’s interrelated plants or departments— roaster, acid, sinter, furnace, zinc oxide, leach, and secondary materials. Smelter operation likewise relied on the efforts of engineers, scientists, lab technicians, bricklayers, electricians, pipefitters, machinists, millwrights, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, surveyors, and safety, security, administrative, railroad, paint shop, and other personnel.

Laborers started their tenure in the position within the department for which they were assigned or picked from the yard. The bid system provided opportunity for them to move within or between departments. Job openings posted on a bulletin board welcomed anyone to submit their name for consideration. “I had a family, so I looked for any job that paid more money than I was making . . . So a job came up in the bag house packing oxide, and a lot of people didn’t like that cause it was a steady job. You had to stay there for eight hours and pack. But it paid more money, so I bid over there.”<sup>52</sup> The selection for job openings hinged on seniority as well as experience. “Some jobs were very tough to get into like furnace operator. The higher paying jobs were obviously hard to get into. The older guys would want those jobs and also steady daylight jobs.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Joseph town Smelter* (1941); St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Joseph town Story 1931-1956* (1956); St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc* (1964); R.E. Lund, et al., “Joseph town Electrothermic Zinc Smelter of St. Joe Minerals Corporation, Monaca, Pennsylvania,” *AIME World Symposium on Mining & Metallurgy of Lead & Zinc* (January 1, 1970).

<sup>51</sup> Terry Frank, interview by Carol Perloff, Ellwood City, PA, September 28, 2016, transcript, 3, 8; John Murtha, interview by Carol Perloff, Sebring, OH, September 29, 2016, transcript, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Joe Strupek, interview by Carol Perloff, Clinton, PA, November 10, 2016, transcript, 7.

<sup>53</sup> John DeChellis, interview by Carol Perloff, Rochester, PA, November 11, 2016, transcript, 8.

**Table 1.** Zinc Smelting Division products, c. 1960\*

Zinc Concentrate (ore that contains zinc)									
Special High Grade Zinc Metal	Zinc Oxide (American Process)	Zinc Metal						Zinc Byproducts	
Zinc oxide (French process)		Galvanizing	Zinc die casting alloys	Brass making	Rolled zinc	Zinc dust	Miscellaneous	Sulfuric acid	Cadmium metal
Adhesive, tape, analytical reagents, artists' colors, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, printing ink, soap, tailor's chalk, photocopy paper	Abrasives, agricultural sprays, golf ball covers, paints, pigmented plastics, printing rolls, soil improvement, solid ties, window shade cloth	Bolts, chains, fencing, hardware, machinery, nuts, pipe and tubing, screws, shapes, sheets, tanks, transmission towers, structural, wire, wire cloth, containers, reinforcing steel	Automobile parts, clocks, electrical equipment, lawn mowers, lighting fixtures, locks, machine tools, meters, radios, refrigerators, slide fasteners, business machines, telephones, toys, vending machines, household appliances	Ammunition, bearings, castings and forgings, electrical fixtures, hardware, pipe, sheets, rods, tubes, wire, cosmetic containers	Addressing machine plates, automobile trim, boiler plates, caskets, roofing, siding, flashing, dry battery cups, engraving plates, eyelets, gaskets, glazier points, grommets, gutters, hull plates, jar tops, kalamein moldings, lithographer's plates, organ parts, name plates, radio parts, roof shingles, spinnings, stampings, termite shields, terrazzo strips, weatherstrip	Aniline dyes, fireworks, gold and silver refining, paint pigments, sherardizing, sugar refining, textile printing	Castings, commercial alloys, nickel silver, manganese bronze, wet battery elements, bronzing powders, desilverization of lead, wire for metallizing	Chemicals, coal tar products, electrolytes, explosives, fertilizer, lithopone, manufacturing other acids, oil refining, pyroxylin soap, steel pickling, tanning, textiles	Electroplating marine and airplane hardware and parts, nuts and bolts, wire, bullets, bearings, nickel-cadmium batteries, pigments

\* Adapted from St. Joseph Lead Company, "St. Joseph Lead Company" [company brochure] (c. 1960), 2-3, *Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, MSS 833.*

Employees may have stayed in the same position for at least 10 years.<sup>54</sup> The furnace plant required the most hands to operate (35-40 per shift) and offered the greatest variety of jobs and opportunities for advancement from the utility gang, which was responsible for cleanup, to supervisory positions for some (Figure 18). “Most of the older guys, once they got in the furnace plant, they tended to stay there. We had so many guys retire out of there that was in there from the time they started.”<sup>55</sup> Temperature extremes created brutal conditions in the furnace plant: full protective clothing and gear exacerbated summer heat, while in the winter, workers huddled near the furnaces to avoid freezing in the unheated mill.



**Figure 18.** Residue from the furnace tables worked with hand-bars before the “Cam-O-Tactor,” 1930s.<sup>56</sup>

The process started with the majority of zinc ore or concentrate arriving in gondola cars via the railroad spur built to Joseph town. It arrived in powdered form, with zinc content varying from 50 to 60 percent, sulfur about 32 percent, and other impurities including iron, cadmium, and lead. Cranes unloaded the zinc concentrate from the gondola cars into stockpiles either in the yard or under cover in the concentrate storage building, which could hold 10,000 tons of concentrate. Frozen concentrates were defrosted in a thaw building. A four-step electrothermic process transformed the concentrate into the plant’s primary products: three grades of zinc metal (High Grade, Intermediate, and Prime Western), each having its own circuit (furnace), and multiple

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<sup>54</sup> Gary Specht, interview by Carol Perloff, Aliquippa, PA, November 16, 2016, transcript, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Herman Specht, interview by Carol Perloff, Aliquippa, PA, September 29, 2016, transcript, 10.

<sup>56</sup> G. Specht, personal collection; St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 7.



grades of lead-free zinc oxide, tailored in purity to meet customers' needs. French process zinc oxide, made from Special High Grade zinc metal, had certain commercial and industrial applications that distinguished its product from American process zinc oxide, made directly from zinc concentrate. Valuable commercial by-products also included sulfuric acid and cadmium metal. The main processes for creating these products took place in the roaster plant, acid plant, sinter plant, leach plant, furnace plant, and bag house (Figures 19-20).

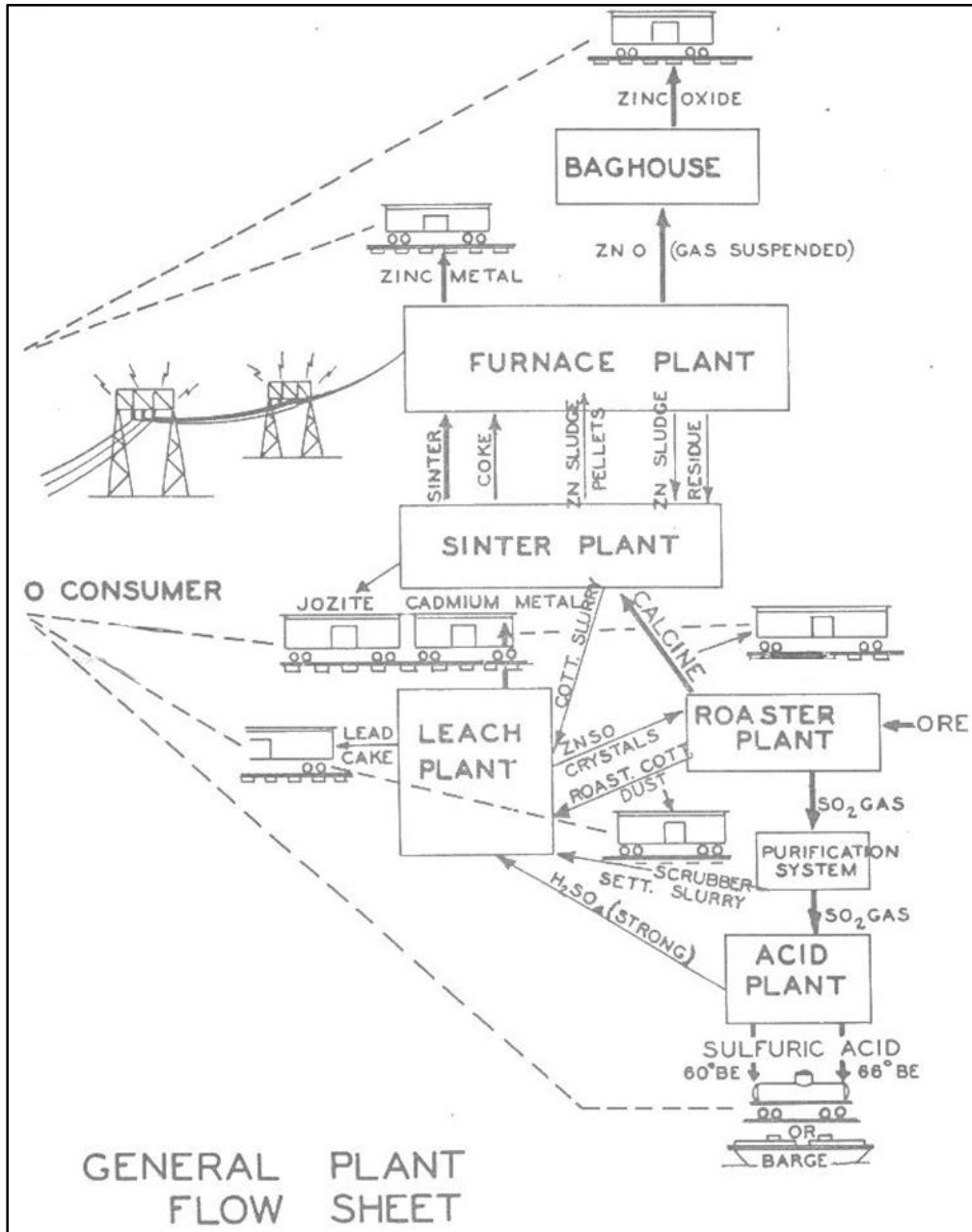


Figure 19. General Plant Flow Sheet, 1941.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Joseph town Smelter*, n.p.



### Roaster Plant

In the storage building, various compositions of zinc ore were blended in bins and conveyed on a belt to a dryer, and, from there, into large storage bins at the roaster plant (Figure 21). The purpose of the roaster was to burn the powdered concentrate, transforming zinc into a crude zinc oxide called calcine—an intermediate product from which final zinc products would be made—and sulfur into sulfur dioxide. The roaster also removed impurities such as iron, cadmium, and lead from the ore.



Figure 21. Ore storage bins at the roaster plant.<sup>59</sup>

St. Joe began operations with hearth roasters and subsequently added flash and fluid roasters, for a total of nine roasters (Figure 22). Five Nichols-Herreshoff hearth roasters, each about 22 feet in diameter and 40 feet high, had 12 closed hot hearths and one feeder or drying hearth, all stacked on top of each other. Ore was dropped in the top and raked across the hearths, burning for approximately 12 hours at temperatures ranging from 720 to 950°C, until it descended to the bottom as calcine (Figure 23). The products of combustion released heat in the form of steam, an energy source cycled back into the plant. Three Bethlehem Suspension (flash-type) roasters, 25 feet in diameter and 44 feet high, consisted of only four hearths. From the drying hearth, ore passed through a ball mill, where it was ground to pass through a 325-mesh screen. It was then blown back into the roaster through a burner, igniting immediately to form calcine, which dropped to the bottom of the roaster, and sulfur dioxide. A screw conveyor moved the calcine to

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<sup>59</sup> Frank, photograph collection.



the sinter plant or storage tanks. One fluid roaster, the most modern type, had a conveyor feed that took the concentrate to a perforated grid plate about a quarter of the way up. A burner above the bed ignited the ore, while air under pressure passed through the bed to sustain combustion. The burning concentrate rose until calcine spilled over into a discharge channel.<sup>60</sup>

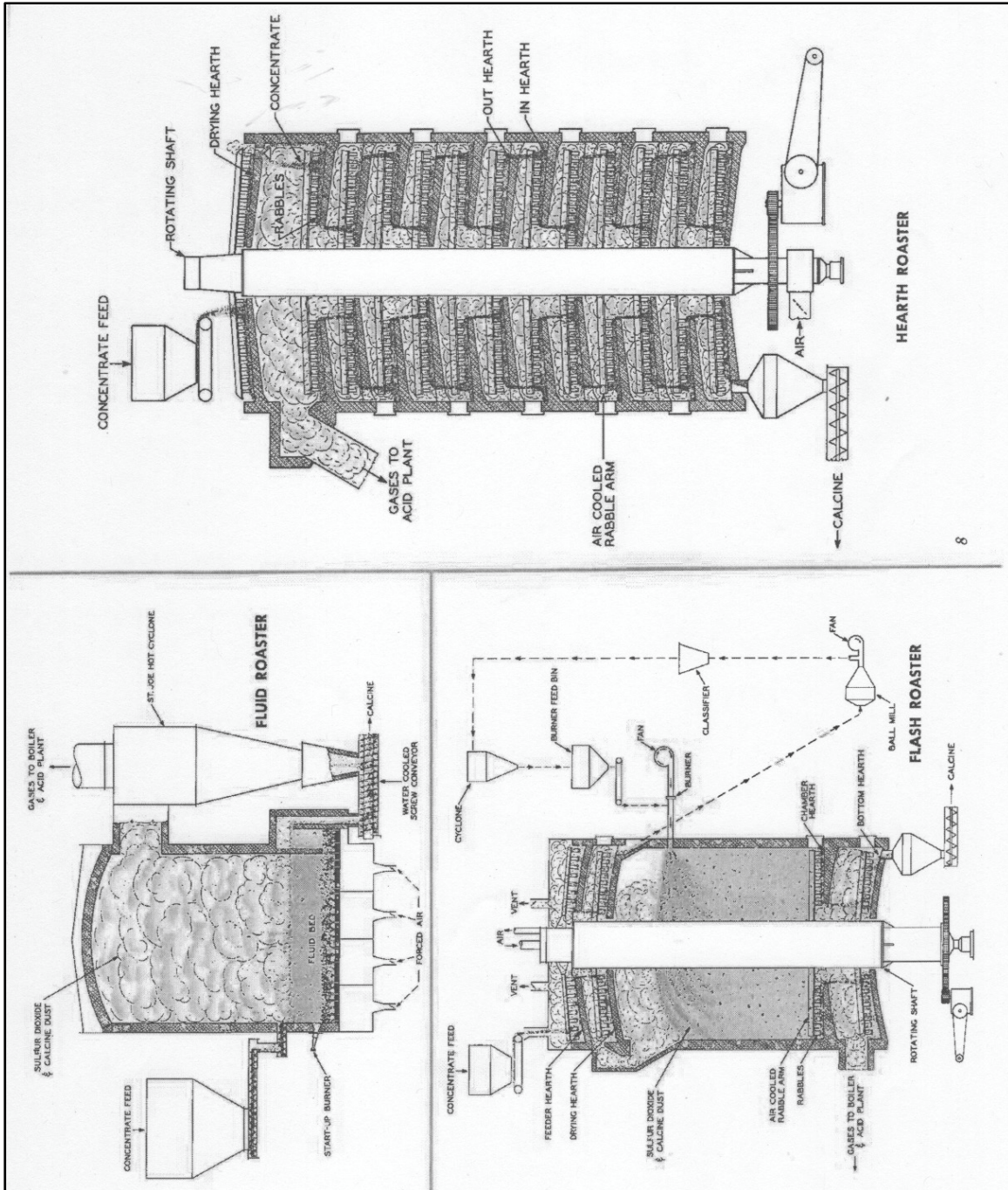


Figure 22. Hearth, flash, and fluid roasters.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Josephtown Story 1931-1956*, 9-10; St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc*, n.p.

<sup>61</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Josephtown Story 1931-1956*, 8.



Figure 23. Drying hearth in the hearth roaster.<sup>62</sup>

The roasting process also produced a clean sulfuric dioxide acid gas for further treatment in the acid plant. Dust, created from red-hot ore scraped across the hearths, carried over with the gases and was removed in the Cottrell electrical precipitator. The Cottrell consisted of a system of wires and plates; the former negatively charged the dust particles and then positively charged plates removed the dust from the gas stream. Dust roaster operations reduced sulfides to oxides prior to treatment in the leach plant for lead, zinc, and cadmium recovery. “. . . most other roasters operated by putting slight suction on the furnace, whereas ours operated under pressure. . . the unique way that we introduced the air and the feed, I think made it somewhat more efficient. And I think they had a patent on it for a while.”<sup>63</sup> By 1969, operating the roaster plant required the work of an 11-man crew for each of the three daily shifts, an 11-man utility crew for the day shift, and a 16-man millwright crew that serviced both the roaster and acid plants.<sup>64</sup> The roaster closed down in 1979 and most of the roaster plant was torn down in 1980.

### **Acid Plant**

The acid plant converted sulfur dioxide gas created in the roaster into commercial grade sulfuric acid. The hot gas went through a system of cooling, scrubbing, and drying to remove dust and water. In the converter heat exchange system, vanadium pent oxide catalyst changed sulfur dioxide into sulfur trioxide, the precursor to sulfuric acid. Heat generated from the exothermic reaction in turn provided the heat needed to treat the gases.<sup>65</sup> The sulfuric trioxide passed into towers where it was absorbed by 98 percent sulfuric acid, which then was cut to various commercial grade strengths.<sup>66</sup> By 1969, the acid plant required three men, including a shift foreman, to operate six contact acid units. Loading acid and maintaining equipment took the work of an eight-man utility crew on day shift only (Figures 24-25).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>63</sup> John Pusateri, interview with Carol Perloff, Pittsburgh, PA, November 15, 2016, transcript, 24.

<sup>64</sup> Lund, et al., 556.

<sup>65</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Josephtown Smelter*, 2.

<sup>66</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc*, n.p.

<sup>67</sup> Lund, et al., 557.





**Figure 24.** Acid tanks.<sup>68</sup>



**Figure 25.** Loading sulfuric acid into a barge for transport on the Ohio River. Acid was also shipped in tank trucks and tank railroad cars.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>69</sup> Frank, photograph collection.



## Sinter Plant

The sinter plant performed five mechanical processes: sizing coke for use in the sinter mix and furnaces; separating residue; making a high zinc bearing material called “blue powder” into pellets to return to the furnaces; grinding calcine to produce “Jozite,” an iron-bearing zinc oxide; and most importantly, converting calcine—high concentrate zinc made in the roaster plant—into a material to charge the electrothermic furnaces. Converting the calcine was done on two different systems, Prime Western and High Grade. For the Prime Western system, calcine was mixed with silica, sand, coke, and residue from the Prime Western furnaces, Dracco dust collector system, and other materials. The sintering machines burned out the coke and fused the remaining material into a strong porous mass, which was then crushed and sized for the furnace (Figure 26). The machines were made up of traveling grates called pallets that move slowly through an ignition furnace. Then they moved over “wind boxes” where a downdraft of about 45,000 cubic feet of air per minute burned the coke out of the charge. The material fused into a strong porous mass, which was crushed and sized for use in fueling the furnaces. In 1932 the sinter plant produced 8,261 tons of sinter; production reached 293,327 tons in 1963.<sup>70</sup>

One of the things that set apart St. Joe’s sintering operations from other companies was that “the product must be of uniform chemical composition, hard and porous, and carefully sized to provide suitable feed for electrothermic furnaces.”<sup>71</sup> For the purer, High Grade system, silica sand and dust containing impurities were omitted and a two-step process removed additional impurities. After a first pass through the sinter machine made a “soft” sinter, a top portion of the sinter cake with fewer impurities was sliced off and sintered again mixed with other zinc bearing materials and silica sand to make High Grade Hard Sinter. The bottom part of the sinter cake was re-circulated.<sup>72</sup>



**Figure 26.** Muffle for igniting charge on Dwight Lloyd Sintering Machines, 1930s.

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<sup>70</sup> G. Specht, personal collection; St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc* (1964), n.p.; St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 6.

<sup>71</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Zinc Oxides: Technical Data for the Consumers* (NY:1950), 15.

<sup>72</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc*, n.p.; Lund, 558.

The sinter, as well as furnace processes, created great quantities of fumes and dust. A sinter expansion program in 1956-1957 added a new sinter machine, a new office building that also housed some of yard and electrical supervision, and a new Cottrell and conditioning tower. Cottrells were part of the reclaiming process in the collection of dust and gases from the sinter plant.<sup>73</sup> The High Grade and Prime Western circuits each had its own dust collecting system to recover and return dust to its circuit. By the late 1960s, the Joseph town plant used magnetic separators to remove high iron particles, “Air float” pneumatic tables (designed by St. Joe and modeled after coal cleaning) to recover free coke, and a heavy media circuit to separate remaining zinc into zinc-rich fractions to feed into sintering and zinc-lean slag to be sold as ballast. Other residue was treated in the leach plant. Running the sinter plant required a 14-man crew, three shifts a day; a 23-man crew on day shift for the heavy media circuit and utility work; and a 22-man maintenance crew to service the plant.<sup>74</sup>

### **Leach Plant**

The leach plant processed and purified by-product materials: dust and fumes from the sinter plant, and weak acid bearing lead, zinc, and cadmium from the acid plant. These materials, fed to a continuous settler, were mixed with acid solution, then treated with various processes: insolubility and filtration obtained lead, electrochemical replacement and distillation obtained cadmium, and evaporation and crystallization obtained zinc.<sup>75</sup> Very pure cadmium metal (99.5 percent) was cast into balls, slabs or “pencils” (Figure 27). The residue in lead contained small quantities of gold, silver, and indium; this product, called “lead cake,” was also sold. Operating the leach plant required a five-man crew on each of three shifts, a 10-man utility crew on day shift, and a five-man maintenance crew.<sup>76</sup> The leach plant closed down in 1979 and was torn down in 1980.



**Figure 27.** Weighing cadmium balls in the leach plant.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, March 1957: 25.

<sup>74</sup> Lund, et al., 561-62.

<sup>75</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Joseph town Smelter*, 2.

<sup>76</sup> Lund, et al., 564-65.

<sup>77</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

### ***Furnace Plant***

While the number and sizes of furnaces changed over time, as did their designation for High Grade, Intermediate Grade, and Prime Western circuits for making different end products, the underlying operation in the furnace plant relied upon the electrothermic process. Preheated coke, the principal electrical conductor, and zinc-bearing materials (sinter and metallic secondaries) were fed continuously into the furnaces. Separate High Grade and Prime Western machines in the sinter plant helped control the making of products with distinct qualities in the furnace plant. The quality of coke and secondary materials fed into the furnace also affected the makeup of the products. Graphic electrodes introduced the electrical energy that developed the heat energy needed for smelting to take place. The power level of the furnaces varied, depending upon the product being made. For example, High Grade and oxide furnaces operated at lower levels to minimize the amount of impurities that would pass along with fumed zinc into the next step.<sup>78</sup>

There were furnaces for making zinc metal and furnaces for making zinc oxide. For zinc metal, zinc-rich furnace vapors bubbled through a water spray-cooled condenser developed at Joseph town (Figure 28). The condenser was a U-tube built of steel, lined with mica and carborundum brick, and filled with molten zinc. Most of the vapor was condensed in the molten zinc; the balance was removed as “blue powder” in the water scrubbing process that followed. The scrubbed gas (carbon monoxide) was recycled for use in the plant. Workers ladled 1,400 to 1,500 pounds of condensed metal into slabs. The standard slab weighed about 45 pounds, although some custom orders weighed as much as 60 pounds each (Figure 29). Removing slag buildup in the furnaces routinely led to brick lining repairs; at any time, these and other repairs kept two of the 17 furnaces out of service for shut down and rebuild.<sup>79</sup>

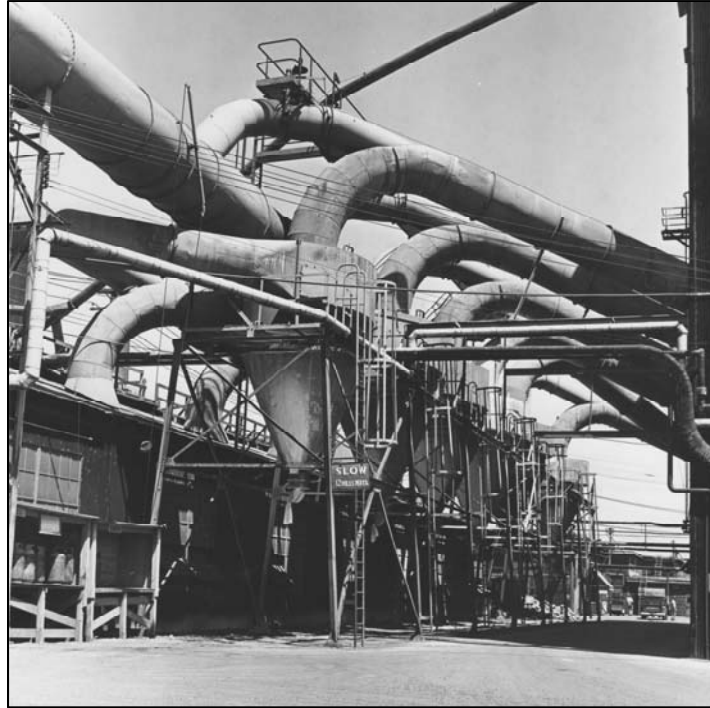
For the making of zinc oxide, gases containing zinc in the oxide furnaces were immediately mixed with air, which produced zinc oxide and carbon dioxide. A system of large fans and tuyeres (nozzles or pipes through which air is blown into the furnace) created suction that moved the suspended zinc oxide gas from the oxide furnace to the bag house (Figure 30). Residue produced in the furnace plant, including slag, coke, low-grade ferrosilicon, and unsmelted zinc, was recovered and recycled.<sup>80</sup> For roughly three decades, the St. Joe Smelter produced American process zinc oxide, which means it was produced directly from zinc ore.

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<sup>78</sup> Charles O. Bounds, “Modernization of the Monaca Electrothermic Zinc Smelter,” *Journal of Metals* (August 1983), 32; Lund, et al., 565.

<sup>79</sup> Lund, et al., 565; St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Joseph town Smelter*, 3; St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Electro Thermic Zinc* (1964), n.p.; Earl Shamp, interview by Carol Perloff, Monaca, PA, October 13, 2016, transcript, 13.

<sup>80</sup> Lund, et al., 565; St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Joseph town Smelter*, 3.



**Figure 28.** Cooling water lines to furnace plant. Furnace maintenance shop (formerly a carpenter shop in the 1960s and '70s) in lower left.<sup>81</sup>



**Figure 29.** Casting zinc metal, c. 1964.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>82</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.





**Figure 30.** Blowing air into the oxide furnace with tuyeres, 1930s.<sup>83</sup>

In 1959, St. Joe erected a zinc refinery with a dedicated circuit to produce 99.99+% Special High Grade zinc metal for galvanizing and the manufacturing of zinc die castings (Figure 31). Molten metal in ladles moved in an overhead system from the furnace plant to the refinery. There, more impurities like lead and cadmium were removed and the zinc was run through oxide columns to make a pure zinc oxide for use in food products and medicines.<sup>84</sup> The 99.99+% metallic zinc was also converted into a zinc oxide product known as French Process zinc oxide; its commercial uses included cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and photocopy paper. As of 1969, 344 people were needed to operate the furnace plant and refinery.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

<sup>84</sup> G. Specht, oral history transcript, 11-12.

<sup>85</sup> Lund, 570.



Figure 31. Pouring zinc anodes in the refinery.<sup>86</sup>

### **Bag House (Zinc Oxide Department)**

The bag house at Joseph town was somewhat unique in that the entire operation of collecting, blending, screening and packaging was integrated into a single unit. In the bag house, zinc oxide suspension from the furnace plant was blown through a cyclone to remove large particles of oxide, mixed with cold air to reduce its temperature, and then passed through 45-foot-high cloth filter bags to remove the oxide particles (Figure 32). These particles next went through a blending, screening, and packing operation, where packers loaded and sealed the product in 50-pound bags of “St. Joe Lead-Free Zinc Oxide” (Figures 33-34).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>87</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Joseph town Smelter*, 4.



Figure 32. The oxide department bag house, 1930s.<sup>88</sup>



Figure 33. Zinc oxide packer.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

<sup>89</sup> Frank, photograph collection.



Figure 34. Zinc oxide storage building, 1930s.<sup>90</sup>

### **Secondary Materials Plant**

The purpose of the secondary materials plant, which opened in 1954, was to make a good feed product from smelter byproducts, such as blue powder (zinc that escaped the furnace condensers), and zinc waste in the form of skimmings and drosses (somewhat oxidized forms of zinc) (Figure 35). Secondary materials were a cheaper source of raw material and cheaper to process than mined zinc ore. Blue powder was processed, pressed into briquettes, dried, and reintroduced into the smelter. St. Joe purchased skimmings and additional zinc waste from galvanizers and die casters—the same customers who bought the zinc. The materials went through a size classification system. Very fine material (“fines”) were more oxidic in nature; they were sent to the sinter plant to be combined with the sinter mix and then returned to the furnaces or to the briquette plant, where they were mixed with blue powder to form briquettes for feed. Larger material, like parts from cars, carburetors, and grills, were more metallic in nature; they could be fed through bins in the furnace plant directly into the furnace without being converted into anything else first. In the early 1980s, the secondary materials department was simplified to produce only two feed products: metallic for the electrothermic and Larvik furnaces, and oxidics for the sinter plant. Secondary material recycling was enhanced with more material to reduce feed costs from ore.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

<sup>91</sup> Tom Janeck, interview by Carol Perloff, Erie, PA, May 23, 2017, transcript, 18-19; Fred Knight, interview by Carol Perloff, Beaver Falls, PA, October 15, 2016, transcript, 2; Bounds, 34.





Figure 35. Secondary materials plant, 1955.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *President's Report to Employees* (1955).

## 6. The War Years: 1941-1945

*War has brought a great many improvements industrially in a good many processes. We ourselves have learned things during the war, which we believe will lead to making the jobs in the plant more interesting and further improve working conditions . . .*  
(George F. Weaton, Plant Manager, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1945)<sup>93</sup>

On January 7, 1941, exactly 11 months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor would plunge the United States into World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8629, establishing the Office of Production Management (OPM) to mobilize the nation's industrial resources needed for defense. Zinc metal, much needed for war production, fell under OPM's "Priority Control." Initially, St. Joseph Lead Company and other zinc producers had to set aside a certain percentage of their monthly zinc production for defense purposes. In March 1941, the federal government set price controls for lead and zinc to increase production with minimal inflation. On June 10, 1941, OPM placed zinc under 100 percent Priority Control, launching Joseph town into a full-scale war production program that would change the composition of the plant's work product and workforce.<sup>94</sup>

Perhaps the most notable product shift for war production was the Government requiring St. Joseph Lead to suspend the making of Prime Western zinc metal in favor of High Grade zinc metal only—better suited for armaments manufacturing. Along with copper, zinc metal is a key component in brass. Ammunition for everything from small arms and machine gun cartridges to airplane cannon and anti-tank guns required brass. Zinc die castings, which contain up to 96 percent zinc, went into the production of hand grenades and aviation equipment, as well as parts for tanks, trucks, tractors, and motor cars. Zinc sheets rolled from slab zinc metal were used for massive boiler construction and hull plates for Navy ship construction. Zinc metal, utilized in galvanizing, provided a protective coating against rust or corrosion from salt water or air. Other products that relied on galvanizing included barbed wire, power transmission equipment, hardware, plumbing and piping, fuel cans and drums, and powder containers. Zinc metal produced at Joseph town also went into corrugated and flat steel sheets used to construct barracks and other buildings. Propellers on naval and merchant vessels and parts for airplanes were made from zinc alloys. The rubber industry utilized zinc oxide to manufacture heavy-duty rubber tires and tank treads. Zinc oxide was also necessary for paints for camouflage and protective purposes, brake linings, and optical glass. Joseph town zinc by-products, too, had a place in the war effort: cadmium metal in bearing metals and electroplating of steel parts, and sulfuric acid for the manufacture of rayon, explosives, storage batteries, and other products.<sup>95</sup>

Despite the departure of 127 Joseph town employees (including six fatalities) who served in the Armed Forces, the plant workforce increased from 396 employees at the start of 1940 to 486 employees in 1942. Daily zinc production grew from 78.7 tons in 1939 to 100.5 tons in 1940, 160 tons in 1941, and an anticipated 165 tons in 1942.<sup>96</sup> From 1943 to 1944, the plant increased its zinc production by 330 tons with 7.2 percent fewer employees. Long hours on the job helped

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<sup>93</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1945: 2.

<sup>94</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Notes on Joseph town Smelter*, 13.

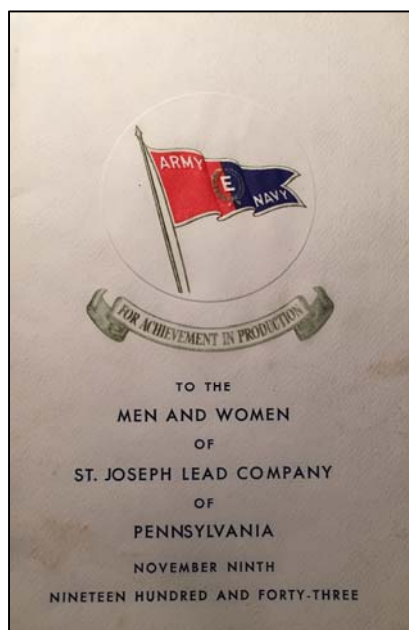
<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

the plant sustain higher production levels: 41 people worked more than 60 hours per week for 52 weeks.<sup>97</sup> One of the lessons from the war years that would carry forward was operating the smelter with improved manpower efficiency.

For the St. Joseph Lead Company as a whole, gross profits were down due to increased costs of supplies, less efficiency caused by the substitution of experienced workers with those having less experience, and higher wages.<sup>98</sup> By January 1946, average hourly wages were 49 percent higher than they were during the last pre-war month of August 1939; take-home pay for hourly workers was even larger as the company covered employee contributions to the Retirement Plan during the war period.<sup>99</sup>

To meet production demands for the war effort, St. Joe Lead turned to Canada, South America, and other domestic mining operations to purchase zinc concentrates—in addition to zinc sourced from its New York mines. The company also likely introduced secondary-sourced materials during WWII to increase production.<sup>100</sup> In 1943, St. Joseph Lead Company of Pennsylvania received the Army-Navy “E” Award for achievement in production (Figures 36-37). Three additional stars later acknowledged the plant’s ongoing contribution to the war effort.



**Figure 36.** Army-Navy “E” Award, 1943.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1945: 1.

<sup>98</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1943 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 11, 1944), 2, Science Industry and Business Library, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

<sup>99</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1945 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 15, 1946), 1.

<sup>100</sup> Donald I. Bleiwas and Carl DiFrancesco, *Historical Zinc Smelting in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C., with Estimates of Atmospheric Zinc Emissions and Other Materials, Open-File Report 2010-1131* (U.S. Department of the Interior, U. S. Geological Survey, 2010) 99, 101.

<sup>101</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.



**Figure 37.** Army-Navy "E" Day Committee. Robert F. Mitchell, Roy W. Miller, Mildred B. Link, G.F. Weaton, Paul Marthens, and Louis E. Taylor.<sup>102</sup>

Like industries throughout the wartime nation, Joseph town added more women to its payroll, some in positions previously held by men (Figure 38). A war-era employee photo album points to women comprising about 12 percent of the workforce. While the majority of them worked in salary/payroll, they also worked alongside men in the bag house, roaster plant, furnace plant, mechanical and electrical departments, and store room; women were absent from the sinter and leach plants, acid plant, and yard.<sup>103</sup> Several women averaged 48 hours a week throughout the entire year of 1944. In 1945, the company reduced the retirement age for women from 65 to 60, with no reduction in annuity payments.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps this pathway to early retirement was intended to create additional job opportunities for men returning from military service. Local schoolboys, too young to serve in the Armed Forces, also pitched in, working in the bag house and elsewhere during weekends and other free time.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

<sup>103</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, Photo album of company employees, c. 1941-1945, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.

<sup>104</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1945: 1.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.



**Figure 38.** Mary E. Cavric, one of dozens of women working during the war years.<sup>106</sup>

The challenges of managing wartime rationing, transportation, and manpower shortages fell on the shoulders of Robert F. Mitchell. A member of the Research Department, Mitchell served as personnel director during the war years.<sup>107</sup> With the shortage of resources, relatively little construction took place at the plant. Two notable exceptions were an extension to the guardhouse, a security precaution that made it easier to monitor the plant gate, gas pump, and traffic from the highway, and alterations to part of the oxide storage building into an auditorium to facilitate plant meetings.<sup>108</sup> St. Joe would build a freestanding auditorium in the post-war years (see Chapters 7, 11).

Organized in October 1942, the Women's Auxiliary consisted of the wives of plant workers. Some of these members (29 as of November 1943) stepped up to fill positions in the plant; the Auxiliary also recommended women outside the employee community to join the St. Joseph Lead workforce. The Women's Auxiliary sold war bonds in the cafeteria and gatehouse, sought blood bank donors, sponsored first aid classes, sent Christmas packages to employees, and shared expertise on home canning and planting Victory Gardens.<sup>109</sup> The company also sent copies of *The St. Joe Catalyst*, the company newsletter, to its employees serving overseas.

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<sup>106</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, Photo album of company employees, c. 1941-1945, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.

<sup>107</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 6-7.

<sup>108</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1945:10.

<sup>109</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, November 1943: 12; *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1945: 15, 22.



*Letter to Mr. Weaton:*<sup>110</sup>

*I think it is wonderful that you and the men at the plant have achieved so much during the war and I sincerely hope that all of us fellows who have been away are back in there helping to make the plant greater than it is at present. Receiving The St. Joe Catalyst is just like a hometown newspaper as it keeps a fellow up with what is going on back there at home.*

*Jimmie Duff  
Paris, France  
July 12, 1945*

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<sup>110</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1945: 17.

## 7. Mid-20th-Century Expansion: 1946-1969

At the end of World War II, Veterans returned to their jobs at the zinc smelter and the company hired additional workers seeking employment. “I kept applying to St. Joe and finally got in. Now, at that time, St. Joe was almost a family place. Everybody was related or knew each other.”<sup>111</sup> With a dedicated workforce, St. Joseph Lead Company embarked on the Josephtown Expansion Program to increase production and improve working conditions. For perspective on this growth, compare capital expenditures at Josephtown of \$3,096 in 1945 to \$699,645 in 1946, \$5,316,460 in 1947, and \$1,776,183 in 1948.<sup>112</sup> Some of the major improvements during this post-World War II-era of reinvestment in the plant’s infrastructure included: a zinc oxide storage building, larger condensers, a new circuit and flash roasters capable of direct production of Prime Western zinc metal without having to make and debase High Grade first, furnace plant expansion to house four new furnaces, acid plant expansion, a new Dracco conveyor system, three new Cottrells to handle fumes in the sinter plant, a new office building, and more laboratory space (Figures 39-40). Expansion also meant staffing up—beyond returning servicemen—and training new hires, roughly 250 in 1946 alone.<sup>113</sup>



Figure 39. Acid plant expansion, c. 1948.<sup>114</sup>

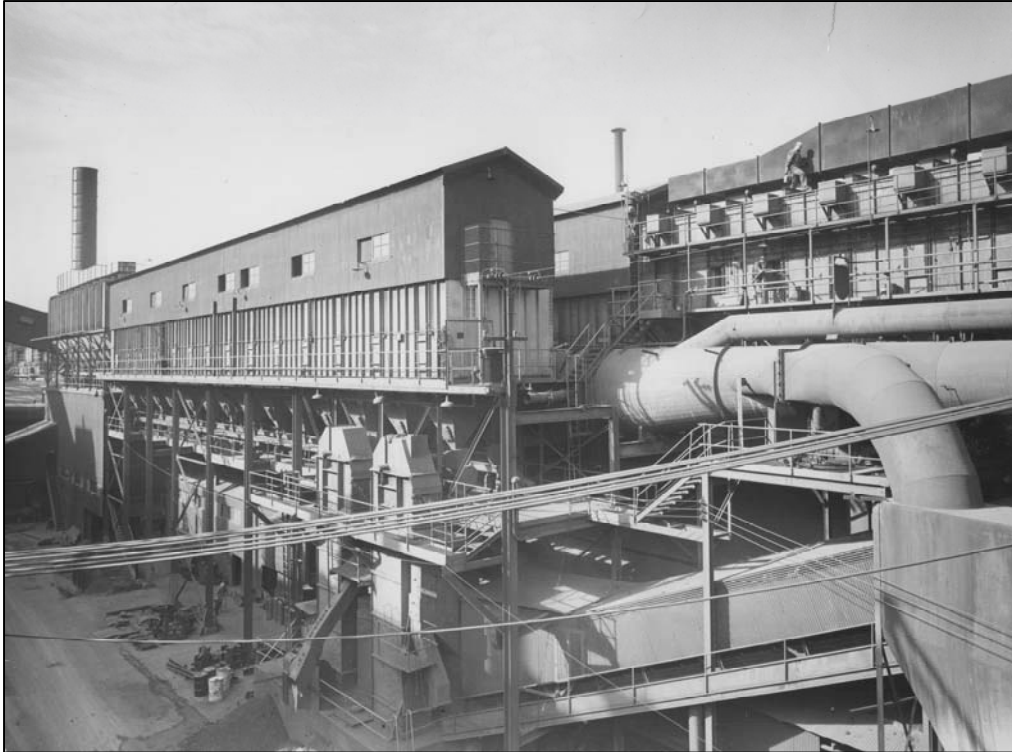
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<sup>111</sup> Murtha, 3.

<sup>112</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1953 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1954), 5.

<sup>113</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, September 1946: 1.

<sup>114</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection; St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 14.



**Figure 40.** Dracco conveyor system. The system removed dust and impurities from the sinter plant.<sup>115</sup>

Only five years after the Allied victory in World War II, the U. S. Government was rebuilding the nation's military strength for the Cold War. St. Joseph Lead Company embarked on a 10-year program (1950-1960) to support national defense interests. Andrew Fletcher, president of the company, projected accomplishing these goals in three years. As he reported to employees in 1950,

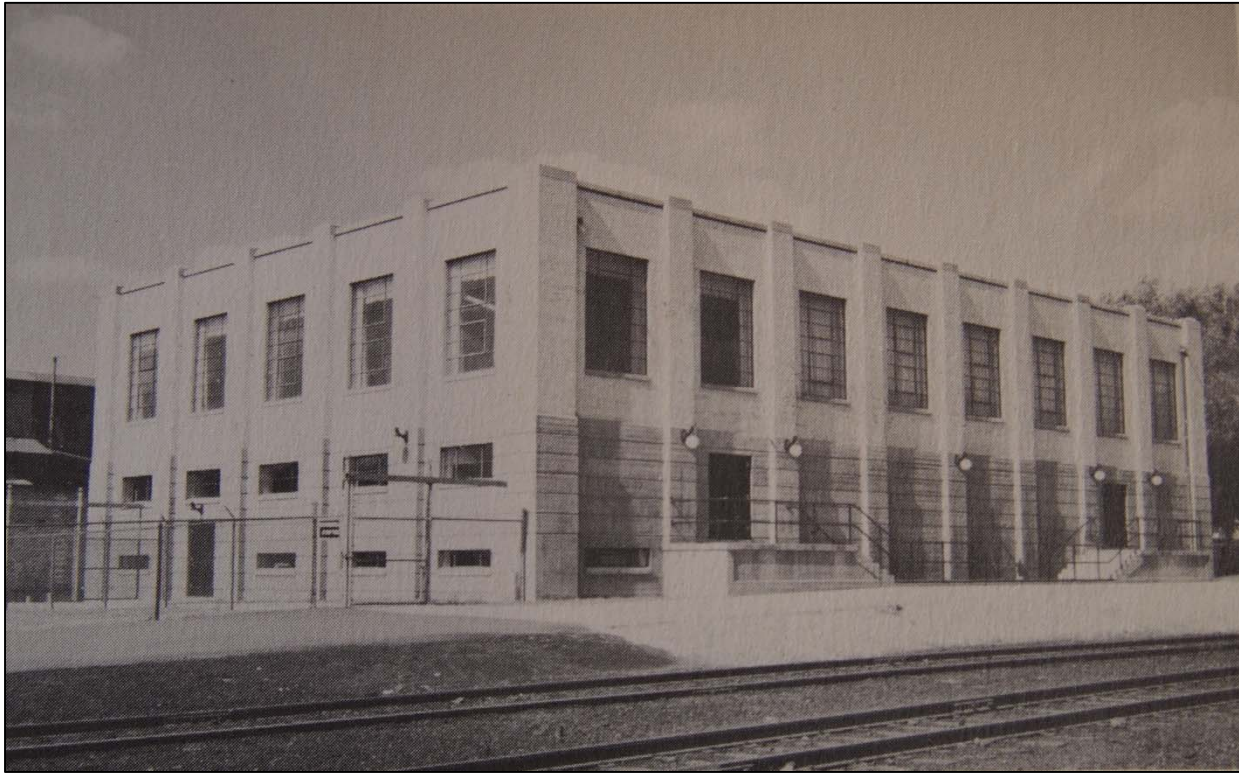
Zinc being a constituent of brass, is of direct military significance, and its alloys are essential in zinc base die castings for airplanes, trucks and other military equipment—steel is protected through galvanizing by zinc. Other products, such as zinc oxide, sulphuric acid and cadmium, are even more indispensable in the current rearmament program. . . Our jobs are important, because what we produce is vitally needed for National Defense.<sup>116</sup>

A new electric furnace, expected to increase output by 10 percent, was built to maximize the full capacity of roasting, sintering, and acid facilities. St. Joe completed several other construction projects in the early 1950s, including: a compressor and turbine building (to utilize waste heat from roasters), a zinc packing plant for the zinc oxide department, a water reservoir, an Emergency Response Building, a scale house, ore shed, bag house No. 2, and, likely most appreciated by the employees, an auditorium (Figure 41). Located next to the administration building, the auditorium or “gym” provided additional facilities for plant meetings and became a hub for employee social and recreational activities (see Chapter 11).

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<sup>115</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>116</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1950 President's Report to Employees* (March 21, 1951), 2.



**Figure 41.** Auditorium, 1952.

Just as previous world and national events had affected operations at the Joseph town smelter, so, too, did the Korean War. With the outbreak of the war, the U. S. Government established ceiling prices for lead and zinc, while prices increased abroad. This action created an artificial domestic shortage of zinc, a large increase in imported metals, and unsold inventory at Joseph town that resulted in curtailed production. St. Joseph Lead, along with other companies, sought relief from Congress and the Eisenhower Administration in the form of import quotas, domestic subsidies, additional purchases for government stockpiling, and tariff adjustments.<sup>117</sup> Eisenhower opted for stockpiling lead and zinc ores and metals to have an adequate supply for an emergency and to stimulate and subsidize the lead-zinc industry (Figure 42).<sup>118</sup> The direct impact of that decision is unclear, but by May 1954, the plant was seeing improved prices and increased demand for zinc production.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1953 President's Report to Employees* (March 1954), 2; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1953 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 17, 1954), 2-3.

<sup>118</sup> Patricia E. Perkins, *World Metal Markets: The United States Strategic Stockpile and Global Market Influence* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 32, ebook accessed September 20, 2017, <https://books.google.com>.

<sup>119</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1954 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 12, 1955), 6.





**Figure 42.** Storage of zinc slabs. St. Joe stockpiled zinc for government emergencies.<sup>120</sup>

Expansion and improvement projects in the mid-1950s continued with additional furnaces and new buildings for personnel, a change house, heavy maintenance, lubricant storage, motor storage, and wastewater treatment. An extension to the Furnace Plant to house No. 15 furnace was underway in 1957, with plans for furnaces 16 and 17 in the future.<sup>121</sup> A secondary materials plant for producing briquettes went into production in 1954. At a new river dock, a whirly gantry crane unloaded zinc concentrates shipped in barges from the mines, and barges laden with zinc metals were shipped to customers, largely in Pittsburgh. St. Joe added a Direct Reader Spectrometry Laboratory for the analysis of zinc metal, oxides, and calcines, and constructed a fluid-bed roaster for more economical and effective production of high-grade zinc metal products and oxide (Josephtown patented the two-stage roasting process) (Figure 43).<sup>122</sup> Annual reports point to an increase in zinc production at the Josephtown smelter from 108,172 tons in 1952 to 134,023 tons in 1956—a roughly 24 percent increase.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

<sup>121</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, March 1957: 25.

<sup>122</sup> Bleiwas and DiFrancesco, 105; “How Applied Research at Josephtown Stimulated Production and Markets,” *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 114.

<sup>123</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1952 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 16, 1953), 6; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1956 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 20, 1957), 8.





**Figure 43.** Pin shaper in Direct Reader Spectrometry Laboratory.  
Used to prepare zinc pins for sampling content.<sup>124</sup>

The most monumental construction project of the decade was the George F. Weaton Station. The company developed plans for the new power station in 1955. The objective was to provide the power needed for the plant's furnaces to increase monthly slab zinc production from 10,000 to 12,000 tons. The \$20-million budget for capital expenditures also included additions to the roaster, sinter, furnace, and acid plants, new continuous casting machine for the automatic casting and palletizing of slab zinc, as well as subsidiary facilities.<sup>125</sup>

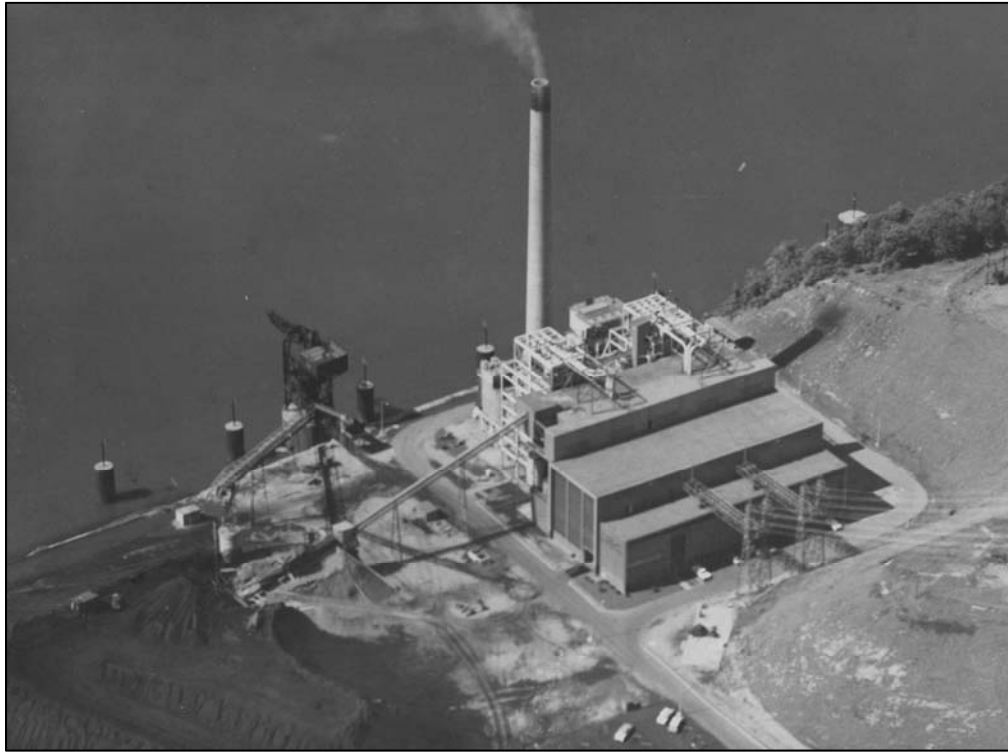
Between 1956 and 1958, St. Joseph Lead Company constructed the coal-fired power plant on land acquired from the Beaver County Home and Hospital. Equipped with two coal-fired, 50,000kw turbo generators with a combined capacity of 120 megawatts, the George F. Weaton Station supplemented purchased electricity with a low-cost, reliable energy supply (Figures 44-45). The concern for reliability in part may have stemmed from events of 1946. Labor disputes within Duquesne Power Company, St. Joe Lead's energy supplier, disrupted plant operations on three separate occasions; production of slab zinc equivalent was down four percent from the prior year.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>125</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1955 President's Report to Employees* (March 19, 1956), 8-9.

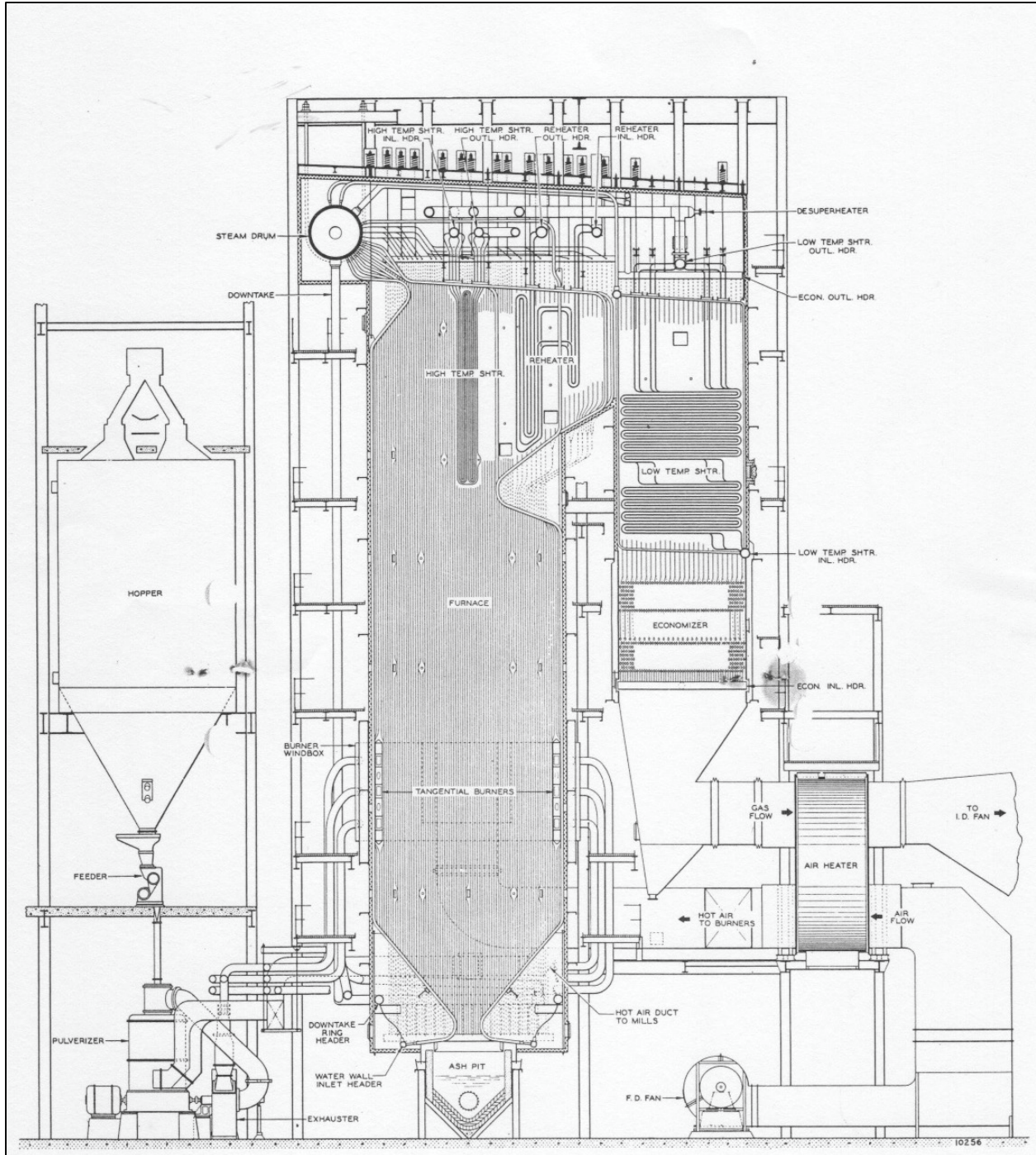
<sup>126</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1946 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 15, 1947), 2.



**Figure 44.** George F. Weaton Station, St. Joe's power plant, 1957.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Bruce Megill, personal photograph collection, donated to Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.



**Figure 45.** George F. Weaton Station, steam generator and auxiliary equipment.<sup>128</sup>

The George F. Weaton Station, designed and built by Kaiser Engineers, included a water-pumping plant and an unloading dock. Initially, the power plant was part of a more ambitious construction project that included an aluminum plant. (A site was cleared for the aluminum plant but it was never built.) The power station's location adjacent to the Ohio River made it easy to

<sup>128</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *George F. Weaton Station* (c. 1958), 1-3, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.



transport coal to the plant by barge. Coal primarily was sourced from coal mines in western Pennsylvania; St. Joe Lead held an ownership interest in the A. T. Massey Coal Company, providing coal from Appalachian mines as well (Figure 46).<sup>129</sup> The river also provided cooling water to condense the steam needed to drive the turbine-generators.<sup>130</sup>

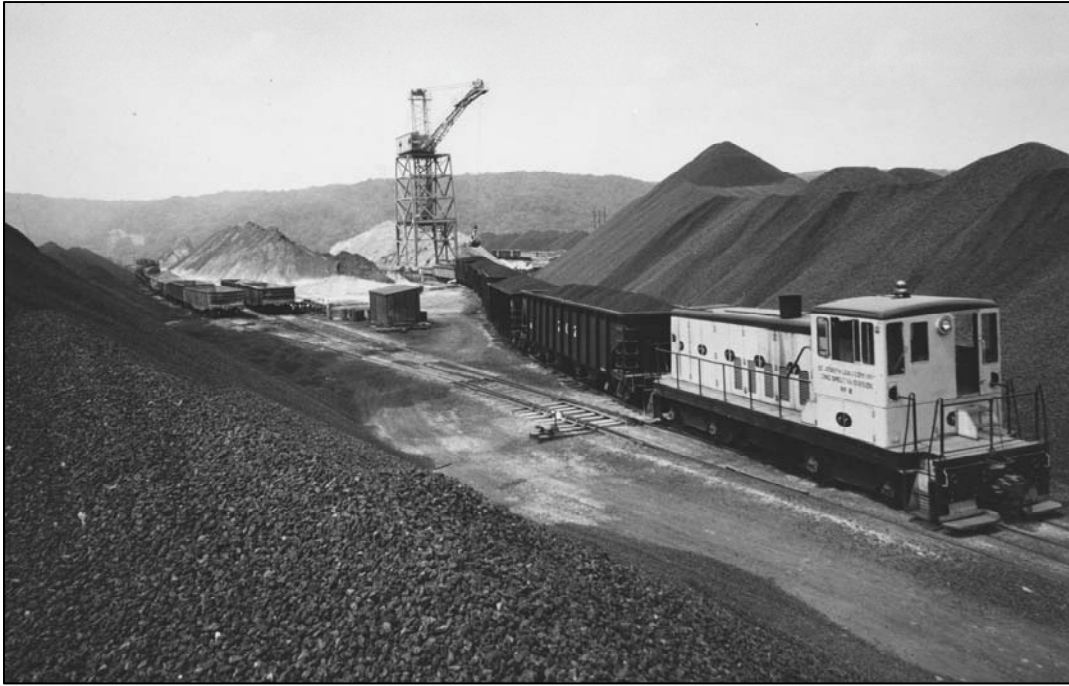


Figure 46. Coal for the power plant.<sup>131</sup>

A 4,000-foot-long double circuit transmission line transported power at 14,400 volts from the station to the smelter electrical system. Supervising and running the power plant took a staff of 62 people; the initial crew was selected among personnel at the zinc smelting facility and trained to keep the power plant running around the clock (Figure 47).<sup>132</sup> In time, the Weaton Station produced even more power than the zinc smelting plant needed; surplus power was sold to Duquesne Light Company and other utilities.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> St. Joe Resources Company, *St. Joe Resources Company* (1985), 16, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.

<sup>130</sup> Zinc Corporation of America, *Commitment to Performance* (1989), 15, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.

<sup>131</sup> Frank, photo collection.

<sup>132</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *George F. Weaton Station* (c. 1958), 1-3, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.

<sup>133</sup> Zinc Corporation of America, 15.





Figure 47. Power plant controls.<sup>134</sup>

St. Joe felt the impact of the Recession of 1958 or Eisenhower Recession, an eight-month period of worldwide economic downturn, caused in part by the worst auto sales since World War II. Hours were reduced and employees reflected on cutting back summer vacation plans.<sup>135</sup> But things turned around. Just as the defense industry influenced the operations of Joseph town in the 1940s and '50s, the automotive and appliance industries increasingly created opportunities for zinc production in the 1960s. Demand for these consumer goods meant growth in the die casting industry—the second largest use for zinc. However, the die casting industry wanted only Special High Grade zinc for casting its molds. St. Joe Lead capitalized on this opportunity by constructing an additional circuit (a refining column) that produced 99.99+ Special High Grade zinc metal. Completed in 1959, the new circuit produced 1,800 tons in its first month.<sup>136</sup> An addition to the High Grade Zinc refinery, completed in January 1964, increased capacity to 3,700 tons per month.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>135</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, August 1958: 12.

<sup>136</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1959 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 15, 1960), 8; St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 11, 13; "How Applied Research at Joseph town Stimulated Production and Markets," *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 112.

<sup>137</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1964 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 26, 1965), 15.

The production of continuous zinc-coated steel sheets remained a growing market, while St. Joe's researchers developed zinc anodes for corrosion protection in sea-going tankers and new plating techniques for decorative zinc die casting for cars and appliances.<sup>138</sup> By 1963, the Joseph town plant employed 1,164, compared to 958 in 1955. The company's offices and research department, also known as the Technical Center, relocated into the reconditioned Beaver County Home building in 1964 (Figure 48). These were very productive years: in 1966 the plant produced 216,910 tons of slab zinc equivalent compared to 146,732 in 1960.<sup>139</sup>



**Figure 48.** Main offices and laboratory space (former Beaver County Home and Hospital). The former Beaver County Home and Hospital was acquired and partially renovated by St. Joe for such use starting in 1964.<sup>140</sup>

Increased competition from imports and decreased industrial activity in the U.S., including the automotive industry, adversely affected production at Joseph town in 1967. As it had in the past, the company responded by tailoring or developing new products to meet customer demand. It identified growth opportunities in sulfuric acid, for which a new unit was built to increase production capacity by 15 percent, and in zinc oxide production, including introduction of a photo-conductive grade zinc oxide for the photocopying industry. The late '60s also witnessed a new pilot galvanizing facility that enabled the technical group to investigate hot dip galvanizing to make protective coatings for steel products; mechanized casting and stacking devices designed by St. Joe engineers; construction of a new metallurgical control center with comprehensive analytical laboratories; and a new No. 1 storeroom, instrument repair shop (Figure 49), and

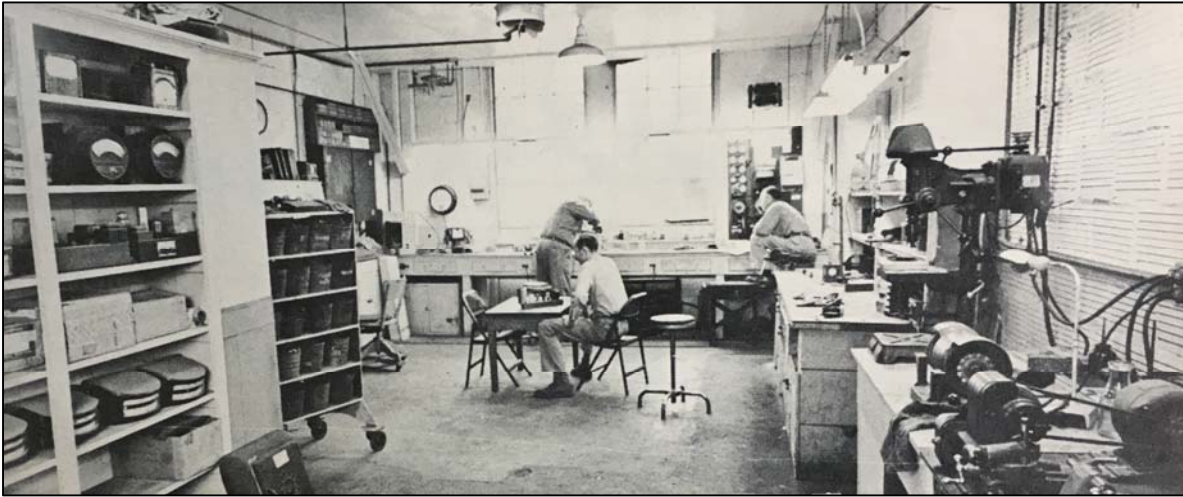
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<sup>138</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1961 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 20, 1962), 11.

<sup>139</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1960 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 17, 1961), 8-9; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1966 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1967), 6.

<sup>140</sup> Donald Inman, photograph collection, Beaver County Industrial Museum, Darlington, PA.

electrical construction shop. Logistics capabilities improved as well with the introduction of computerized inventory and order records.<sup>141</sup>



**Figure 49.** New instrument repair shop, 1962.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1967 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1968), 3, 13; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1968 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1969), 10, 13; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1969 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1970), 2.

<sup>142</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, December 1962: 27.

## 8. Decline and Modernization: 1970-1986

In 1970, the zinc smelting plant's parent company, St. Joseph Lead Company, changed its name to St. Joe Minerals Corporation, reflecting its broadened interests in natural resources, including coal, gas, oil, and gold.<sup>143</sup> Diversification proved to be fortuitous during a decade in which a number of economic forces undermined the profitability and ultimately led to a shutdown of the Joseph town plant.

The decade got off to a rough start with the 67-day General Motors strike of 1970. Automobile manufacturing comprised a large share of the demand for zinc products and General Motors was the world's largest automobile manufacturer. Low new car production meant a decrease in sales of zinc for die casting and galvanizing.<sup>144</sup> As the demand for zinc returned to normal levels, St. Joe's zinc mines no longer could provide the supply of concentrates needed for the plant to produce at full capacity; purchasing additional concentrates and secondary materials squeezed profit margins. During generally good years for the zinc industry in 1973 and 1974, a high demand for zinc drove up prices, in turn causing users of zinc products to look for alternative materials. Around the same time, the oil crises that had started in the early 1970s shifted automotive design toward smaller, lighter cars that required less fuel to run and less zinc to manufacture. As seen in previous decades, fluctuations in the automotive industry trickled down to the zinc industry. Zinc prices dropped steeply.<sup>145</sup>

More stringent environmental standards affected plant operations and profitability too. In 1970, the company made major improvements to the acid plant to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions and added a new dust collector unit to improve plant hygiene (Figure 50). In 1971, the St. Joe Minerals Corporation budgeted \$8.7 million out of its \$24 million for capital expenditures on environmental improvements, with the major emphasis on reducing sulfur discharge into the air at its smelters (lead in Missouri, zinc at Joseph town).<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Cheryl Weller Beck, ed., *The Twentieth Century History of Beaver County, Pennsylvania, 1900-1988* (The Beaver County Historical Research & Landmarks Foundation, 1989), 129.

<sup>144</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1970 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1971), 2.

<sup>145</sup> Bounds, 30; Beck, 130.

<sup>146</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1971 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (1972), 3.





**Figure 50.** Environmental ductwork between furnace and sinter plants.<sup>147</sup>

By 1973, St. Joe Minerals Corporation had identified growth opportunities in two areas: zinc oxide, the uses for which were diversifying, and slab zinc for the galvanizing and brass industries. The company phased out Joseph town's production of Special High Grade zinc alloys to concentrate resources on these areas. The investment in zinc oxide increased production from 38,000 tons in 1971 to 62,000 tons in 1973, making the company the nation's second largest producer and meeting demand for uses of zinc oxide in ceramic glazes, medicines, pigments, photocopying, and vulcanizing rubber. Within the galvanizing industry, St. Joe's smelter stood out as "the only one in the country to use an electrothermic process which directly produces Prime Western grade used by galvanizers. Most other smelters produce special high grade zinc, which is used in the die-casting market and requires debasing before use in galvanizing."<sup>148</sup>

Various factors made it more costly for St. Joe to operate the plant and maintain its furnaces and other equipment, some of which was nearly 50 years old. In 1974, St. Joe hourly workers voted to join Union Local No. 8183, United Steel Workers of America (see Chapter 11). The union brought about higher wages, more paid vacation, increased health monitoring (blood lead levels, for example), and better safety equipment, all adding to operating costs. Sales of zinc oxide and zinc metal looked promising in 1974, but the following year, the depressed state of the automotive and construction industries set back the smelter to operating at 57 percent capacity.<sup>149</sup> Construction of a zinc dust facility at Monaca with an initial capacity of 6,000 tons per year

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<sup>147</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>148</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1973 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (1974), n.p.

<sup>149</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1974 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (1975), n.p.; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1975 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (1976), n.p.

began in 1976; the goal was to produce zinc-rich coatings that would prevent corrosion for the auto industry.<sup>150</sup> The zinc dust plant was completed in 1977.

Domestic consumption of zinc, which had reached an all-time high in 1973, was clearly in decline by 1978. Factors contributing to this situation included: the substitution of aluminum and plastic in the automotive industry to produce lighter, more fuel-efficient cars; decreases in non-residential construction, which decreased the demand for zinc used in galvanizing and brass; and imports of cheaper zinc. Stricter environmental standards meant large capital expenditures and higher operating and maintenance expenses. The zinc industry faced competition from several alternative materials, including plastics, aluminum, aluminum/zinc alloys, and weathering steels and paints.<sup>151</sup>

While some zinc smelting plants in the United States and Canada approached these industry-wide economic challenges by converting their plants to electrolytic rather than electrothermic processes, St. Joe opted not to make that considerable capital investment and, instead, closed down its smelter that employed 1,500 people in December 1979.

They [the older men] could not believe the plant was closing down. And a lot of them thought it was a ruse . . . There were some things that were happening in the plant, some sabotage that was occurring, that was really getting annoying. They thought maybe this was a way for the company to get rid of undesirables. But that wasn't it at all. They just had to shut the plant down to come up with a better way of running the plant.<sup>152</sup>

The company retained enough maintenance and supervisory personnel to keep the power plant running to sell electricity, and the Research Department (see Chapter 10), which served a corporate function, continued albeit somewhat cut back. But most jobs were lost, as was the beloved cafeteria.<sup>153</sup>

The shutdown would be short-lived. In the summer of 1980, customer demand for zinc oxide and sulfuric acid—at a time of rising zinc prices—gave St. Joe incentive to reopen. Ingenuity gave the company, renamed St. Joe Resources Company, a path to do so. Bob Sunderman, plant manager at the time of the shutdown, was the architect behind the transformation that extended the plant's life into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The plan called for high-grade zinc extracted from St. Joe's Pierrepont mine in upstate New York, enhanced secondary material recycling to reduce feed costs, and streamlined operations and equipment. The company refurbished only large capacity, efficient operating units; it reduced the number of active furnaces from 17 to six (seven, with one always down for rebuilding), eliminated the leach/cadmium plant, acid plant, and roaster; and limited the three former circuits to one Prime Western circuit (hence, eliminating need for two-stage roasting and two-stage sintering). Cutting back the number of furnaces eliminated the nine smaller furnaces that had been used to make American process zinc oxide. High-grade zinc oxide continued to be produced from the Prime Western metal. The small furnaces that were shut down

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<sup>150</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1976 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (1977), n.p.

<sup>151</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1978 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (1979), n.p.

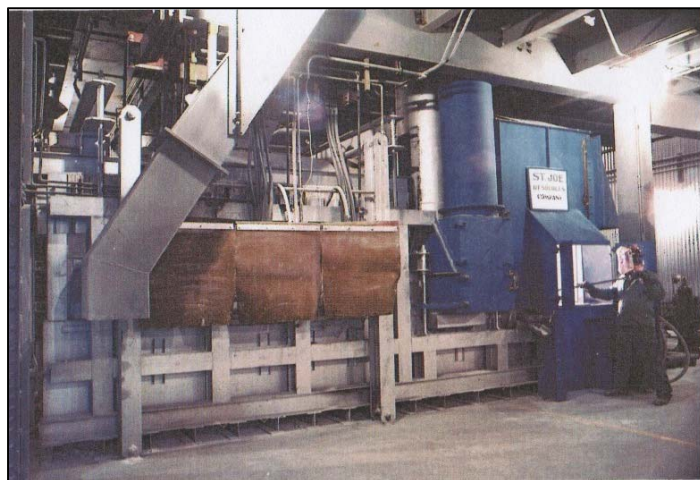
<sup>152</sup> DeChellis, 18.

<sup>153</sup> Bounds, 30; Beck, 130; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1980 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (1981), n.p.

used to generate off-gases that heated the old main office building and the auditorium. Rather than investing resources to heat those two buildings, St. Joe abandoned them.<sup>154</sup>

Modernization, along with streamlining the product line to produce only the most profitable metal products, breathed new life into the plant, which came back on line as “the only nonelectrolytic zinc smelter operating in the United States and Canada and the only primary zinc-producing plant in the United States operating at capacity.”<sup>155</sup> Management was also highly selective about whom they rehired. “If you had caused any problems previously, then they weren’t too enthused about bringing you back.”<sup>156</sup> Of the 1,700 employees before the shutdown, roughly 200 were hired back when the plant reopened; the workforce eventually reached about 600.<sup>157</sup>

In 1981, Fluor Corporation purchased St. Joe Resources Company’s diverse zinc, lead, and coal interests. A large engineering company, Fluor “was fairly flush at the time. They had just finished the Alaska Pipeline project.”<sup>158</sup> At Monaca, they soon added Larvik furnaces that could process metallic secondary materials that were too large to be processed in the electrothermic furnaces (Figure 51). The Larvik furnaces did not rely on the coke and sinter used in the other furnaces, making it a more environmentally clean process. The Larvik units were used primarily for zinc dust and zinc oxide production. Zinc-rich feed for this process came from electric air furnace (EAF) dust, in the form of a calcined zinc product. The New Jersey Zinc Company’s Palmerton, PA, plant, which produced calcined zinc in its Waelz kilns, supplied most of this secondary feed material utilized in the Monaca furnaces.<sup>159</sup> Table 2 summarizes the smelter operations before and after the 1980s modernization.



**Figure 51.** St. Joe’s Larvik furnace, producing zinc oxide and zinc dust.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Jim Reese, interview by Carol Perloff, Beaver, PA, October 15, 2016, transcript, 13, 19; Frank, 22.

<sup>155</sup> Bounds, 30-31; Beck, 130.

<sup>156</sup> Knight, 22.

<sup>157</sup> Reese, 17.

<sup>158</sup> Tom Weyand, interview by Carol Perloff, New Brighton, PA, November 11, 2016, transcript, 13.

<sup>159</sup> Bleiwas and DiFrancesco, 105; Bounds, 34.

<sup>160</sup> St. Joe Resources Company, *St. Joe Resources Company* (1985), 15, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.

**Table 2.** Comparison of the simplified smelter (1980s) with previous practices (1970s).<sup>161</sup>

<b>Operation</b>	<b>Previous Practices - 1970s</b>	<b>Simplified Practices - 1980s</b>
Concentrate handling	Large stockpiles of many concentrates	Minimum stock in covered feed bins
Circuits	3 parallel	1
Roasting	5 hearth roasters in series with 3 fluid-beds and 1 flash roaster	1 fluid-bed roaster
Acid conversion	3 to 5 primary units in parallel with 1 final cleanup unit	2 units in series
Sintering	9 machines	3 machines
Leaching/cadmium recovery	1 dust roaster and 2 leach circuits	Eliminated
Furnacing	9 large and 3 small metal furnaces and 5 oxide furnaces (17 furnaces total)	5 large metal furnaces only
Refining/oxide and dust	Primarily for oxide production; ISC for dust	All oxide production, expanded metal production/casting capability: ISC & Larvik for dust
Secondaries	Classification, liquation, granulation, and briquetting	Classification

<sup>161</sup> Bounds, 34.



## 9. The Final Years: 1987-2014

Fluor Corporation's ownership of St. Joe Resources Company was short-lived. "The price [of zinc] is cyclical, and if you can't survive the downtime, you sell, you go bankrupt or whatever."<sup>162</sup> A few years into Fluor's ownership of the zinc smelter, the engineering and metals businesses experienced a downturn. Fluor sold off St. Joe in parts, which included zinc, gold, lead, and coal interests. In 1987, the zinc interest went to Horsehead Industries Inc., which owned New Jersey Zinc Company. The sale resulted in Zinc Corporation of America (ZCA), a combination of New Jersey Zinc Company and the St. Joe zinc smelter. The sale included St. Joe's zinc mines in Balmat, New York, which Horsehead created into another entity called ZCA Mines, Inc. In 1986, Horsehead had created Horsehead Resource Development (HRD), which operated four Waelz kiln plants at different sites. Waelz kilns, which recover zinc and other metals from metallurgical waste and other recycled materials, became a feed source for the zinc smelter at Monaca. ZCA became "the country's largest producer of zinc, as well as the world leader in the production of zinc from recycled sources and value-added zinc products. It also established itself as a major global provider of zinc for use in the increasingly important alkaline battery industry."<sup>163</sup> At the same time, under ZCA "you didn't see the innovation and stuff that you did with old St. Joe, the research and development."<sup>164</sup> In fact, ZCA disbanded the Research Department's product development group in 1987.

The Monaca plant continued to use the electrothermic process for producing zinc metal and zinc oxide. However, with declining reserves of domestic ore, the company shifted its feed to larger quantities of recycled zinc sources: calcine, derived from EAF dust at Horsehead's Palmerton plant, which operated three Waelz kilns, and purchased zinc recyclable materials. In 1988, a new retort bottle furnace at Monaca added capacity for processing zinc dust. A new furnace and a single larger sinter machine, added in 1991, were necessary adaptations for the new focus on manufacturing zinc metal and zinc oxide with recyclable zinc materials. The expansion was envisioned to increase production by 50,000 tons per year.<sup>165</sup>

ZCA took additional measures to address environmental concerns and regulations at the zinc smelter. The coal used to fuel the Weaton power plant was switched to a low-sulfur variety. Other modifications enabled the substitution of natural gas for coal. In 1990, the addition of a tail gas plant to the acid plant further reduced emissions.<sup>166</sup> When the plant operations were streamlined in 1980 (following the 1979 shutdown), three circuits in the furnace were reduced to one that made Prime Western grade zinc, which had upwards of one percent lead. As the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) passed laws limiting the amount of lead that could be in a product, toys, for example, the market for the plant's Prime Western zinc decreased. This trend contributed to the many factors that would lead to the final shutdown.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Frank, transcript, 25.

<sup>163</sup> "Horsehead Industries, Inc. History," *Funding Universe*, <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/horsehead-industries-inc-history/>.

<sup>164</sup> G. Specht, transcript, 22.

<sup>165</sup> Roger L. Williams, "The Monaca Electrothermic Smelter – The Old Becomes the New" in Thomas S. Mackey and David R. Prengaman, eds., *Lead-Zinc '90* (Warrendale, PA: The Minerals, Metals and Materials Society, 1990), 439-446.

<sup>166</sup> Bleiwas and DiFrancesco, 112; Williams, 440.

<sup>167</sup> DeChellis, 9.

In 2002, ZCA discontinued the primary roasting of feed at the Monaca smelter, relying only on secondary sources of zinc. This shift ended the production of sulfuric acid, the first commercial product the plant had generated in 1930. Horsehead Industries, the parent company of ZCA, filed for bankruptcy in 2003 and Sun Capital, under the Horsehead Corporation name, acquired its assets. By that time, “The plant was a dinosaur. It was built in 1930. All of the operations were old. . . new plants being built in the south, Clarksburg and different areas. They had electric arc furnaces, new furnaces that were much more efficient than what they had here.”<sup>168</sup> Competition from electrolytic plants, which cost less money to run, and the ups and downs of customers who used zinc for their commercial products, also affected the Monaca plant.<sup>169</sup> “Michelin, they wanted nothing but our oxide. They said it was the best. . . we had specific customers, but as the years went on and the manufacturing kind of went down, we started losing these customers and the final demise was there.”<sup>170</sup>

The welfare capitalism and, for many, the sense of family, camaraderie, and loyalty that had characterized St. Joe for decades contrasted with the climate under Horsehead (see Chapter 11). “The people up until the Horsehead Corp timeframe, it was impossible to find a better group in my opinion. I was always treated fairly.”<sup>171</sup> Safety incentives, profit sharing, and suggestion programs reportedly disappeared. Rather than hiring more workers, and paying for benefits packages, Horsehead encouraged hourly employees to work overtime. “But when you have guys averaging 60, 70 hours a week every week, mentally and physically it’s going to take a toll. . . at one point the union actually made the argument that nobody was allowed to work a triple.”<sup>172</sup> Horsehead cut back on benefits for salary employees as well, and “they were just taking whatever they could get and that was the end of that.”<sup>173</sup>

In February 2011, Horsehead Corporation began exploring sites to build a new, environmentally sustainable plant that could produce 150,000 tons of zinc a year. Monaca was among the locations the company considered, but in September of that year, Horsehead announced that the zinc plant would be built in Mooresboro, North Carolina. By March 2012, Horsehead reached an agreement with Shell for an option to purchase the Monaca property to build a petrochemical complex, an option that was extended and eventually exercised in November 2014. The furnace of the new Mooresboro plant was ready for production in January 2014.<sup>174</sup> The Monaca smelter closed at the end of April 2014—affecting the jobs of 510 employees—and the demolition of a Beaver County industrial landmark commenced.

It was, as my father said in 1949, it’s a great place to work. You could get a future there . . . it was steady work. It was good work. It was hard work, it was a great place to work and I hated to see it go away. My dad, I remember him sitting in his chair saying, ‘I thought it would never happen.’ But it did.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Chuck Andrews, interview by Carol Perloff, Ellwood City, PA, September 28, 2016, transcript, 24.

<sup>169</sup> Reese, 26.

<sup>170</sup> Andrews, 24.

<sup>171</sup> Janeck, 33.

<sup>172</sup> John Wakeley, interview by Carol Perloff, E. Liverpool, OH, November 10, 2016, 25.

<sup>173</sup> G. Specht, transcript, 20, 22.

<sup>174</sup> “Timeline: Horsehead Holding Corp.,” *Bizjournals*, *Pittsburgh Business Times*, February 12, 2016, <https://www.bizjournals.com>.

<sup>175</sup> Andrews, 32.

## 10. A Tradition of Innovation

The successful launching of St. Joseph Lead Company's zinc smelter into the business of producing zinc oxide and slab zinc can be attributed primarily to three innovative engineers: Earl C. Gaskill, George Frederic Weaton Sr., and Herand K. Najarian. The technologies and apparatus they created are discussed and illustrated within the context of Chapters 2 and 4. This chapter provides additional biographical profiles of these seminal figures in the company's history and focuses on St. Joe's Research Department. The ongoing growth of the plant and the development and diversification of products and services that for so long maintained St. Joe's dominance in the domestic zinc smelting industry are a credit to its Research Department. In addition, engineers elsewhere in the plant, draftsmen, machinists, and other tradesmen in the shops contributed to innovations or adaptations of equipment—like a Hershey's Cocoa packer for zinc oxide powder<sup>176</sup>—that continually improved the smelter's operations.

### Earl C. Gaskill (1895-1930)

Engineer and inventor Earl C. Gaskill played an essential role in the decision of the St. Joseph Lead Company of Missouri to open a zinc smelting division in western Pennsylvania. Born in New Jersey, Gaskill attended Rutgers Scientific School as an Ocean County Assembly District Scholarship student, graduating in 1917.<sup>177</sup> By 1920, he resided in Palmerton, Carbon County, Pennsylvania, where he worked as a “physicist” at the New Jersey Zinc Company of New York, NY.<sup>178</sup> Between 1921 and 1923, Gaskill, along with two colleagues at New Jersey Zinc, filed three patents (awarded in 1925) for improving the manufacture of zinc oxide<sup>179</sup>

By 1926, Gaskill had relocated to Red Bank, New Jersey. On October 28, 1926, St. Joseph Lead Company of Herculaneum, Missouri, hired him to develop a process for the electrothermic smelting of zinc ores for the production of zinc oxide; George F. Weaton and W. T. Isbell joined Gaskill as consultants. These experiments took place between 1926 and 1929.<sup>180</sup> While still residing in Red Bank, Gaskill filed four patents between November 17, 1926, and December 17, 1926, three of which he assigned to St. Joseph Lead Company. The four patents were for the electric smelting of zinc ore (#1,743,886) (Figure 1), zinc oxide manufacture (#1,743,964) (Figure 2), a process for making zinc sulphide (#1,758,741), and a method of reducing zinc ore and the product obtained thereby (#1,773,779). By the time he filed a fifth patent on September 17, 1928, for the electrothermic zinc furnace (#1,775,591) (Figures 3a-3d), Gaskill resided in Bonne Terre, Missouri.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Frank, transcript, 24.

<sup>177</sup> Rutgers Scientific School, *Report of the New Jersey State College for the Benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, New Brunswick, NJ, Fifty-first Annual Report, October 21, 1915* (Trenton, NJ: State Gazette Publishing Co., 1916), 10, *The Internet Archive*, accessed February 2016, <https://archive.org>.

<sup>178</sup> 1920 U.S. Census, Carbon County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Palmerton, 49B:67, *Family Search*, accessed February 2016, <https://familysearch.org>.

<sup>179</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed February-March 2016, <http://www.google.com.pg/patents/>.

<sup>180</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 2.

<sup>181</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed February-March 2016, <https://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com>.

Gaskill died on October 11, 1930, just one month after the patent for the electrothermic zinc furnace was awarded and a few months short of seeing it in operation at Joseph town. He served as division manager during most of the smelter construction.

**George Frederic Weaton Sr. (1886-1959)**

George F. Weaton, whom St. Joe employees affectionately referred to as “The Old Man,” managed the St. Joseph Lead Company Zinc Smelting Division from 1931 to 1954 (Figure 52). Weaton began his career in the power plants of General Electric Company in Schenectady, New York, where he rose from apprentice to engineer. In 1908, he joined Coats Co. in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, as a power plant engineer; he furthered his technical education at Brown University’s night school. Weaton left Rhode Island to work as steam engineer in charge of Thomas Alva Edison’s New Jersey power plants.<sup>182</sup>



**Figure 52.** George F. Weaton.<sup>183</sup>

In 1921, Weaton started his long career with the St. Joseph Lead Company in Missouri, where he worked as a power engineer and consulted on Gaskill’s experiments in developing the electrothermic furnace for zinc smelting. With the untimely death of Gaskill, Weaton oversaw completion of the initial smelter unit at Joseph town and became the division manager of the plant that first fired up its furnaces for zinc oxide production in January 1931. Weaton, along with Najarian, developed the patented condenser that made it possible to transform zinc vapor

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<sup>182</sup> “George Weaton Dies At Home” *Beaver Valley Times*, December 5, 1959: 1. Accessed March 2016. <https://news.google.com/newspapers>

<sup>183</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, December 1959: opp. 1.



into molten zinc metal (Figure 16). In 1942, Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey would award Weaton an honorary degree of mechanical engineering.<sup>184</sup>

In addition to his engineering expertise, Weaton contributed significantly to the positive culture that engendered employee loyalty, professional growth, and retention, much in the St. Joe spirit of welfare capitalism (see Chapter 11). He accomplished this through numerous initiatives like family social events, suggestion and incentive systems, apprentice and technical training programs, General Education Development (GED) opportunities, plant safety meetings and programs, employment milestone celebrations, college scholarship awards, an employee cafeteria with subsidized food, and an auditorium to promote extracurricular activities and social gatherings. Employees held “The Old Man” in high regard. “He’s the kind of guy who would get out and make sure people were working very hard. But at the same time, he worked very hard too. If there was people down in a ditch, he’d get down in the ditch with his suit on and help ‘em shovel out what needed to be shoveled out.”<sup>185</sup>

In retirement and until his death, Weaton continued his dedication to the St. Joseph Lead Company. As a metallurgical consultant to the corporation’s New York office, his major accomplishment was “the study of metallurgy required for recovery of values from complex New Brunswick sulfide ores.”<sup>186</sup> He played a pivotal supervisory role in the project to build a new power plant along the Ohio riverfront to make St. Joe less dependent on Duquesne Light and Power, the local utility company. Weaton selected the engineering firm (Kaiser Engineers of Oakland, California), negotiated the contract, oversaw the design—making frequent trips to Oakland to meet with Kaiser—and monitored construction of the power plant. Weaton died in December 1959, 19 months after the power plant that bore his name was completed.<sup>187</sup>

### **Herand K. Najarian (1889-1978)**

Metallurgical engineer and designer Herand K. Najarian joined St. Joseph Lead Company in 1931 and worked as a company employee until retiring in 1967 (Figure 53). Najarian had immigrated to the United States from Marshsh, Turkey (later identified as Armenia), in 1910 to pursue studies in mining engineering at Yale University.<sup>188</sup> After graduating in 1913, he acquired experience working in extractive industries—copper in Nevada and Utah and cobalt in Missouri.<sup>189</sup> For the Missouri Cobalt Company, he designed a new smelter in Fredericktown,

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>185</sup> Mike Deelo, interview by Carol Perloff, Ellwood City, PA, October 13, 2016, transcript, 12.

<sup>186</sup> “George Weaton Dies At Home” *Beaver Valley Times*, December 5, 1959: 1.

<sup>187</sup> William B. Ball, *Tales From A Grandfather* (Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear Publishing, 2007), 170-173, accessed March 2016.

<sup>188</sup> *New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957*, *Ancestry.com*, entry for Hoand Najjarien [sic], accessed April 2016, <http://search.ancestry.com>; Yale University, *The Yale Banner and Pot Pourri 1912-1913* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1913), 5:469, *HathiTrust Digital Library*, accessed April 2016, <https://babel.hathitrust.org>.

<sup>189</sup> The American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers (AIME). *Bulletin of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers* (July 1916), 115: xvi, accessed March 2016, <https://books.google.com>; AIME, *Bulletin of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers* (May 1919), 149:191, accessed March 2016, <https://books.google.com>; AIME, *Directory of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, Inc.* (corrected to April 9, 1921), 200, accessed March 2016, <https://books.google.com>.

Missouri.<sup>190</sup> By 1930, Najarian had relocated to an area of St. Lawrence County, NY, where the Balmat-Edwards zinc mines were located.<sup>191</sup> Chances are good that here his path crossed with the St. Joseph Lead Company, which had acquired an interest in the mines a few years prior.



Figure 53. Herand K. Najarian.<sup>192</sup>

At the St. Joe smelter in Joseph town, Najarian headed the mechanical maintenance, construction, electrical, and yard groups, and later served as general plant superintendent.<sup>193</sup> With Weaton, Najarian's development of the patented "Weaton-Najarian" condenser put St. Joseph Lead's Zinc Smelting Division in the business of producing zinc metals, before which the main product was zinc oxide (Figure 16). In addition to his patent #2,070,101 with Weaton, Najarian received 15 individual patents (Table 3), as well as one with St. Joe's Carleton C. Long. Of Najarian's 15 patents, six were filed in and granted by Canada (CA).<sup>194</sup> After retiring in 1967, Najarian continued to work for the company as a consultant.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> AIME, (July 1916), xvi.

<sup>191</sup> 1930 U.S. Census, Lawrence County, New York, population schedule, *Gouverneur Village*, entry for Harand Najjarien [sic], 5B: 52, *Ancestry.com*, accessed April 2016, <http://ancestry.com>.

<sup>192</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, Photo album of company employees, c. 1941-1945, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833.

<sup>193</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 5.

<sup>194</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed February-March 2016, September 2017, <https://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com>;

<sup>195</sup> "H. K. Najarian Dies at Age 88," *Beaver County Times*, September 18, 1978: A-3, accessed April 2016, <https://news.google.com/newspapers>.

**Table 3.** Najarian’s individual patents. Except where noted (i.e., CA for Canada), the patents were granted in the United States.

Patent #	Date filed	Date awarded	Title
1,425,039	6/18/1921	8/8/1922	Screening machine and vibrating hammer therefor
1,447,355	11/22/1920	3/6/1923	Screening machine and method
1,449,774	7/30/1920	3/27/1923	Continuous vacuum filter
1,514,009	8/10/1923	11/4/1924	Screening machine and vibrating hammer therefor
CA343,818	n/a	8/7/1934	Sintering machine pallet
CA343,819	n/a	8/7/1934	Sintering apparatus
2,127,633	5/8/1935	8/23/1938	Smelting of zinciferous metals
CA423,838	n/a	11/14/1944	Furnace charge distribution system
2,766,034	3/13/1952	10/9/1956	Condensation of metallic vapors
CA532,480	n/a	10/30/1956	Condensation of metallic vapors
2,840,466	10/29/1954	6/24/1958	Method of reducing metal chlorides
CA564,122	n/a	9/30/1958	Condensation of zinc vapors
CA568,291	n/a	12/30/1958	Reduction of metal chlorides
3,075,751	8/2/1960	1/29/1963	Gas scrubber
3,321,191	7/7/1961	5/23/1967	Gas and liquid contact apparatus

**Research Department**

Innovative research and researchers gave St. Joseph Lead Company the technology it needed to create and expand the zinc smelting operation in Western PA. A continued commitment to research maximized the running of the plant, the technical training of employees, the development of new and improved processes and products, quality control, and good customer relations.

In August 1937, Weaton established a formal research department. Laboratories and research facilities initially were housed in the Administration Building; in 1941, a dedicated laboratory building was erected, although some labs continued to operate in the Administration Building. Weaton appointed Carleton C. Long, who had joined St. Joseph Lead Company in 1935 as a research engineer, as director of plant and process research and James J. Rankin, director of customer and product research.

Long, who held B.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Colorado and a M.S. degree from Stanford University, had joined St. Joseph Lead Company in 1935. He would become director of research in 1955 (Figure 54). An accomplished research scientist, engineer, and educator, Long held a number of patents in the field of extractive metallurgy and would receive the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers’ 1977 James Douglas Gold Medal for “His work in the extractive metallurgy of zinc [that] has led to improvements in fluid bed roasting practices, in the purification of sulfide ores and in dust recovery from industrial

gases.”<sup>196</sup> As director of plant and process research at Joseph town, Long fulfilled a wide range of responsibilities:

Plant problems; trouble-shooting; general technical and operating counsel; operations surveillance and planning; recruiting and training of technical people under the Technical Training Program set up by Mr. Weaton the same year [1937]; and the performance of odd jobs that no one else could handle.<sup>197</sup>



Figure 54. Carleton C. Long.<sup>198</sup>

Rankin spent the early part of his career as an assistant chemist in the research department at the Phelps Dodge Corporation.<sup>199</sup> By 1921, he joined St. Joseph Lead Company of Herculaneum, where as chief chemist, Rankin headed the experimental work on refractories and pigment development.<sup>200</sup> At the Joseph town smelter, he served as superintendent of the Zinc Oxide Department, as well director of customer and product research for 20 years (1937-1957). He invented and patented (#2,769,716, filed January 16, 1953, granted November 6, 1956) a process to inhibit the development and growth of fungus, mold, mildew, and other substances for use in the manufacture of protective coatings, linoleum, rubber products, leather, textiles, and drugs.<sup>201</sup>

In 1940, the Research Department consisted of three engineers, two assistant engineers, one rubber chemist with one assistant, one analytical chemist with two assistants, one paint chemist, one research chemist and microscopist, one physical testing chemist, and two additional personnel (Figures 55-56).<sup>202</sup> During World War II, the War Production Board requested certain

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<sup>196</sup> AIME, “Carleton C. Long,” accessed March 2016, <http://www.aimehq.org>.

<sup>197</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 6.

<sup>198</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, April 1960: 11.

<sup>199</sup> James, J. Rankin, “Acidity Determination in Water, Leach Liquors, Mine Waters, Etc,” *Metallurgical & Chemical Engineering* 18 (January 15, 1918). 2:96, accessed March 2016, <https://books.google.com>.

<sup>200</sup> *Directory of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, Inc.* (Corrected to April 9, 1921), 200, accessed March 2016; St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 3-4.

<sup>201</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, accessed March 2016, <https://books.google.com>.

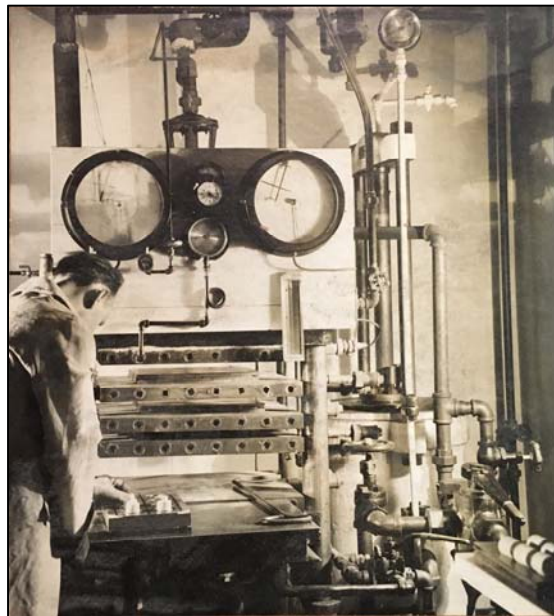
<sup>202</sup> National Research Council, “Industrial Research Laboratories of the United States Including Consulting Research Laboratories,” *Bulletin of the National Research Council* 104 (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, December 1940), 242.



industries to focus available manpower on production rather than development. Research and development throughout St. Joseph Lead Company's divisions were curtailed temporarily and at Joseph town's Research Department, one of its members was even reassigned to head the Personnel Department.<sup>203</sup>



**Figure 55.** Joe Reising working in the microscopic lab. The lab was located on the second floor of the office building, 1930s.<sup>204</sup>



**Figure 56.** Samples testing in the laboratory, 1930s.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1945 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 15, 1946): 1; St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 6-7.

<sup>204</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection; St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 9.

<sup>205</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

The plant's post-war expansion more than doubled the Research Department's staff to 32 by 1950; it remained steady at that size for at least the next 10 years.<sup>206</sup> The staff included Mary DeWitt, and as *The St. Joe Catalyst* reported, "Everyone has gotten used to the idea of a female engineer working in Research."<sup>207</sup> The four main objectives of the department were to: (1) troubleshoot technical problems that come up in regular operations; (2) improve equipment design and operating methods; (3) develop new equipment, methods, and operations; and (4) raise the efficiency and lower the cost of existing operations.<sup>208</sup> The plant operated seven interrelated laboratories: rubber, paint, electronic, ceramic, spectrographic, microscopic, and analytical, which alone performed more than 140,000 analyses in 1955.<sup>209</sup> The labs analyzed products, raw materials, water, and other plant items, and provided product support service for customers (Figure 57).



**Figure 57.** Paint lab's sampler for paints made with St. Joe oxide.<sup>210</sup>

Upon Rankin's retirement from director of customer and product research in 1957, the plant laboratories were divided into two departments: Product and Service Laboratory under Robert S. Havenhill, who had headed the rubber laboratory, and the Metallurgical Control Department, directed by Robert Redelfs.<sup>211</sup> (Redelfs had worked in the roaster plant before pursuing advanced management training at the University of Pittsburgh in the fall of 1956, one of St. Joe's continuing education benefits.<sup>212</sup>) By 1964, Joseph town's product research program had

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<sup>206</sup> National Resource Council, "Industrial Research Laboratories of the United States Including Consulting Research Laboratories," *Bulletin of the National Research Council* 120 (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, November 1950), 310; John H. Gribbin and Sue Singer Krogfus, *Industrial Research Laboratories of the United States* 844 (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council, 1960), 411.

<sup>207</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, Spring 1959: 15.

<sup>208</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *St. Joe Zinc Oxides: Technical Data for the Consumers* (NY:1950), 19-20.

<sup>209</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Joseph town Story, 1931-1956*, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue (1956), 25.

<sup>210</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>211</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 4, 6.

<sup>212</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, October 1956: 16.

developed roughly 35 different zinc alloys to meet consumer needs, and had invented the equipment needed to test materials to make better products.<sup>213</sup>

Redelfs standardized St. Joe's program and process for sampling analysis. Previously, each of three major departments—roaster/acid, sinter/leach, and furnace—had their own testing for quality control.<sup>214</sup> The Metallurgical Control Department recruited and trained technical personnel, supervised technical superintendents, and ran the analytical and spectrographic laboratories.<sup>215</sup> Via a pneumatic tube from the casting section to the lab, spectrographic analysis of an alloy sample could be run within ten minutes, insuring the product was being made to specifications.<sup>216</sup> The lab measured the content of zinc, lead, cadmium, and other materials. A new building for the Metallurgical Control Department was erected in 1970. The department had about 60 people—scientists, chemists, and analysts (Figure 58).<sup>217</sup>



**Figure 58.** Chemist operating the research spectrophotometer measuring zinc oxide color, 1960.<sup>218</sup>

In spring 1959, the employee newsletter reported the rumor that the Research Department would take over at the Beaver County Home and Hospital, when the inmates and personnel are moved to their new building.<sup>219</sup> Rumor became reality in 1964 when the Research Department and its Metal Products Development Laboratory moved into the reconditioned portion of the Beaver County Home and Hospital with modern facilities and equipment. Product research occupied one wing, extractive research the other; labs were located in the basement and other buildings throughout the plant. The next round of innovations included methods for producing zinc billets

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<sup>213</sup> "How Applied Research at Joseph town Stimulated Production and Markets," *Engineering and Mining Journal* (April 1964), 111.

<sup>214</sup> Deelo, 6-7.

<sup>215</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 6.

<sup>216</sup> "How Applied Research at Joseph town Stimulated Production and Markets," *Engineering and Mining Journal* (April 1964), 111.

<sup>217</sup> Terri Belczyk, interview by Carol Perloff, Pittsburgh, PA, November 15, 2016, transcript, 3.

<sup>218</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, October 1960: 9.

<sup>219</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, Spring 1959: 13.

for extrusion in a wide variety of alloys and a new product—photosensitive zinc oxide, a boon for the photocopy machine industry.<sup>220</sup> By 1969, a staff of 26 professionals and an equal number of support staff performed process and product research, developing new methods for treating zinc-bearing materials, improving furnace performance, and recovering materials.<sup>221</sup>

Early research and development work at the Joseph town (a.k.a. Monaca) plant had focused primarily on smelter enhancements for the zinc plant. However, by the late 1960s, changes affecting the zinc and lead markets led St. Joe to engage research teams in support of its diverse corporate interests: lead, zinc, coal, and gold. The Research Department reported to St. Joe's New York headquarters although it remained at the smelter site.<sup>222</sup> (The department's corporate-wide role kept most of the staff working when the smelter shut down in 1979.)

The Research Department grew to about 100 people, bringing the Monaca plant to its peak size of 1,700 employees.<sup>223</sup> It had a technical library on site, staffed by a fulltime librarian. The department was organized into two groups: product development and extractive studies, each headed by a research manager and divided into teams consisting of a team leader, one or two additional engineers, and two to four engineering assistants to pursue various projects. "Individual team leaders were actually the people who generated the proposals for their projects and carried them out. You literally sold a project. . . Carl Long put in a system that you had to budget it out and show the return on the investment and the whole nine yards."<sup>224</sup> Robert E. Lund, research manager for extractive studies, succeeded Long as Research Department head by 1975. With co-inventors Charles Anthony Brockmiller and John Edward Fitzsimmons, Lund was awarded a patent (#3,855,387, filed September 5, 1973, granted December 17, 1974) for a method for removing mercury from industrial gases.<sup>225</sup> As a mentor, Lund was "just an excellent person, knew his stuff technically, but was a real person, very positive and encouraging."<sup>226</sup>

The product development group, headed by John Cigan, not only looked for new applications and new markets for zinc and zinc oxide, but also sought new market opportunities for St. Joe's lead smelter in Missouri. It "started at a time when St. Joe recognized that its products, especially for lead, were being threatened by new rules eliminating tetraethyl lead from gasoline."<sup>227</sup> In 1975, a research team at Monaca developed the lead strip process with a lead calcium tin alloy for maintenance free batteries. Other researchers worked with zinc oxide for the cosmetics industry. Work was also undertaken to improve zinc alloys for galvanizing applications.

The department's process development group investigated ways to improve or replace operations. "It seemed like the company always wanted to be looking for the next generation of process technology both from the standpoint of more efficiently using cheaper, raw materials and

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<sup>220</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1964 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 26, 1965), 15; St. Joseph Lead Company, *1966 President's Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1967), 6.

<sup>221</sup> Lund, 576.

<sup>222</sup> Weyand, 5.

<sup>223</sup> Deelo, 15.

<sup>224</sup> Weyand, 15.

<sup>225</sup> United States, Patent and Trademark Office, *Google Patents*, accessed April 2016, <https://www.google.ch/patents/US3855387>.

<sup>226</sup> Pusateri, 3.

<sup>227</sup> Weyand, 6.



reducing energy costs. . . and improving environmental control.”<sup>228</sup> The efforts spanned from feasibility studies to bench scale testing, to building pilot plants. Researchers developed a bacterial leaching process to extract refractory gold, supporting St. Joe’s gold interests in Chile. They also made significant innovations in the flash smelting process. “In essence, it was an adaptation of a rocket to take the zinc bearing residues and extract the zinc at a very cost and energy efficient fashion.”<sup>229</sup>

Funding for research projects typically came from corporate headquarters, but not exclusively. The U.S. Bureau of Mines and The Center for Metals Production (part of the Carnegie Institute) helped fund St. Joe’s flame reactor project, which reached the stage of a pilot plant in Monaca in 1983. The company filed three patents for the process.

Initially it started out that we were trying to replace or develop a process that would succeed the electrothermic furnace process. The idea was you’d be able to take waste type of materials or feeds that were lower cost and process them directly. We wouldn’t have to go through the sinter plant or through the furnace with the expensive metallurgical coke that was required and the hope was that the energy requirement would be lower.<sup>230</sup>

One such lower cost waste material was EAF dust, produced from the melting of steel scraps. EAF had a toxic component (lead) and therefore could not be disposed of in a conventional landfill. The flame reactor used a flash furnace to recover zinc from EAF dust; the liquid residue, or slag, was no longer hazardous. One drawback was that the new process made it harder to condense zinc vapor into zinc metal; it also could not reduce zinc from mined concentrates. The flame reactor was short lived at Monaca. ZCA (successor to Fluor in 1987) had Waelz kilns, which accomplished the same end, operating at its other facilities.<sup>231</sup>

Several other research efforts led to pilot plants in Monaca during the early to mid-1980s (Figure 59). These included a lead chloride technology to replace the lead smelter in Herculaneum, MO; a citrate process for scrubbing sulfur dioxide from the power plant and smelter off-gases; and a lead acid battery grid project involving prototype production for the lead calcium tin alloy developed at St. Joe.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Pusateri, 15.

<sup>229</sup> Weyand, 5-7.

<sup>230</sup> Pusateri, 6.

<sup>231</sup> Weyand, 16; Pusateri, 6-8.

<sup>232</sup> Pusateri, 14.



**Figure 59.** Hydrometallurgical pilot plant facilities.<sup>233</sup>

The product development group was cut back in 1985. It ended in 1987—50 years after Weaton had established the Research Department—when Fluor Corporation sold off St. Joe Resources Company in parts and there was no further need for a centralized research and development operation. Process research continued at ZCA’s Monaca plant until about 1995.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Inman, photo collection, Beaver County Industrial Museum.

<sup>234</sup> Weyand, 14; Pusateri, 9, 12-13.

## 11. Industrial Relations

*Industrial harmony and mutual respect must be earned, they cannot be bought or induced through propaganda any more than an individual can buy respect or a good reputation. (Andrew Fletcher, St. Joseph Lead Company president, 1947-1960, and chairman of the board, 1960-1967)*<sup>235</sup>

The executives who ran the St. Joseph Lead Company felt responsible for the physical, mental, and moral well-being of their employees and their families. The company was a proponent of welfare capitalism: by definition, any service provided for the comfort or improvement of employees, which was neither a necessity of the industry nor required by law. American businessmen, particularly those with a large workforce, adopted welfare practices to counter lethargy, absenteeism, insobriety, and job turnover, and hopefully prevent destructive and violent strikes. Employers also felt that instilling loyalty to the company would inhibit the growth of unions and government interference and foster productivity. Paternalism was an intrinsic element of welfare capitalism as was Americanization for a largely immigrant workforce. The welfare capitalism movement reached its greatest popularity in the first three decades of the 20th century. After surveying 1,500 of the largest companies in the United States in 1926, a researcher reported that 80 percent had adopted at least one form of welfarism and about half had comprehensive programs. At a minimum, more than four million people worked for companies that engaged in welfare capitalism.<sup>236</sup>

The St. Joseph Lead Company began putting the principles of welfare capitalism into practice at an early date in Bonne Terre, the center of the company's lead operations in Missouri. Company engineers designed a town with large lots and wide streets. Houses were rented at reduced rates and 12 company farms insured an adequate food supply for Bonne Terre. A company store sold goods near cost and as the population increased, privately owned commercial businesses were established. A public hall for lectures and concerts, a hospital, social club, swimming pool, schools, churches, and a company band—all supported by St. Joseph Lead Company.<sup>237</sup>

Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities were a mainstay of the welfare capitalism philosophy. Recreation provided physical, cultural, mental, and spiritual alternatives for leisure time, thereby lessening the potential of unsavory pastimes. Recreational activities often provided a form of advertising and recruitment for the company. Athletic teams represented the company in competitive games. Musicians performed in concerts and marched in parades. Management and workers played and marched together, fostering pride and unity. A 1926 survey of recreational

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<sup>235</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Employees Handbook* (c. 1952), 1, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh. MSS 833

<sup>236</sup> Stuart D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 2-3, 12, 28-29; Sanford M. Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since The New Deal* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4.

<sup>237</sup> Robert Sidney Douglass, *History of Southeast Missouri* (Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 385-386; J. Wyman Jones, *A History of the St. Joseph Lead Company, from Its Organization in 1864, to January 1, 1892* (Privately printed, 1892), 38-49; Missouri SHPO.

activities provided by American companies found that the annual picnic or outing was the most prevalent followed by baseball teams.<sup>238</sup>

When the St. Joseph Lead Company came to Potter Township to establish its Zinc Smelting Division, it brought the ideals of welfare capitalism, but not all its manifestations. Unlike Bonne Terre, Missouri, which St. Joseph Lead built and maintained as a company town, Joseph town was not a “company town” per se. The local workforce in the 1930s already had homes and cars to get to and from the site. However, from the very start, investment in employee wellbeing and satisfaction, which included facilities, amenities, and perks, and open communication between management and labor, set the tone for good industrial relations and defined the culture of the plant. Barometers of successful management-labor relations were long years of service celebrated in 10, 20, 30, and 40-year increments and the absence of unions in the plant for more than four decades.

In 1930, while the plant was still under construction, Division Manager George F. Weaton initiated the Corn Roast, the first annual company picnic for employees and their families, on grounds adjoining the plant along Poorhouse Run. This event became the highlight of every employee’s social calendar. By the fourth annual picnic in September 1934, 800 people were attending the festivities. The day began with a softball game between the operating and maintenance departments (white collar vs. overall). Family-friendly contests included the children’s peanut scramble, the women’s rolling pin throw, the men’s 16-lb. shot put, foot races, cracker eating, hog calling, and a tug of war (Figure 60). The plant manager handed out prizes to the contest winners and then awarded engraved pocketknives to all the men employed in departments with good safety records. An additional prize of \$25 was awarded to the cleanest department. A lunch of hot dogs, corn, ice cream, cookies, and coffee followed the games.<sup>239</sup>



Figure 60. Tug of war at the 1934 Corn Roast.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Stuart D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 75-81; Chauncey J. Hamlin, chairman, National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, *A Report Epitomizing the Results of Major Fact-finding Surveys and Projects which Have Been Undertaken under the Auspices of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation*, 70<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Senate Document No. 158 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1928), 29.

<sup>239</sup> “St. Joseph Lead Co. Has Big Picnic,” *Daily Times*, September 10, 1934: 7.

<sup>240</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 9.



The company's annual picnic became a more event-filled day as the workforce expanded. Approximately 1,350 people attended the tenth annual picnic in 1940. The program of sports and contests included bingo, mushball (a squishier softball), children's candy and balloon races, and couples' horseshoes, egg toss, and marshmallow feeding contests. A trio serenaded the picnickers with Hawaiian music.<sup>241</sup> The St. Joseph Zinc Smelting Division continued to expand its operations and workforce during the 1950s. In time, the annual picnic on the company grounds may have appeared to become old-fashioned. The realignment of S.R. 18 in 1957 appears to have provided a catalyst for a change of venue. In 1964, 3,900 employees and guests attended the St. Joseph Lead Company picnic in Idora Park, Youngstown, Ohio.<sup>242</sup>

The St. Joseph Lead Company (Missouri) granted its first pensions in 1911. The fully funded pension trust guaranteed payment to employees who were still working for the company at age 65. The company first purchased a group life insurance policy for its employees in 1919; the free policy increased in value up to 10 years of service and employees had the option to purchase additional insurance. These benefits, of course, applied to St. Joe employees at the Joseph town zinc plant that opened in 1930.<sup>243</sup>

The Employees' Benefit Association was formed in 1933 to provide financial assistance to members who could not work due to injury or illness; it also paid a small death benefit. The company provided the administrative support for the program, but employees made all contributions to the benefits fund. St. Joe also provided a credit union on site, requiring less stringent standards than banks and loan organizations for employees to borrow money. Employees were encouraged to use the "Drop Box" at the gatehouse for normal credit union business. Through a gasoline and oil cooperative, employees could tank up their vehicles at St. Joe's gas pump at prices below the going rate at gas stations.<sup>244</sup>

Management engaged employees in efforts to promote and celebrate safety at the workplace, which included safety training (Figure 61). The zinc plant held its first Annual Safety Banquet in 1933, a rally of sorts, attended by employees, management, and their wives.<sup>245</sup> In 1936, Weaton initiated the "Suggestion System," which gave employees an opportunity to contribute their ideas toward plant improvement and to receive awards for ideas the Suggestion Committee deemed valuable (Figure 62). About 35 percent of the employees' suggestions addressed safety concerns for the year 1951.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> "Big Crowd Attends Annual Corn Roast of Local Company," *Daily Times*, September 9, 1940: 1.

<sup>242</sup> "Whee!" [photo caption], *Beaver County Times*, August 18, 1964: 2.

<sup>243</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Employees Handbook*, 18-19.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33; St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, October 1956: 2.

<sup>245</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 15.

<sup>246</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *Employees Handbook*, 30.



**Figure 61.** Safety training.<sup>247</sup>



**Figure 62.** Ira Sullivan at furnace chute, 1946. He suggested this chute to improve cleaning out of condenser down-legs in the furnace.<sup>248</sup>

The Plant Foremen's Association, organized in 1935, held monthly meetings to discuss safety as well as plant problems and programs, and around 1943, Weaton set up department safety meetings and required safety reports.<sup>249</sup> A scoreboard at the Gate House tracked the number of hours of exposure for how many days without a lost time injury for the various departments,

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<sup>247</sup> Frank, photograph collection.

<sup>248</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, September 1946: 16.

<sup>249</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 15.

while signage at the entrance read, “Through this portal pass the safest workers in the zinc industry, work safely and pass through again.”<sup>250</sup> When employees met goals for hours worked without an accident, they received a gift like a pocketknife or jacket. The employee newsletter, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, typically focused on safety initiatives and messages, with “Safety Always Saves Regrets” in its masthead and a cartoon character, “Safety Sam,” sharing safety tips (Figure 63).



**Figure 63.** “Safety Sam,” St. Joe’s safety mascot. A real person known as “Safety Sam” LoFaso worked in the sinter plant.<sup>251</sup>

The plant’s safety record for 1953, as measured by lost time injury, earned it the National Safety Council Award of Honor.<sup>252</sup> The company made new safety glasses available—though not mandatory—in 1958.<sup>253</sup> Safety gear in general was minimal during the 1960s, but as time went on, the company required and/or provided safety glasses, better respirators, face shields, helmets, and flame retardant clothes.<sup>254</sup> “They paid for all fireproof stuff. Not your boots. That was payroll deducted because they had a boot truck come.”<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, December 1947: 16; St. Joseph Lead Company, *Employee Handbook*, 2.

<sup>251</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, September 1946: 20 St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, 1959.

<sup>252</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, December 1956:18.

<sup>253</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, August 1958: 5.

<sup>254</sup> Strupek, 12.

<sup>255</sup> Shamp, 10.

The plant opened with a first aid room for treating minor occupational injuries. In 1950, the company erected a new Emergency Response Building and hired a registered nurse (Figure 64). “We have a nurse on all three shifts. After 5:00 P.M., the nurse takes over the telephone instead of the Gate House.”<sup>256</sup> St. Joe required new employees to pass a complete physical examination and all employees received periodic examinations. The company also provided flu shots and blood lead monitoring before any regulatory agencies required it. The roaster plant had the highest lead levels at the smelter. If someone developed elevated levels, the company reassigned him to another position and if that job had a lower pay rate, the higher rate was guaranteed.<sup>257</sup> In 1959, St. Joe hired Dr. M.U. Eninger, an industrial management consultant, to develop a New Accident Prevention Program. It included a training course for superintendents, foremen, and eventually group leaders, and a new accident reporting and investigation system (Figure 65). The systematic program required safety inspections, safety observation, and group safety meetings.<sup>258</sup>



Figure 64. St. Joe’s first registered nurse, 1950.<sup>259</sup>

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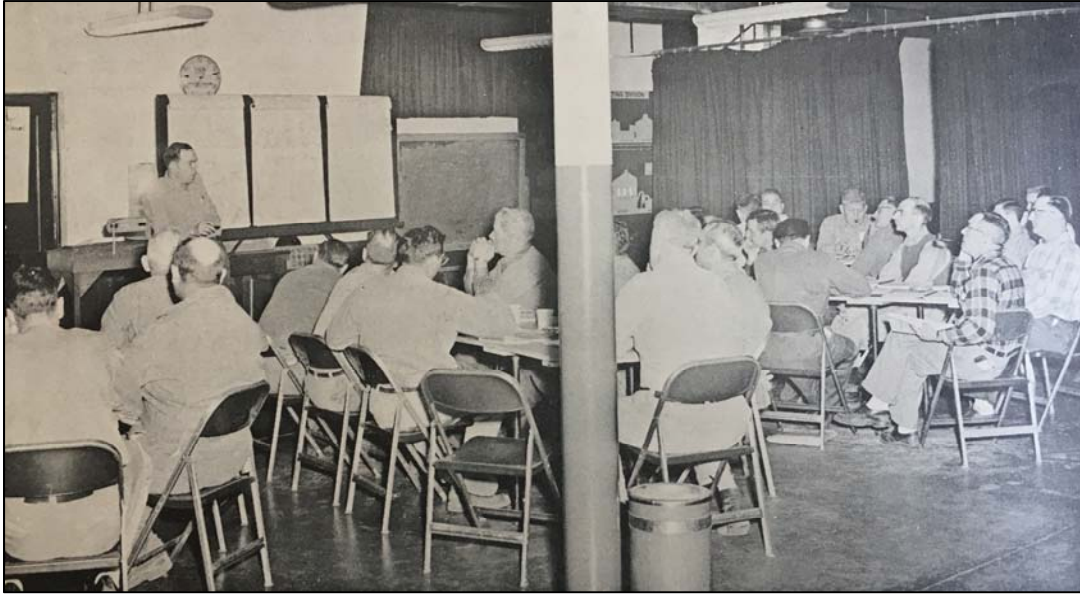
<sup>256</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, December 1959: 5.

<sup>257</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Joseph town Story, 1931-1956*, 28; Reese, 9.

<sup>258</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, Spring 1959: 2; St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, April 1960: 7.

<sup>259</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 20.





**Figure 65.** Clifford A. Conklin instructing foremen and supervisors in “Fundamentals of Accident Prevention,” 1959.<sup>260</sup>

The company instituted an incentive plan effective September 1, 1945. Payment was based upon employees meeting targets for the recovery of metals from concentrates. In the latter six months of 1947, employees received an additional 7 percent in earnings. Of course, tonnage quotas were modified as the capacity of furnaces was increased with new equipment.<sup>261</sup>

St. Joe offered training and tuition assistance programs that developed skills that were good for the company and good for the employee’s career with the company. In 1936, St. Joe launched its Apprentice Training School in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor. The program, which ran uninterrupted well into the 1970s (except during World War II), entailed a four-year course of classroom and shop training to prepare high quality craftsman for the various aspects of smelter work, including auto mechanic, pipefitter, and machinist, just to name a few. When the school reopened in 1945, a new set of standards made apprentices eligible for a certificate recognized throughout the State of Pennsylvania, along with a St. Joseph Lead Company diploma. Returning servicemen utilized GI Bill benefits to pay for these courses.<sup>262</sup> In 1937, St. Joe established a Technical Training Program to recruit and train engineers. During the summer of 1960, the Technical Training Department employed 26 students representing 12 universities, who worked in 10 departments throughout the plant.<sup>263</sup> “The program definitely was designed to try to have summer engineers learn about the smelter and learn what kind of job opportunities there might be in the future.”<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, Spring 1959: opp. 1.

<sup>261</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, December 1947: 15, 28.

<sup>262</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, September 1945: 14.

<sup>263</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, October 1960: 12.

<sup>264</sup> Reese, 4.

A Management Training program, started in 1943, educated supervisors and hourly employees in basic management principles and emphasized industrial relations and leadership.<sup>265</sup> Effective September 1, 1956, St. Joe initiated a Tuitions Aid Program. It paid up to 80 percent of fees toward courses for employees who wanted to further their education with courses related to their current job or one they aspired to. The laboratory reported ten of its staff pursuing higher education in October 1956.<sup>266</sup> In 1966, the Zinc Smelting Division organized another technical training program in collaboration with Penn State University. The four-year program, which entailed 10 hours of weekly classroom instruction and rotating plant assignments, awarded its first associate degrees in drafting and design technology or materials technology-metallurgy in 1970.<sup>267</sup>

Perhaps what was truly the heart of the plant was the cafeteria, opened in 1940 and known simply as “the Cafe” (silent “e”). Plant manager George F. Weaton believed you would get a good day’s work from a man who had a good warm meal. The employee cafeteria provided hot meals at subsidized rates, with meal tickets deducted from pay (Figure 66). (Workers sometimes cashed in their meal tickets in the cafeteria for money to frequent a nearby bar after work.<sup>268</sup>) Twenty-four employees served more than 1,000 meals a day, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, serving the workers on all three shifts. Women did all the cooking, which included baking pastries (Figure 67). Men worked as meat cutters, trimming cuts of beef and pork that came from a 470-acre, company-owned farm located southwest of the plant, off Raccoon Creek Road (Figure 68). Jim Druschel operated the St. Joe farm, which had a barn and a slaughterhouse with a large walk-in cooler on the premises. Meat taken off the skulls of butchered livestock was used to make sausage.<sup>269</sup> In 1956, the farm had 150 head of cattle and 110 head of hogs. Seventy percent of the grain and other feed for the livestock was grown on the farm. In later years, the farm ceased raising cattle and became a hog-only operation. Produce, dairy, bread, and canned goods largely were sourced from Beaver County purveyors.<sup>270</sup>

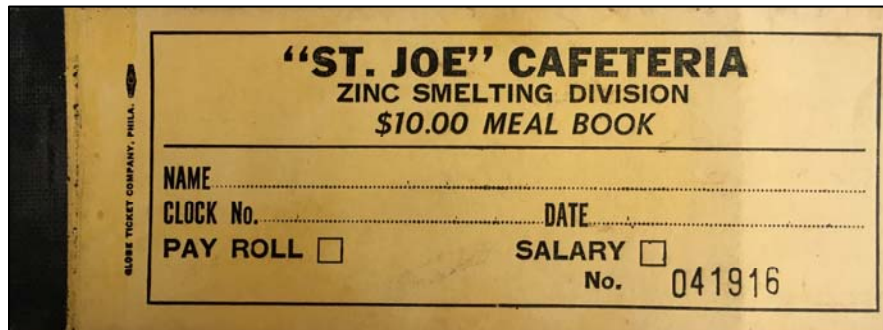


Figure 66. Book of meal tickets for the St. Joe Cafeteria.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>265</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 16-17; “St. Joe Minerals: Growing Through Diversification” *Engineering and Mining Journal* (November 1976): 105.

<sup>266</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, October 1956: 4; St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst* December 1956; 17.

<sup>267</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *1969 President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (March 1970), 20.

<sup>268</sup> Victor Hall, interview by Carol Perloff, Beaver, PA, November 16, 2016, transcript, 27.

<sup>269</sup> Shamp, 6.

<sup>270</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Joseph town Story, 1931-1956*, 29.

<sup>271</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.



**Figure 67.** Cafeteria crew, 1949. Left to right: Myrtle Stone, Mary Forey, Lula Neno, Inez Ammon, Ruth Kress, Lucille Burkhommer, Catherine Bishop, Emma Nelson, Birdie Graham, Marie Blinn, Alice Corsetti, Edith Crowther, Eleanor Nichols.<sup>272</sup>



**Figure 68.** St. Joe farm.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 15.

<sup>273</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.



Everyone from management to maintenance shared the one common dining room. Although they were free to sit anywhere, people tended to sit with co-workers in their department. “Especially on daylight because you had a lot of office personnel coming in. And who wants to sit beside some guy that is full of sweat and everything else when I’m working in the office?”<sup>274</sup> In the mid-1970s, cafeteria hours were cut back, closing from 1am-5am. When the plant reopened after the 1979 shut down, the cafeteria did not, a casualty of the streamlined smelter operations.<sup>275</sup>

Yet another company initiative that engendered a positive employee culture was the auditorium building, constructed in 1951 on grounds fronting the railroad tracks and S.R. 18 (Figure 41). The auditorium served a practical purpose of providing additional space for plant meetings “If you went to the plant meeting, you got your paycheck. If you didn’t go to the plant meeting, you’d have to wait till Monday to get it.”<sup>276</sup> More often, and typically Monday through Saturday, 6-11pm, the main auditorium space functioned as a gymnasium with its beautiful wooden basketball court. A kitchen was situated to the west of the court, a stage, to the east. The basement housed a number of recreational facilities including four bowling alleys, two tenpins, two duckpins, pool, ping pong, and shuffleboard (Figure 69). The amenities were free for the use of employees and their families and guests. However, as the bowling alley did not have automatic pinsetters, bowlers paid local teenagers a small fee per game for working as pin boys.<sup>277</sup>



**Figure 69.** Downstairs activities in the auditorium building during the 10 Year Club Dance, 1954.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> H. Specht, 14.

<sup>275</sup> Bruce A. Megill, “The Cafe,” ZCA newsletter, January 1994.

<sup>276</sup> Hall, 25.

<sup>277</sup> Shamp, 7.

<sup>278</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, December 1954: 3.



Social functions like the annual Christmas parties, movies, banquets, awards dinners, and dances took place in the auditorium. St. Joe was known for its children’s Christmas parties—attended by 825 children in 1952—and the extravagant, age-appropriate gifts purchased months ahead of the event (Figures 70-71).

The bleachers were unfolded and the heavy green velvet drapes above the stage were pulled open to show cartoons to the children. Everyone would sing holiday carols and then the children would visit Santa with their toy list. At the end of the parties, we would receive a gift and a box of Rosalind’s Candies.<sup>279</sup>



**Figure 70.** The auditorium decorated for the annual Christmas party, 1950s.<sup>280</sup>



**Figure 71.** Children’s Christmas Party, 1954.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Bruce A. Megill, “The Auditorium,” ZCA newsletter, c. 1993.

<sup>280</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

<sup>281</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 25.

The company's extensive athletics programs warranted a fulltime athletic director. Hank Davenport supervised the auditorium and St. Joe's sports leagues. "A really cavalier kind of guy. He was the kind of guy that once you met him, you would never forget Hank. We would shoot pool and he would smoke a cigarette and he would put it in his ear while he's taking a shot."<sup>282</sup> St. Joe had many athletic leagues: intra-departmental teams, couples leagues, women's teams, and groups that competed against other mills around Beaver County. In addition to bowling, the range of sports included volleyball, softball, golf, trapshooting, and pistol shooting (Figures 72-74). The auditorium stage "was so big that a lot of times in the winter time they would set up a screen and, well, a net and you could go up and practice your golf swing to get ready for spring."<sup>283</sup> The pistol range was located in the basement of the old Beaver County Home, vacated and occupied by St. Joe in the late 1950s. "They supplied the bullets and powder and everything and, if you shot on the pistol team, you could go down there and shoot."<sup>284</sup> There was also a St. Joe Boat Club with a launch on Raccoon Creek, east of S.R. 18. Some of St. Joe's teams were quite accomplished. In 1958, the company's No. 1 Ten Pin Team traveled to Harrisburg to participate in the State Ten Pin Tournament.<sup>285</sup> That same year, the volleyball team competed in the National Championships and did so bringing honor, if not victory, to St. Joe.

*May I take this opportunity to say that your team is a credit to the firm whose name it bears. I have watched your team during the season and at the Nationals and it a pleasure to observe them. They are a smooth working organization, hustling and striving to turn in a good game always. They are a cooperative group and their sportsmanship is unexcelled, no official baiting, but always an acceptance of the call of the play as it comes and in keeping with the best Volleyball tradition.*

*(Letter from Edward A. Heisler, Region 3  
Representative, to John Wehn, Manager, St. Joe  
Lead Company, May 17, 1958)<sup>286</sup>*

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<sup>282</sup> Shamp, 7.

<sup>283</sup> H. Specht, 16.

<sup>284</sup> Frank, 16.

<sup>285</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, August 1958: 12.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.



Figure 72. The Yard Department, duck pin bowling champs, 1955 and 1956.<sup>287</sup>



Figure 73. St. Joe Lead softball team, 1940. The team finished in second place in the Beaver County Manufacturers' League.<sup>288</sup>

<sup>287</sup> G. Specht, personal photograph collection.

<sup>288</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, October 1960: 13.





Figure 74. Patch for St. Joe trap team.<sup>289</sup>

The zinc smelting industry rode the ups and downs of the economy as a whole, and specifically, the defense and automotive industries. At times, furnace repairs necessitated partial shutdowns. Based upon the annual reports, it appears that management adapted to these fluctuations with reduced work hours rather than layoffs—48 hours per week at full operation, cut to 44 or 40 hours as needed. “St. Joe was famous for not laying off like the steel industry. Everybody said, ‘Well, go to St. Joe. You won’t make as much money, but you’ll never get laid off.’”<sup>290</sup>

Several initiatives promoting labor-management relations came about in the 1950s. In 1953, Weaton established the Employees’ Advisory Committee, “the first venture by management in general employee representation.”<sup>291</sup> In 1956, John Wehn, who succeeded Weaton as plant manager (1954-1963), formalized company policies that addressed trends in fringe benefits like vacation time, holiday pay, and medical coverage. He expanded the Employees’ Advisory Committee to include hourly employees from the various departments. The cooperative efforts led to a three-week vacation policy, implementation of the turn differential, upgrade premium pay, and wage adjustments. Other actions management took from recommendations of the committee included standardizing wage structures, job posting and bidding procedures, standardized job qualifications, grievance procedures, death and funeral leave allowance, and improvements to the pension plan and hospitalization. In 1959, St. Joe established an Industrial Relations Department, headed by Clifford A. Conklin, to coordinate the more complex labor-management administration.<sup>292</sup>

The numerous gains outlined have been made through cooperative effort and mutual respect—Management realizing the needs and desires of the employees—the labor representatives respecting the financial limitations on Management by the Company’s profit level and the economic conditions in the zinc industry. These gains have been

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<sup>289</sup> Ted Simmons, personal collection.

<sup>290</sup> Frank, transcript, 14.

<sup>291</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, April 1960: 25.

<sup>292</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *A Growing Enterprise*, 17, 20; St. Joseph Lead Company, *President’s Annual Report to Stockholders* (1961), 10-11; St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, April 1960: 25.



made without financially crippling strikes that threaten the security of workers and their families and our Company, and destroy friendly relations.<sup>293</sup>

The benefits program, good working conditions and labor-management relations, training opportunities, fair wages, and ample safety provisions satisfied most of the needs that typically turned an industrial workforce to organized labor. Even the six-day workweek was seen as a plus as “everybody was happy about the money.”<sup>294</sup> While other divisions of the St. Joseph Lead Company had been unionized for decades, Joseph town employees did not elect to join Union Local No. 8183, United Steel Workers of America until February 1974. “It kind of went tilt in the 1970s with price controls, when there were no increases available.”<sup>295</sup> To some degree, management inadvertently brought in the union when it commissioned a time and motion study. The outside organization that conducted the study observed laborers doing various tasks in the plant and made recommendations to do the same jobs with fewer people. “I think the men looked at it, viewed it as a lack of trust in their abilities . . . if you needed help and we were losing money and you want us to help out in controlling costs, ask us.”<sup>296</sup> The St. Joe workforce turned to the union to protect their interests.

With union contracts came higher wages, a shorter workweek, more paid holidays, more safety equipment, and closer medical monitoring. However, the transition from a nonunion to union workplace was not all smooth. In 1977, union workers went out on a brief wildcat strike, wanting back some of benefits they’d had before and that were not in the agreement. Labor and management representatives “got together, had a meeting and agreed that since there was a labor contract, a labor agreement, both sides had to follow it.”<sup>297</sup> But things would not be the same. Activities, programs and facilities that had built decades of esprit de corps, a sense of family, and company loyalty—things like the cafeteria, gymnasium, safety banquets, and Christmas parties—disappeared between the 1974 vote to unionize and the 1979 shutdown of the smelter. When the jobs disappeared too, the company had a training program to help employees make a resume and search for jobs. If relocation was necessary, a program helped to pay moving expenses.<sup>298</sup> When the streamlined plant reopened in 1980, a lot of the returning workers “were disappointed, and they would say they wish we could go back to the good old days. Well, the good old days were gone, gone forever.”<sup>299</sup> That’s not to say that all the camaraderie went too. “They were your friends, . . . if you had a problem they would come together and they would help you.”<sup>300</sup> “Guys would, if they found out you were putting a garage up, the whole shift would show up and do stuff like that.”<sup>301</sup> Bob Sunderman, plant manager, endeavored to keep up the annual family picnic at Idora Park and later at Kennywood Park. When the final 2014 shutdown loomed, the plant’s union leaders staged job fairs to help fellow members prepare for the transition and search for new employment.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, April 1960: 25.

<sup>294</sup> Knight, 20.

<sup>295</sup> Deelo, 24.

<sup>296</sup> DeChellis, 13.

<sup>297</sup> Sam Mullen, interview by Carol Perloff, Clinton, PA, November 12, 2016, transcript, 7.

<sup>298</sup> Strupek, 19.

<sup>299</sup> Mullin, 25.

<sup>300</sup> Andrews, 30.

<sup>301</sup> G. Specht, transcript, 2.

<sup>302</sup> Deelo, 26; Wakeley, 23.

## 12. Community Relations

The St. Joseph Lead Company not only practiced good employee relations, but also good community relations. The company welcomed area residents onto the site for recreational purposes and college students from different schools for co-op programs and summer engineering programs. St. Joe employees ventured out to support civic activities and causes, executives often serving on school boards and in other local organizations. There was a time when St. Joe also reached out to the community over the airwaves, presenting “radio programs of general interest to the people of Beaver County.”<sup>303</sup>

One of the most direct symbols of the company’s community involvement was construction of the Potter Township Elementary School in 1939. The company built the two-room, orange brick schoolhouse on Poorhouse Run Road (now Pleasant Drive) at a cost of \$15,000. The 40-foot x 70-foot brick building was designed with a kitchen, restrooms, drinking fountains, gas heating, sewage disposal, and a folding partition wall so it could double as a community center. In its first year, the school had 40 pupils. St. Joe donated the school and the land to Potter Township School District. After the school moved elsewhere in 1952, the Boy Scouts and the Explorer Scouts used the building. St. Joseph also donated five acres of land to the fire department to build their firehouse.<sup>304</sup>

The six acres of its property that St. Joe converted into picnic grounds with tables, playground equipment, and other facilities, were made available to church, civic, and other organized community groups. In September 1944, the Southside Rural Woman’s Club held a covered-dish dinner at the picnic grounds. After the dinner, the group went up to the school building where a business meeting was held. In the late 1940s, girl scouts from the Rochester-Monaca-Freedom District used the picnic grounds as their day camp site. A Methodist church group from Rochester hosted a “hamburg fry” there in June 1952.<sup>305</sup> Other picnickers using the St. Joe grounds included the Monaca Junior Woman’s Club, the Rochester American Legion Post, the Slovak Baptist Young People Union, St. Peter’s Lutheran Church of Monaca, the Monaca Board of Trade, the Beaver County Foremen’s Club, the Potter Township Volunteer Fire Department, the Miller Family Reunion, and Bunker Hill Community Sunday School. References to events at the company picnic grounds are absent from newspapers after 1954. The picnic grounds disappeared when S.R. 18 was relocated in 1957 and the new road alignment passed through that area of the property.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Joseph town Story, 1931-1957*, 31.

<sup>304</sup> “Lead Company Gave Fine School Building to Potter Township, *Daily Times*, May 25, 1940: 30; Deelo, 26; Champ, 27.

<sup>305</sup> “Southside Rural Woman’s Club Has A Picnic Dinner,” *Daily Times*, September 14, 1944: 2; “Camp Sites Are Selected In The Various Districts,” *Beaver Valley Times*, June 17, 1949: 2; “Methodist Class To Have ‘Hamburg Fry’ Saturday,” *Beaver Valley Times*, June 27, 1952: 13.

<sup>306</sup> “Rochester Legion Post Conducts Nomination,” *Daily Times*, September 18, 1946: 1; “Slovak Baptist Young People from Several Cities To Meet Here,” *Daily Times*, August 29, 1946: 1; “Monaca Lutheran Sunday School Annual Picnic Enjoyable Event,” *Beaver Valley Times*, July 19, 1948: 5; “Monaca Board Schedules Picnic,” *Beaver Valley Times*, June 5, 1951: 1; “Foremen’s Club Starts 18th Year [photo caption],” *Beaver Valley Times*, September 14, 1953: 1; “Potter Twp: Fire Auxiliary Plans August Corn Roast,” *Beaver Valley Times*, July 14, 1954: 8; “Miller Family Has Reunion in Potter Township,” *Beaver Valley Times*, August 5, 1954: 5; “Sunday School Holds Picnic,” *Beaver Valley Times*, August 24, 1954:6.

Construction of the auditorium in 1951 enriched the lives of area residents, as well as St. Joe families. The Potter Township School held its Christmas party in the auditorium.<sup>307</sup> Friends of St. Joe families used the facilities as accompanied guests, joining in basketball, bowling, and other activities. St. Joe rented a building on the property to the Beaver County Humane Society for one dollar a year and donated fire trucks to the community.<sup>308</sup>

The St. Joe farm, which supplied beef and pork to the company cafeteria, pursued good husbandry as seriously as the smelter pursued engineering. “St. Joe farmers share their knowledge with neighboring farmers, devoting nearly a quarter of their time to such work, and the resulting cooperation has been of untold value both to the company and to the managers of nearby farms.”<sup>309</sup>

Volunteerism was part of the company ethos. In 1959, 70 company men volunteered in a Boy Scout program and the St. Joe male chorus sang at various churches and at Aliquippa High School for a “Youth for Christ” rally.<sup>310</sup> More St. Joe employees than could be accommodated volunteered to donate blood in the Bloodmobile.<sup>311</sup> The company contributed Christmas trees that they decorated and auctioned off right after Thanksgiving, proceeds going to support an agency.<sup>312</sup> “. . . any charitable group, or any, let me say, community movement that was done, St. Joe would take some part in it.”<sup>313</sup> Employees participated in big drives for United Way and events at the Beaver County Mall supporting the organization. At a local event in Rochester, known as the River Regatta, the company sponsored a booth where it hosted a putting green, with proceeds going to charity, and passed out zinc pennies, sunscreen made with St. Joe zinc oxide, and information about the company. As ZCA, the company participated in Ohio River Sweep, a volunteer cleanup activity started in 1989.

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<sup>307</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, February 1953: 26.

<sup>308</sup> G. Specht, transcript, 26.

<sup>309</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The Joseph town Story, 1931-1956*, 29.

<sup>310</sup> St. Joseph Lead Company, *The St. Joe Catalyst*, Spring 1959: 20, 22.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>312</sup> Belczyk, 18.

<sup>313</sup> Mullin, 6.

### 13. Shell Comes to Potter Township: 2015

In 2015, Horsehead sold the former St. Joe property to Shell for the construction of a petrochemical complex. Shell's selection of the Monaca location and subsequent construction of the petrochemical complex indicated their strong confidence in the hard working families that live in the Monaca area, as well as a faith and trust in the industrial traditions of Beaver County and the Ohio River Valley. During the course of documenting the history of the St. Joe's smelter, AECOM conducted oral history interviews of former employees of St. Joe's and asked them for their thoughts regarding the arrival of Shell in Beaver County and the petrochemicals complex (see Appendix B). Many narrators, as the interviewees are called, commented very positively regarding the arrival of Shell and the plans they had for the former smelter property.

One narrator indicated that he thought "it's one of the best things that happened to Beaver County. It's a big boom to Beaver County" and another indicated "it's good for the county and once they get it going people will see the positive impact."<sup>314</sup> The narrators indicated they were impressed with how Shell approached the community and introduced the project to the public. Comments such as "first-class operation," "good corporate neighbor," and the "community is going to be better off with them here" reflect this sentiment.<sup>315</sup> A few narrators also indicated that they appreciated that Shell was continuing industrial operations on the former St. Joe site. One narrator addressed a number of these themes with the following response:

Interviewer: What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

Narrator: I think it's great. I liken that to the turn of the last century. When you had Carnegie and Frick and all those guys getting the steel mills going in Pittsburgh . . . and then all of a sudden all this industry came into this area here. I look at that as the same thing that's coming here. It's a different industry and I liken that to the turn of the last century, the steel boom in this area. This is going to be the next thing that happens in this area . . . I wish I were younger to be part of it . . . it's going to be fun to watch it grow and watch this area grow . . . the people in this area are good people. They're hardworking people . . . and the other thing it's going to bring . . . younger couples into the area."<sup>316</sup>

Approximately 85 years after St. Joseph Lead Company established a presence in Potter Township, Shell's arrival will continue the industrial traditions established by St. Joe's into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>314</sup> Bob Hanne Sr., Interview by Carol Perloff, November 12, 2016, transcript, 3; Bob Beatty, Interview by Carol Perloff, November 17, 2016, transcript, 30.

<sup>315</sup> Richard Romisher, Interview by Carol Perloff, November 12, 2016, transcript, 3; DeChellis, 27; Frank, 34.

<sup>316</sup> DeChellis, 27.



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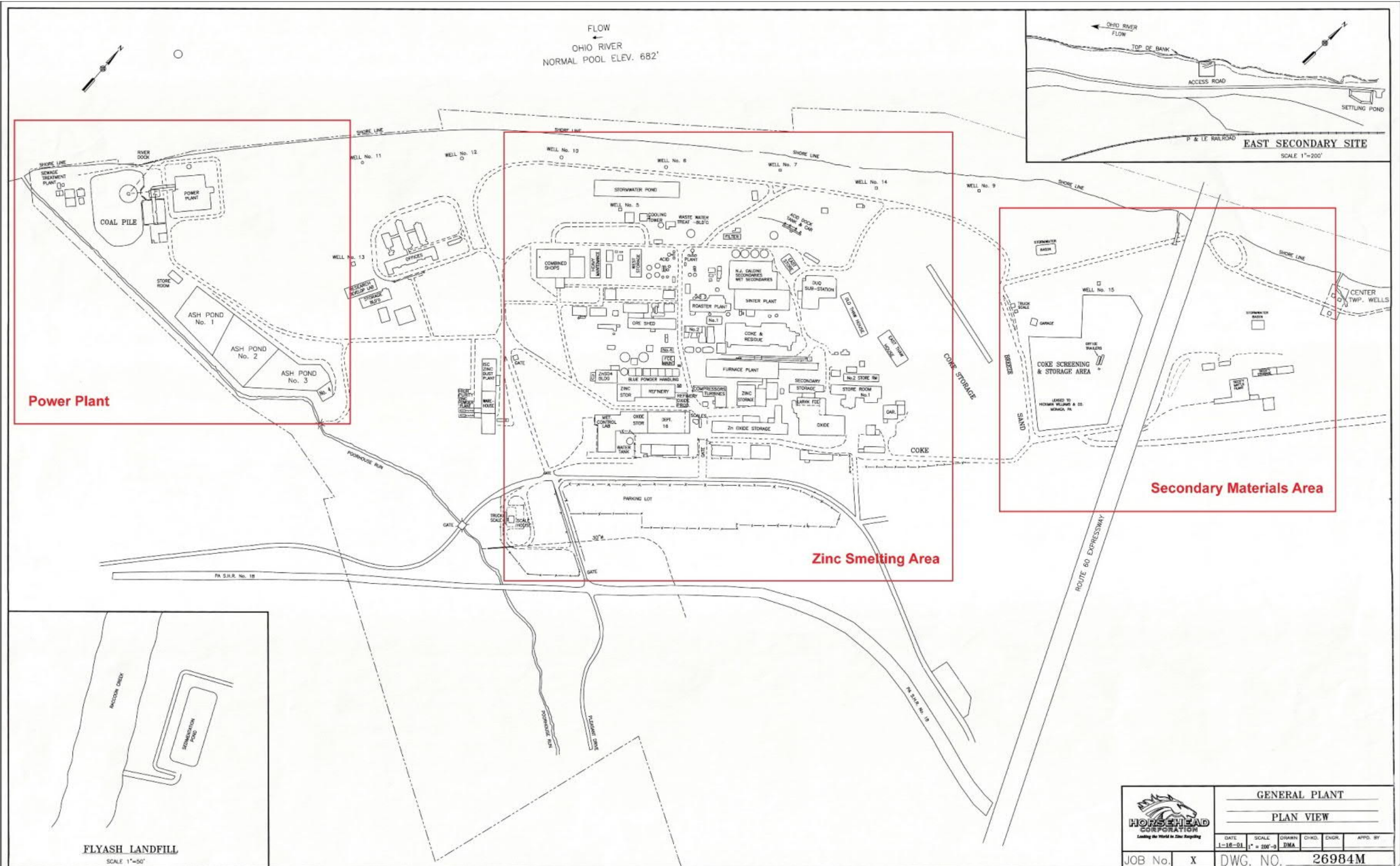
**Appendix A**  
**Historic Architectural Survey/Building Inventory (2014)**

**Historical Architectural Survey/Building Inventory (2014)**  
**Josephtown/Monaca Smelter**  
**Potter Township, PA**

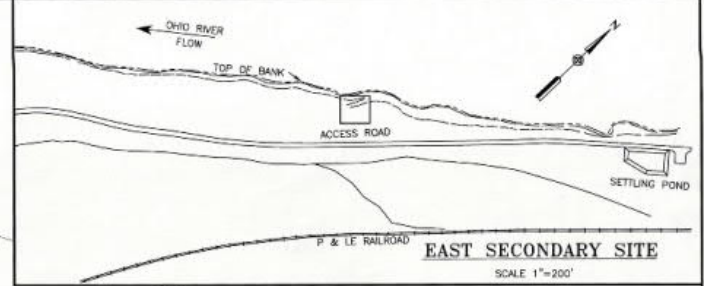
Survey Code (SC)	Building Name/Function	Historic Function	Date of Construction/Alteration*	Photo Number
1	Acid Loading Rack	Acid loading rack	c. 1950	1
2	Old Acid Plant	Acid plant	1930, alt. 1948	2-3
3	Bag House No. 1	Bag house	c. 1960	4
4	Bag House No. 2	Bag house	c. 1950	5
5	Coke Residue Building	Sinter plant	1930	6
6	Compressor Building	Compressor and turbine building	1949	7-8
7	Crane Building/Paint Lab	Paint lab	1939 (Crane Bldg.); c. 1955 (Paint Lab)	9
8	Electrical Maintenance Building	Electrical maintenance	1959	10
9	Emergency Response Building	Emergency response	c. 1950	11
10	Furnace Maintenance Building	Furnace maintenance, carpenter shop	c. 1955	12
11	Furnace Plant	Furnace Plant	1930; 1940; 1948; 1952	13-14
12	Garage	Garage	c. 1940	15
13	George F. Wheaton Power Plant	Power plant	1958	16-17
14	Auditorium	Auditorium, gymnasium	1951	18
15	Heavy Maintenance Building	Heavy maintenance	c. 1955	19
16	Lubricant Storage Building	Lubricant storage	c. 1955	20
17	Motor (West) Storage Building	Motor storage	c. 1955	21
18	New Wastewater Treatment Plant	Wastewater treatment	c. 1955	22
19	Old Main Office	Offices, laboratories, and research facilities	1930; c. 1950; c. 1965	23-24
20	Wet Lab	Shipping Building	c. 1945	25-26
21	Old Thaw House	Railroad car thawing	1941	27
22	Ore Shed	Ore storage	c. 1950	28-29
23	Oxide Department 6	Oxide storage	1930	30-31
24	Personnel Building	Personnel	c. 1955	32-33
25	Power Plant Storeroom	Storage	1958	34
26	Pump House No. 1	Pump house	c. 1930	35-36
27	Roaster Plant	Roaster plant	1930	37-38
28	Secondary Materials Plant	Secondary Materials Plant	1954	39
29	Secondary Materials Storage	Storage	1959	40
30	Store Room No. 1	Storage	1930, alt. 1962	41
31	Power Plant Treatment/Sewage Plant	Power plant/sewage plant	1958	42-43
32	Truck Scale Building and Garage	Residence/garage	c. 1945	44-45
33	Zinc Oxide Storage Building	Storage	c. 1945	46
34	Zinc Refinery	Zinc Refinery	1959; 1963	47
35	Old Leach Plant	Leach Plant	1937	48-49
36	Cafeteria	Cafeteria	1940	50
37	Scale House	Scale house	c. 1950	51
38	Feed Group Office	Sinter Plant Office	c. 1960	52

\*Construction dates based on historic aerial photographs from 1939, 1947, 1952, 1958, and 1967, as well as information included in the 1964 Anniversary booklet compiled by St. Joseph Lead Company.





FLOW  
OHIO RIVER  
NORMAL POOL ELEV. 682'



**Power Plant**

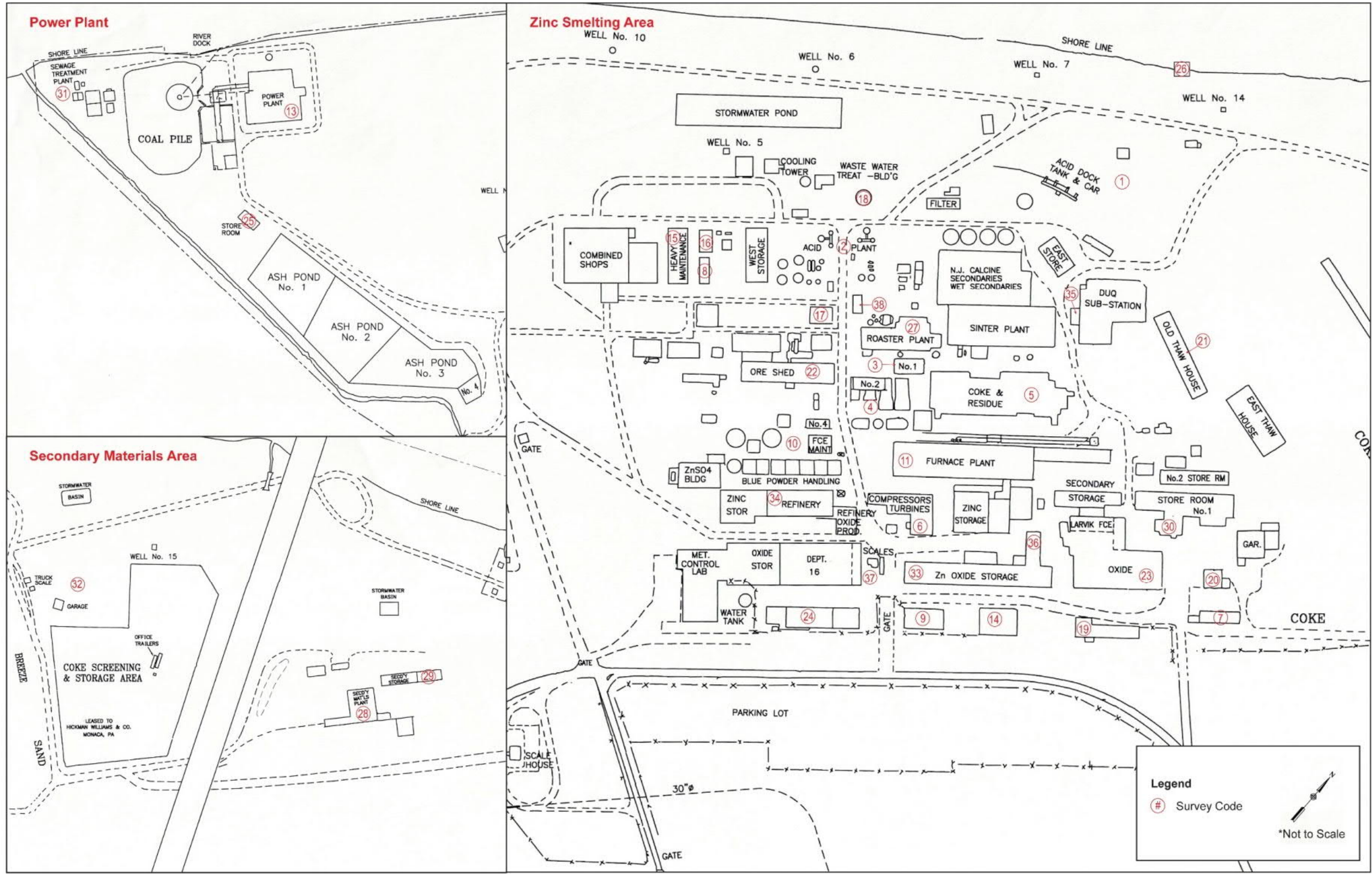
**Zinc Smelting Area**

**Secondary Materials Area**



 <b>HORSEHEAD CORPORATION</b> <small>Leading the World in Zinc Recycling</small>	<b>GENERAL PLANT</b>			
	<b>PLAN VIEW</b>			
DATE	SCALE	DRAWN	CHKD.	ENGR.
1-18-01	1" = 100'-0"	DMA		
JOB No.	X	DWG. NO.		26984M
User 1-Jan 16, 2001 - 15:24:02				







**Photo 1.** Acid Loading Rack (SC-1), view west



**Photo 2.** Old Acid Plant (SC-2), view south





**Photo 3.** Old Acid Plant building (SC-2), front (southwest) façade, view east



**Photo 4.** Bag House No. 1 (SC-3), southwest elevation, view northeast



**Photo 5.** Bag House No. 2 (SC-4), northwest elevation, view east





**Photo 6.** Coke Residue Building (SC-5), northeast elevation, view west



**Photo 7.** Compressor Building (SC-6), northwest elevation, view east



**Photo 8.** Compressor Building (SC-6), southeast gable end, view north



**Photo 9.** Crane Building/Paint Lab (SC-7), front (southwest) façade and southeast elevation, view north





**Photo 10.** Electrical Maintenance Building (SC-8), front (southeast) façade and southwest elevation, view north



**Photo 11.** Emergency Response Building (SC-9), front (southwest) façade and northwest elevation, view east



**Photo 12.** Furnace Maintenance Building (SC-10), front (northeast) facade and northwest elevation, view west



**Photo 13.** Furnace Plant (SC-11), southeast elevation, view northwest





**Photo 14.** Furnace Plant (SC-11), southwest elevation, view northeast



**Photo 15.** Garage (SC-12), front (southwest) façade, view northeast



**Photo 16.** George F. Wheaton Power Plant (SC-13), view north



**Photo 17.** George F. Wheaton Power Plant (SC-13), front (southwest) facade and southeast elevation, view north





**Photo 18.** Auditorium (SC-14), front (southeast) façade, view west



**Photo 19.** Heavy Maintenance Building (SC-15), front (southeast) façade and southwest elevation, view north



**Photo 20.** Lubricant Storage Building (SC-16), front (northwest) façade and northeast elevation, view south



**Photo 21.** Motor (West) Storage Building (SC-17) [right side of image], view northeast





**Photo 22.** New Wastewater Treatment Plant (SC-18) tank, view north



**Photo 23.** Old Main Office (SC-19), front (southeast) façade and southwest elevation, view north



**Photo 24.** Old Main Office (SC-19), rear (northwest) and southeast elevations, view south



**Photo 25.** Wet Lab (SC-20), front (southwest) elevation, view northeast





**Photo 26.** Wet Lab (SC-20), rear (northeast) elevation, view west



**Photo 27.** Old Thaw House (SC-21), northwest and northeast elevations, view south



**Photo 28.** Ore Shed (SC-22), northeast elevation, view southwest



**Photo 29.** Ore Shed (SC-22), southwest and southeast elevations, view north





**Photo 30.** Oxide Department 6 (SC-23), southeast elevation, view north



**Photo 31.** Oxide Department 6 (SC-23), northeast elevation, view southwest



**Photo 32.** Personnel Building (SC-24), front (northeast) façade and southeast elevation, view west



**Photo 33.** Personnel Building (SC-24), southeast and southwest elevations, view north





**Photo 34.** Power Plant Storeroom (SC-25), front (southwest) façade and northwest elevation, view east



**Photo 35.** Pump House No. 1 (SC-26), front (southeast) façade and southwest elevation, view north





**Photo 36.** Pump House No. 1 (SC-26), side (northeast) elevation and Ohio River, view west



**Photo 37.** Roaster Plant (SC-27), southwest and southeast elevations, view north





**Photo 38.** Roaster Plant (SC-27), northeast elevation, view southwest



**Photo 39.** Secondary Materials Plant (SC-28), southeast and southwest elevations, view north



**Photo 40.** Secondary Materials Storage (SC-29), northeast and southeast elevations, view west



**Photo 41.** Store Room No. 1 (SC-30), southeast elevation, view northwest





**Photo 42.** Power Plant Treatment/Sewage Plant (SC-31), Blower House, view west



**Photo 43.** Power Plant Treatment/Sewage Plant (SC-31), Wastewater pool, view northeast



**Photo 44.** Truck Scale Building (SC-32), front (north) façade and west elevation, view southeast



**Photo 45.** Garage (SC-32), front (north) façade and west elevation, view southeast





**Photo 46.** Zinc Oxide Storage Building (SC-33), southwest and southeast elevations, view north



**Photo 47.** Zinc Refinery (SC-34), northwest elevation, view south



**Photo 48.** Old Leach Plant (SC-35), front (southwest) façade, view northeast



**Photo 49.** Old Leach Plant (SC-35), front (southwest) façade, view north





**Photo 50.** Cafeteria (SC-36), southwest elevation, view northeast



**Photo 51.** Scale House (SC-37), northwest and northeast elevations, view south



**Photo 52.** Feed Group Office (SC-38), front (southwest) façade and southeast elevation, view north



**Appendix B**  
**Oral History Interview Summaries and Transcripts (on CD)**

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**Abbreviated Interviews**  
**Alumni Breakfast @ November 12, 2016**

**James Norman Allen**

**Daniel Bucan**

**Michael Cochran**

**Randy Contray**

**Harry Theodore Eder, Jr.**

**Bob Hanne Sr.**

**Richard Romisher**

**Perry Tice**

**Edwin Duane Zinkan**

## ALUMNI BREAKFAST INTERVIEWS Summary

St. Joe "alumni" are former employees who have been getting together for years for reunions at the Towne Square Restaurant in Beaver, Pennsylvania. The group meets on a Saturday morning, every other month excluding summertime, at 9am. Their breakfast gatherings last roughly an hour. Unlike the other St. Joe oral history interviews, which were in-depth, one-on-one sessions typically lasting 90 minutes to two hours each, the alumni breakfast interviews were intended to capture as many voices as possible during the short timespan at the reunion. Two common questions posed were: why they worked at the plant as long as they did and how they feel about Shell coming to the area.

The interviews were conducted in a booth within the back room of the restaurant where the breakfast was held; people not associated with the St. Joe event were also dining in the room. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] All those present for the St. Joe breakfast were invited to participate in an interview. Nine people volunteered in the hour available. Those nine interviewees were:

Allen, James Norman  
Bucan, Daniel  
Cochran, Michael  
Contray, Randy  
Eder, Harry Theodore Jr.  
Hanne, Bob Sr.  
Romisher, Richard  
Tice, Perry  
Zinkan, Edwin Duane\*

\* With gratitude to Ed Zinkan, who coordinates the alumni breakfasts and facilitated our being there to conduct the interviews.

**James Norman Allen**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**



1 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 JAMES NORMAN ALLEN  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please state and spell your full name?  
8

9 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** My name is James Norman Allen. J-A-M-E-S, N-O-R-  
10 M-A-N, A-L-L-E-N.  
11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. State your date of birth and your full address please.  
13

14 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** My date of birth is [REDACTED], and my address  
15 is [REDACTED], Beaver Falls.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working at St. Joe Lead and when did you  
18 stop working for the company?  
19

20 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** 1971 and it was December 2000. No. Excuse me. Yeah.  
21 September 2011.  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What department did you work in?  
24

25 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** The power plant.  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** The entire time that you worked there?  
28

29 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Uh. All but a few months. Yeah. You know, down there.  
30 They had a 110-megawatt power plant, coal fired. That's not a small power plant. That's,  
31 that's fairly decent size and it, uh, it's just like any other power plant. You know, a lot of  
32 people didn't know it existed. Yeah. We made our own power.  
33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** What role did you have in the power plant and did you have different  
35 positions over your time there?  
36

37 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. I started off as a janitor and when I left I  
38 was, what did they call me? Uh. Projects. I just did, uh, in, well, I did just about  
39 everything there. Just about all the jobs. Um. Let's see, I was in operations. I was a shift  
40 supervisor. I was, uh, maintenance supervisor. I also had the license to run the sewage  
41 plant, which was nice. And, uh, yeah, I did just about everything. When I left there, I was  
42 still, like I said, projects. It was helping guys with outages and special things that we  
43 needed done. Some capital projects I helped out with. You know, that sort of thing and  
44 training. I was a training guy.  
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46 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you get trained?

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**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** I sort of did a lot of reading and studying sort of on my own. Yeah. And I got licensed and, you know, passed all the tests. Yeah. You know. And I was fortunate. I had, I had supervisors that would encourage that and they let me do a lot of things that, you know, you just wouldn't do in a larger power plant. Well, we had to. We were small. You had to depend on each other and you had to learn.

**INTERVIEWER:** We had a, a conversation yesterday with somebody and we were talking about power outages and...

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** The impact of those on people working in the plant...

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Also in dangerous places. Um. What, what would you do in the power plant when there was a power outage?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** You restarted. Sometimes easily. Sometimes not a lot. They were exciting. I kind of lived for those moments actually. But, yeah, the lights would go out. You know, and you'd hear steam lines shaking and, you know, the, uh, they were, they were something. But you just, we had procedures. We just started, you know, from step one and we got everything going and sometimes we recovered quickly. Sometimes there was damage to our, our equipment and we had, it took a while. But, yeah, usually, you know, within in a few hours we had things back. Not all the time, but usually.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were there any practice drills so you would know how to respond in that kind of situation?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Uh. I did that with my, my shift. Yeah. I mean, we had emergency procedures that once a month we went over one. I wouldn't call 'em practices, but yeah, I mean we had, they weren't drills so to speak, but they were, and, and each one was a little different. I mean, you had to know how each little system worked and sometimes they failed. Sometimes they didn't. You know. You had to be able to, uh, find out what caused the problem, you know, and how to avoid it when you restarted. It's, it wasn't, it wasn't the same all the time.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were you from the Beaver County area?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** My, my parents moved down here when I was in the Army. They moved to Beaver, and I stayed here ever since. I like it here. It's nice. You know. A pleasant area. It's fairly cheap to live, you know.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Um. Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Uh. I didn't, uh, that's a good question. I, uh, I was going to school. I was I just started making more money than my college professors. So, and it, it was, it was interesting. You know, and I had the ability to amuse myself. So, you know, that's, that's why I stayed. And the benefits were, at the, at the time they were very good. Pay was acceptable.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were you union?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** For a while I was union. Yeah. When I went on salary obviously, I did not. That was in 1982. I went on salary.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part about working for St. Joe?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Those guys over there. You know. I think a lot of people will tell you that. There were a lot of good people there. You know. They, uh, they were fun. They were competent. You know. You got things done. That's, yeah, that made it, and there, there were times I just looked forward to go to work because I was, you know, a lot of the old timers that should be here today, you know, they, you know, just, uh, we just had a good time. You know.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Not much. I don't, you know, I mean, things, things happened, you know, and that's just the way life and the last page is read, close the book, go onto something else. It didn't bother me at all.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you retire after St. Joe?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** No, no, no. I got another, I still work. I still work.

**INTERVIEWER:** What are you doing?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** I do industrial and, uh, commercial water treatment for power plants, boilers, that sort of thing. Yeah. I'm doing okay now.

**INTERVIEWER:** Good. What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

**JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** I think it's great. You know. It's, uh, I don't think there's going to be as many jobs as, uh, that St. Joe had. I think they were close to like 1,100 or 1,200 jobs at its peak. And when I left there was about 600. And I think there's going to be less permanent jobs, but there'll be a lot of, uh, spinoff companies. You know. People

1 are going to move here because of the feeds, the plastics and things like that. That's, uh,  
2 that's the projection. We'll see. Nobody knows the future. You know.

3  
4 (0:06:31)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Anything else you'd like to add about your time with the company?

7  
8 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Oh, there were good times. There were bad times. But,  
9 yeah, I mean, I just, uh, I don't know. It, it kinda, it was better then it got worse. You  
10 know. And what made it survivable was, was the guys you work with. You know. The,  
11 uh, when I mean worse, I mean there were market conditions that, uh, several, they went  
12 through a bankruptcy, several slowdowns and layoffs, you know, and, uh, you know,  
13 they, I don't know, they, they treated you fair, you know, for the most part unless you  
14 were on salary. That, that's a common complaint.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** That's...

17  
18 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** A common complaint.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh.

21  
22 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Yeah.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What were, could you expand on that?

25  
26 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Oh, yeah, yeah. Sure. There were cuts. Uh. If you were in  
27 the union, your, your rights and benefits are protected. If you're salary, you know, they  
28 didn't. I mean, there were times when, uh, well the medical benefits for example were,  
29 were, were not as, uh, generous if you were on salary. You know. But that's, you know,  
30 that's the way it goes. I'm not complaining. I mean, it just happened and you now, that's, I  
31 mean they, over the years my immediate supervisors treated me pretty fairly. You know.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Thank you, Jim.

34  
35 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Oh, you're welcome.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Thanks very much.

38  
39 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** Nice meeting you. Yeah.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Nice meeting you.

42  
43 **JAMES NORMAN ALLEN:** I'm glad you had a chance to stop by.

44  
45 (END)



**Daniel Bucan**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

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**DANIEL BUCAN**  
**INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

**St. Joe Alumni Breakfast, Towne Square Restaurant, Beaver, PA**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
DANIEL BUCAN

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you please state and spell your full name?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Daniel Bucan. B-U-C-A-N.

**INTERVIEWER:** Your date of birth and your full address please.

**DANIEL BUCAN:** [REDACTED], and I live in Raccoon Township, [REDACTED], Aliquippa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In what year, did you start working at St. Joe Lead and in what year did you stop working for the company?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Uh. It would’ve been 1990 I started and in 2014 they disbanded our security force.

**INTERVIEWER:** What made you come to work at St. Joe in 1990?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** I come out of the Act 120 at community college as a police officer. And at that time, I was 58 years old and yeah, I went around to different police departments and they're looking at my age, 58 years old, and they couldn't see anywhere where I could fit in their department. And I think a lot of the police chiefs were afraid being my age that I might take over some spot and, and they were really worried about their position as a police chief. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, what position were you hired for at St. Joe?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Uh. They asked me to be a security officer cause I had my qualifications as, as Act 120 and since I couldn't get a position with local police I ended up working at different places. I worked at the Army base in Oakdale. I worked at the airport. I worked at housing projects and I finally ended up at Zinc Corporation. Well, it would be Horsehead.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of shifts were you working in security?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** You, you had to work all three shifts. And not in one week, but during the three-week period you went through three shifts. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was a typical day on the job or night on the job for you?

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(0:02:34)

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Many truck, truck, uh, deliveries and ex, ex, I guess export you might say. We were, they were shipping metal out of the plant. So, uh, we would get deliveries in. We would get, uh, second, secondary materials from different plants all over the country. And then we'd, we'd ship, uh, the metal out of the plant. We would have to uh, uh, one of the, uh, security places we had a scale and we scaled all the deliveries in and scaled all the deliveries out.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about that first day on the job being the new guy there?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Well, my, uh, human resources director that hired me stated I have to be a union employee before I got hired. So, I, uh, I didn't really want to belong to the union because I already spent 33 years in J&L Steel as a, uh, worker in the metallurgical department. And I didn't appreciate some of the things the union done for me working for J&L Steel and I figured I would do better by myself without them. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you end up having to join the union?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Did I what?

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you end up having to join a union again to be a security guard?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Yeah. I had to, I had to be in the union. That was the only, and during, I hate to say this, but I think I was, uh, I mean, instrumental in obeying some of the rules that they come out with especially with drug and alcohol enforcement. If I would see any employee overusing alcohol or drugs, I had to report it.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um. What was the best part about working for the company?

(0:06:14)

**DANIEL BUCAN:** Uh. It was, my part, the best part that I can recall is talking to all the employees and looking out for safety factors and making sure that everybody was safe and comfortable on their way to work. So, uh, I didn't want anybody getting hurt and that's the way we worked.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Uh. What do you recall about your last day on the job?

**DANIEL BUCAN:** I, at my age at that time, uh, I was, I was thinking that it would be a good, a good thing to retire and maybe, you know, help somebody down the road, the neighbors or whatever and, and being, uh, I was a township official prior to this, so I had a lot of experience in government and I also ran for county commissioner in 1982. But, uh, at that time the county commissioner the top vote getters they get the top three. The

1 top three vote getters and here in 1982 I come in fourth place. So, evidently people didn't  
2 appreciate somebody that was straight forward and they wanted somebody that they  
3 could bend a little bit, and I, that, that wasn't me.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

6  
7 **DANIEL BUCAN:** Shell, Shell Corporate. I think it's a good idea and, uh, I didn't think  
8 they was gonna spend all that money. I noticed they purchased more property, uh, the  
9 other day and they're expanding clear to, from Raccoon Creek, I guess you'd say, from  
10 Raccoon Creek clear to, uh, the bridge area and, and even further. But, uh, I appreciate  
11 them coming in. It just seems like they're doing a lot of revamping that probably needed  
12 to be because, uh, it was probably a lot of toxic materials in the area.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Anything else you'd like to add about your experiences working with  
15 the company?

16  
17 **DANIEL BUCAN:** Well, during my lifetime, I, uh, my, my daughter is a, uh, currently  
18 the assisting chief in Rochester, PA. And my son works for, uh, a, uh, an outfit out of, not  
19 real estate, but a right of way outfit out of Houston, Texas, and he's, and I'm proud of  
20 what he does and proud of my daughter. Uh. I think they did well. So, I mean my wife  
21 and I had to go through some sacrifices, but I, I really enjoyed it. So.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much.

24  
25 **DANIEL BUCAN:** Oh. You're welcome. Thank you.

26  
27 (END)



**Michael Cochran**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**



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**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Ore, coke, and a little bit of everything.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um. What are some of your, your fondest memories of working at St. Joe?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Uh. Just the guys, that's all. If I had to do it over again, I'd go to school. [Laughter] But, uh, fondest memories, I really don't know. The utility gang, most of the guys, most of them will be here. Uh.

**INTERVIEWER:** What did, what did you do when the plant shut down in 1979?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Oh. I was one of the last ones to leave and then got my unemployment. From there, I got hired back in the same job. I was one of the lucky ones. Then, I went to the furnace plant after that.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was your job?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** I was a utility man.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Uh. How many years did you work in the furnace plant?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Uh. About 20 years or something like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** What, why did you stay with the company as long as you did?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** It was close to home. [Laughter]

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** I lived, I only live three miles from St. Joe. Pleasant Drive is where they used to go into St. Joe. Well, it went up the other way.

**INTERVIEWER:** And is that where you grew up as well?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Part of the time. I started in Vanport and then I moved out there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you...

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** I started at St. Joe as a pin boy. Setting pins at the bowling alley.

**INTERVIEWER:** Really.

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(0:03:32)

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Down there. We had a gymnasium and everything else down there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you have family who were working at St. Joe?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** How did you get the job as the pin boy?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Just went down and applied for it. A lot of my friends were working down there like that. It was probably the best paying job if you were a pin boy down around here. It paid 25 cents a game and 15 for duck pin.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** My last day?

**INTERVIEWER:** Your last day on the job when it was time to leave the company?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** That was the best day. I just didn't do nothing. [Laughter] I walked around and did nothing. Said goodbye to all the guys that we knew. And just laid around.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do, are you one of the regulars at the alumni breakfast?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Fairly regular. I, I miss once in a while.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you still see your friends from St. Joe's other than at this event?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Oh, yeah. Once in a while I run into 'em.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** I think it's a good thing. I've been watching it from day one. I go past the place every day.

**INTERVIEWER:** Hard to imagine what used to be there?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Yeah. It really is. It's, I don't know where they got all the dirt from but.

**INTERVIEWER:** Anything, anything else you'd like to tell me about your experiences at St. Joe?



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**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** No. Not really. We did have a volleyball team down there. We travelled all over the United States playing volleyball and the company paid for everything.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were you, were you on the volleyball team?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** I heard something about Olympic, Olympic trials or?

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Well, one boy did go. [Inaudible] He went for trials. I think another kid just walked in that played too, so. But we had a good time. Okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much.

**MICHAEL COCHRAN:** Alright. Thank you.

(END)

**Randy Contray**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

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**RANDY CONTRAY**  
**INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

**St. Joe Alumni Breakfast, Towne Square Restaurant, Beaver, PA**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
RANDY CONTRAY

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you please state and spell your full name.

**RANDY CONTRAY:** Yeah. Randy Contray. Uh. C-O-N-T-R-A-Y.

**INTERVIEWER:** And your date of birth and your full address please.

**RANDY CONTRAY:** Uh. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Baden, PA 15005.

**INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working at St. Joe Lead and when did you stop working at the plant?

**RANDY CONTRAY:** Uh. June, uh, in the middle of June, 16th I think in 1972, and my last day was April 12, 2012. I, I got hurt and I had to leave.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why, why did you go to St. Joe for a job?

**RANDY CONTRAY:** I went down, uh, actually I went down for, uh, free meal. My friend was going down. They were taking, uh, applications for the apprenticeship and he told me that they had a free lunch. So, I said I'd come along. I wasn't doing nothing that day and I ended up going down and I took the apprentice test and, and I passed and I went into the apprentice program down there.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what specialty did you go into?

**RANDY CONTRAY:** Well, I was in the, uh, uh, they placed you at the end of your four years and I was a, a mechanical repairman when I was done with the apprenticeship. They called them millwrights. Same thing.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you work throughout the plant as a millwright?

**RANDY CONTRAY:** Well, uh, in my later years I was in different departments, but early on the first four years in your apprenticeship you go for so many months in each department. So, you get to familiarize yourself with the whole plant and upon graduation, they placed you in a department and I was placed in the sinter plant, uh, when I graduated.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what were you doing in the sinter plant?

1 (0:01:51)

2

3 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Well, uh, they, uh, they make sinter to feed the furnaces there,  
4 and I, I repaired the machines, the mechanical part of the machines, uh, when they broke  
5 down. You know, uh, different daily maintenance and stuff like that.

6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Now, what did you do when the plant shut down in 1979?

8

9 **RANDY CONTRAY:** I, uh, collected unemployment for about three weeks and then I  
10 went to American Bridge and I was a millwright down at American Bridge. And then  
11 when they opened back up in 1980, I, I didn't really care for working at American  
12 Bridge. So, I came back to, uh, work for, uh, St. Joe again.

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the plant seem any different after the shutdown?

15

16 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Well, other than all the people being there, see I came back early  
17 enough that, that the, um, everything wasn't tore down yet. It was just sort of abandoned.  
18 You know. It was like a ghost town down there. Then, we started getting the plant ready  
19 to start back up again. And, uh, I came back in October, October 5th of 1980 and, and,  
20 uh, I forget when the plant started. It started in, you know, '80, toward the end of '80  
21 there.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** What was torn down as part of the restart of the plant?

24

25 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Uh. They tore most of the roaster plant down. They tore, tore, uh,  
26 they had a leach plant with a cadmium circuit. They tore it down. Um. Oh. I can't  
27 remember the other things, but that's all I remember right now. That's, that was in the  
28 general department where I worked.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the, the best part or a favorite memory about working at  
31 the plant?

32

33 **RANDY CONTRAY:** It was, yeah, we had, uh, when I, uh, went into the apprenticeship  
34 there was 25 of us and we sort of all kept, you know, in touch with. We, uh, we'd go out,  
35 you know, we, we watched everybody get, uh, engaged and married and, you know, have  
36 families and that and we, we all started on the same day in the apprenticeship and, uh, it,  
37 you know, we, we kept together through, you know, through the years. As people left or  
38 retired or got another job, but we all stayed, you know, in touch.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** Were these relationships that you maintained outside of the  
41 company?

42

43 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, we used to go out to dinner with, with the  
44 guys, you know, and their wives and that and when we were single we'd go out partying  
45 and stuff like that. But it was, yeah.

46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

2

3 (0:04:31)

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5 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Well, my last day on the job wasn't very, I fell off a ladder and  
6 got hurt. So, they took me out in an ambulance. So, I didn't, I didn't get to leave like the  
7 other guys did. I ended up, you know, going in the hospital and, uh, a lot of recovery and  
8 stuff like that. But, yeah.

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Sorry.

11

12 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Yeah. Me too. That wasn't, that wasn't the way I planned on  
13 retiring.

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

16

17 **RANDY CONTRAY:** I think it was good. I thought, I thought they should've done  
18 more to try to keep Horsehead there, you know. They, they really bent over backwards to  
19 help Shell, but I don't think they tried hard enough to help keep, keep Horsehead there,  
20 but, uh, it wasn't just. It was, it was, uh, a big, you know, we used, I was in the union and  
21 we tried to go see all the representatives and, you know, try to talk them into helping  
22 keep the plant opened. You know, cause they, they would've built a new plant there if  
23 they would've had the right set of circumstances instead of Shell. You know. But, uh, I  
24 think Shell is a good, uh, I'm glad there's some, since the plant closed that there's  
25 somebody taking over the property. It's just, just, uh, when you drive past you don't even  
26 know we were there, you know. Like, like a lot of the mills in, in the whole Beaver  
27 County you can see where they, uh, where, where the, their skeletons are still there. You  
28 can say, "Oh, I remember I worked there and that." I couldn't point to anywhere I worked  
29 in the plant now. You know. But, uh, I go out in the river once in a while. There's still a  
30 couple things you can see, but there's not too much, too much left of the place.

31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Anything else you would like to add?

33

34 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Not really.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Something else about your experiences at the plant?

37

38 **RANDY CONTRAY:** Just, you know, 42 years is a long time to spend in one place.  
39 You don't see that nowadays. Most people average three or four or five years in a place  
40 and like, you know, we get together with all these guys here every other month and it, uh,  
41 you know, you'll hear 'em. They're afraid to get on the camera and talk to people, but  
42 you'll, you'll hear all kind of stories just, you know, sitting at the table and, uh, it's fun to  
43 reminisce about everything. That's it.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, if you, if you can convince any of your buddies to come over  
46 and tell them it wasn't that, it wasn't that bad.

1

2 (0:06:48)

3

4 **RANDY CONTRAY:** The big talkers aren't, aren't, you know, the ones that, uh, maybe

5 I'll get Jimmy Allen to come over. He'll, he'll do. He's got a better memory than I do.

6 Alright.

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much, Randy.

9

10 (END)

11

**Harry Theodore Eder, Jr.**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

1 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

3  
4 **St. Joe Alumni Breakfast, Towne Square Restaurant, Beaver, PA**

5  
6 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
7 HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.  
8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please state and spell your full name?

10  
11 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** My name is Harry Theodore Eder, Jr. Uh. My last  
12 name is E-D-E-R. And what was the next one?

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. What's your date of birth and your full address?

15  
16 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** [REDACTED]. [REDACTED], Beaver, PA.  
17

18 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year  
19 did you stop working for the company?

20  
21 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** I started there in June of 1971. A week out of high  
22 school.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** And what year did you stop working?

25  
26 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Well, when the, when the plant closed in April, I  
27 forget the exact date.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** What made you look for work at St. Joe?

30  
31 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Well, this is a big question. Uh. It, it wasn't my  
32 plan in high school, but things happen and I ended up having a child. So, I had to put my  
33 nose to the grindstone and they had had representatives at the high school prior to and,  
34 uh, my uncle worked down there all of his life. So, I applied at several places, you know.  
35 So, I started right in the apprenticeship after high school.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you tell me a little bit more about the presence of the company  
38 at your high school?

39  
40 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Uh. That particular presence was they had a day,  
41 they have a lot of different jobs out there, careers and so forth and they had  
42 representatives of the apprenticeship there that particular day. That was a long time ago  
43 though. Okay. Uh, uh, many details, can I remember? No. Um. That's about all I can say.  
44 It's, it sounded like a good opportunity and it was close to home. You know. I grew up in  
45 Center Township, so, and I had been around. They used to have a gymnasium and  
46 everything down there and as a child I went down there a played basketball and so forth.



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**INTERVIEWER:** When you went through the apprentice program, what, what trade did you end up pursuing?

**HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** I was a machinist. Yes. A machinist. Then, I got classified a machinist and mechanical repairman. So, I worked in so-called shops area.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you end up working throughout the plant?

**HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Yes. The apprenticeship covered, we rotated through all the different crafts. You get electricians, sheet metal, pipe work, uh, out in the mill with, um, you had the sinter plant. You went through maintenance with them. You had the furnace plant. You went through maintenance with them people. You know. Maybe three months at a time and just learn everything.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was the most challenging thing about that job?

**HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** I would say the heat. The cold wasn't so bad, but the heat and the dirt. It was pretty dirty. So, the heat and everything is probably what made, made up my mind. I'm going to work in the shops area most of the time. And heat, heat was tough on me. I couldn't get used to it, you know. Some people do and I couldn't do it. It was a lot of times I went home after daylight and sleep for several hours and that's how much it took out of me at 18 years old anyway. Yeah. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where were the shops located?

**HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Uh. I don't know. They was like a thousand feet or something, 1,500 feet away from the major part of production area. We called it out in the field more or less, you know what I mean. But it was a, a fairly new shop. Built in the '60s I believe. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you participate in some of the sports leagues and other activities?

**HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** No. No. I didn't. The only thing I participated in they had a boat club. I got involved in the boat club down there. But as far as the trapshooting and different stuff, no.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part about working at the zinc plant?

**HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** The best part it was a good steady wage to start with. I raised four kids on what I made down there. Um. I think the people are great. Made some fantastic friendships down there. Of course, uh, some of them are here today. Some aren't. Some couldn't be. But, uh, yeah, the people were great.

1  
2 (0:04:35)

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4 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

5  
6 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** It was sad. Living so close I could here 'em tearing  
7 it down. That was sad. It really was. You're going to make me cry. [Laughter]

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm sorry. I'm sorry. What do you think about Shell coming to the  
10 area?

11  
12 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Well, we need something for the area. I think it's  
13 going to be a big boom. I hope it doesn't hurt, you know, pollution wise and everything.  
14 I'm hoping that's going to be great. Am I happy to see 5,000 to 6,000 more people clog up  
15 the highways? They, they're super bad now with all the construction of course. I  
16 understand all the construction is to alleviate some of that when, when they're done. So,  
17 yeah, it seems like everywhere in Beaver County you try to go, uh, they got the roads tore  
18 up. So, hopefully that will be done before too long. So. Yeah. I, I think it's a good thing.  
19 Uh. Time, time will tell though. You know what I mean? Um. How many people from  
20 this area are they going to be employ? I don't know. But they're saying they're going to,  
21 but time will tell. Yeah. A lot of younger people when they're coming up they don't know  
22 which direction they're going to go, you know, what, what they want to do. I see they're  
23 having job fairs and everything to tell 'em what they, what they're, what they need. If I  
24 was a young man, yeah, I'd be interested. I'm not. [Laughter]

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** What are you doing now?

27  
28 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Uh. I went to school afterwards. And I went up to  
29 New Castle Trade School, just to up my, uh, status as a machinist because, uh, my  
30 teachers were World War II-era people. There was a lot of changes. So, I went, basically  
31 went up there to learn CNC, computers and everything cause I really I haven't touched  
32 computers, you know. And it was a good experience also. I learned some stuff. But right  
33 now, I'm working at a machine shop down in Aliquippa Industrial Park. I'm probably  
34 making half as much as I made in the mill, but I like the job. So, I only got a few more  
35 years. So. Time will tell there too. Yeah. There's another plant I'm interested in. My  
36 resume has been in, which I'd be up to par on what I was making, but whether I'd like it  
37 as much I don't know. And that's, that's pretty important to me right now whether I'd like  
38 it or not.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much, Harry.

41  
42 **HARRY THEODORE EDER, JR.:** Okay.

43  
44 (END)

**Bob Hanne Sr.**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

1 **BOB HANNE**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

3  
4 **St. Joe Alumni Breakfast, Town Square Restaurant, Beaver, PA**

5  
6 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
7 BOB HANNE  
8 UNKNOWN SPEAKER  
9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please state your full name?

11  
12 **BOB HANNE:** My full name. Well, my, my, my, see my, I, it's Robert, but I go by  
13 Bob. What do you want?  
14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** Bob is fine.

16  
17 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. We'll say Bob, Bob Hanne, H-A-N-N-E.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Your date of birth.  
20

21 **BOB HANNE:** Uh. [REDACTED].  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** And your address.  
24

25 **BOB HANNE:** [REDACTED]  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What town?  
28

29 **BOB HANNE:** Beaver.  
30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In what year, did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in  
32 what year did you stop working at St. Joe Lead?  
33

34 **BOB HANNE:** I started at there in, uh, 1952 and I, I, uh, retired when I was, uh, 62.  
35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you go to St. Joe for a job?  
37

38 **BOB HANNE:** Uh. They sent people to the, uh, high school and they, they, uh, talked  
39 to the people that they needed men in Rochester and they talked on there. So there was  
40 three of us that went, three, three men or three guys went down there and we got jobs  
41 down there. We was apprentices. We went down as apprentices.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Could you tell me about the apprentice training you had?  
44

45 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. The apprentices four years. I was an electrician and the other  
46 ones were, were mechanic.



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**INTERVIEWER:** And did you work as an electrician throughout your years?

**BOB HANNE:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** With St. Joe Lead?

**BOB HANNE:** Well, I became a, a foreman later as I worked there.

**INTERVIEWER:** A foreman of a particular plant or a foreman among the electricians?

**BOB HANNE:** Well, the, the whole plant. I was an electricians' foreman, but we, we, we covered the whole plant. We, we would, we wasn't just a little shop. We went everywhere in the plant.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you were there for a lot of years when there were activities going on around the plant that the company sponsored.

**BOB HANNE:** Well, on, uh, I was, I was the, uh, I was in charge of the, uh, boats down at, uh, Racoon Creek. So we have a boat and something there for the company that we, uh, it belonged to them, the company and we made a place for boats and what do you call it, uh, when you put a boat up against something?

**UNKNOWN SPEAKER:** Dock.

**BOB HANNE:** It's a dock. Okay. We made that and then, uh, uh, then Christmas I was, uh, in charge of two Christmas, uh, parties for 'em down there. You'd go and get the, you actually go and get all the, uh, toys and everything in July. You'd go to Pittsburgh and get the toys and then you pass 'em out for the, uh, the Christmas.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember the cafeteria?

**BOB HANNE:** Yeah. The cafeteria. The only thing I was in there I ate. Yeah. But the electricians they'd take care of 'em.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, you started when you were 17?

**BOB HANNE:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you make a lot of friends there?

**BOB HANNE:** Pardon?

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you make a lot of friends at the plant?

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**BOB HANNE:** Oh. Everybody I could. They were, everybody at the plant I feel that they were very, very good to people. And they helped people and they taught us. The, all the elderly people they really did a good job for. Weaton was the man. He ran that place.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was the best thing for you about working at St. Joe Lead?

**BOB HANNE:** The best thing is the people, the people. They were, they were, uh, everybody was friendly. You could say friendly and helpful and, uh, uh, it was, that helped out everything. You know. That's hard to say. All over the plant, they either knew you or they helped you, but anyway, uh, the people who worked there were very good. They were, they were good mechanic, electric, and everything else.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about your last day on the job there?

**BOB HANNE:** Oh. It was really funny. Uh. Uh. The, my kids and some of 'em they had a, had a limo that came down to the, uh, they thought the people from the, the New York came in there. I was in there waving, uh, waving right there. That was really funny. Once they had a, a thing for me to, uh, you know, a dinner, a dinner. I had a dinner too.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

**BOB HANNE:** I didn't meet with anybody from the Shell. Okay. I didn't meet. I met, I met, uh, uh, people, you know, I had an attorney. I went with an attorney. The only time I met with probably somebody, that person there was worked for Shell whenever they bought my land and also my house. But I didn't meet 'em, you know, for anything else. But anyhow I think it's one of the best things that happened to Beaver County. It's a big boom to Beaver County. We constantly do what we are doing now. Within four years, we should be on the roll. You know. I mean, uh, Beaver County is really something for Pennsylvania, a big blow up. It's bigger than the people working on the, uh, bridges, the roads, and, and, uh, with Shell and the hotels. The Beaver County really blew fast. So, it's one of the best things that's ever happened. It's going to bring everything up. But it's going to take time.

**INTERVIEWER:** And did you originally live very close to the plant?

**BOB HANNE:** Yeah. I walked back and forth. Everyday I walked about a, it's close to a mile one way and back [Inaudible], but I walked almost every day.

**INTERVIEWER:** And did you mention that your property was then sold? Was it sold to the company, to St. Joe Lead or to Shell?

**BOB HANNE:** Shell.

1 (0:06:24)

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was this property?

4

5 **BOB HANNE:** It was, uh, from where the light was, it was the second house on the  
6 right-hand side coming up Pleasant Drive. Plus, I owned the land behind me.

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember the County Home?

9

10 **BOB HANNE:** Pardon?

11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember the County Home, the, the County Home that used  
13 to be on the grounds, the Poor House?

14

15 **BOB HANNE:** The Poor House. We bought that out the Poor House and late, later on  
16 they used it for offices down there. They took half of it and cleaned it all out because of  
17 the, uh, the, uh, they cleaned it up and they had it for a, a boss, you know, like, uh, uh,  
18 they were there. What was they there for? There was offices down there at the old.

19

20 **UNKNOWN SPEAKER:** Well, first it was offices...

21

22 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah.

23

24 **UNKNOWN SPEAKER:** And later on it was corporate offices.

25

26 **BOB HANNE:** It was offices down there. That is, well, that was really some building.  
27 It was really something. When people went in there, they did just like, uh, they didn't  
28 have anything and they live, lived there until they died.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** What else, what else would you like to share about the company,  
31 about your years working there?

32

33 **BOB HANNE:** Well, uh, I think they were, uh, ahead of a lot of the, uh, um,  
34 companies. They had a, a, uh, you know, uh, the cafeteria. The, the, uh, the things with  
35 the, uh, people and then meetings and different things like, like Christmas and, and they  
36 gave, they gave, uh, if you had a good idea they paid you for it. Uh. They were very  
37 helpful for everybody. Yeah. We had our own farm. We had our own farmers. We raised  
38 pigs and, uh, we, uh, slaughtered 'em. We put 'em, the meat into the, uh, cafeteria. So  
39 that's, uh, they were farmers. They weren't people in the plants. They were, they raised  
40 the corn. Oh, yeah. We used to have a, the, the corn roast. They'd bring it in there and we,  
41 uh, down in the, they had that at the beginning. They had that, uh, uh, some, in the  
42 summertime they had, uh, picnics for 'em.

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** For the entire plant?

45

1 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. People would come there. And they had eating and corn and  
2 everything else.

3  
4 (0:08:45)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did families come to the corn roast?

7  
8 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. The full family comes. They, they were more family than I've  
9 ever seen. But as it goes on and you have, uh, I say the, uh, management has changed not  
10 only with, uh, St. Joe but, uh, all the other ones too. You know, different ones and  
11 different ideas. What I'm trying to say is, we were ahead of a lot of people. You know.  
12 We just didn't say you work here and you work here. We did, we had, uh, you know, the  
13 apprentices. Every year they had apprentices from different places and, you know, like,  
14 uh, four years you had to go through. They had teachers.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** While you were an apprentice, were you also working within the  
17 plant?

18  
19 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. I was working in the plant. I think everybody in there, uh, will  
20 tell you they have a good, they had a good time there. They even made, uh, uh, a washer  
21 for your car. If your car came and it got a little dust on it out in the, uh, where you parked  
22 your car you can drive through, push a button and it would wash your care, drive through,  
23 and it would wash it. How you like that one?

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. I heard you could get, buy your gas there too.

26  
27 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. You could buy your gas right there. And that's good. That's  
28 something. And we had, uh, we had the boats and everything else, you know, the boats  
29 and everything. We've, uh, we built the thing, the, uh, thing and floated it down the Ohio  
30 River and up, up there and put it down there. Made it. And we had the Boy Scouts help us  
31 down there. We had a, uh, plenty of people went down there and had picnics and  
32 different things.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever do any of the trapshooting or the pistol range?

35  
36 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. I did. They had, uh, they had a couple of, uh, guns who worked  
37 together especially what you just said. Yeah. They had a, they had a special, special place  
38 so it wasn't in, uh, it, uh, they threw the things out and you shot 'em.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there, were there a lot of scout people at St. Joe's?

41  
42 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. At St. Joe's, uh, men had their, had their sons drop off there and  
43 we, we had a, uh, we had a pretty good space there for 'em.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Were the scout meetings at St. Joe's?

46



1 (0:11:08)

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3 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. At the, right at the door they had was a, was a schoolboard. The  
4 school of, uh, you know, uh, a house like a schoolboard. They let us use that for our  
5 scouts. I think there we had a good time. But I didn't go to J&L or Crucible or anything.  
6 So, I really can't say they weren't as good as us or anything like that. I can tell you that  
7 we worked, we, everybody was kind and helpful. Yeah. It was really good.

8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** If you had to do it again, would you do that?

10

11 **BOB HANNE:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We had a, the, uh, machine shop that was like  
12 out of this world with 'em. Uh. The people in there could do anything, you know, the  
13 lathes and everything. And our welders, our welders were really good. Very, very good.  
14 Oh, you figure we actually generated electric and we sold it. We would sell the power  
15 coming out of the power plant. That was a big thing.

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** What did they use for power before they had the power plant?

18

19 **BOB HANNE:** We had also, we had, we tied the electric in with Duquesne Light  
20 coming across the river. There was a, two of them coming across there to feed us 69,000  
21 comes across and then it would be 13,800. It was coming from the, from the, uh, uh, you  
22 know, I'm not sure whether you know what that is or they come from the power plant.  
23 Yeah. It was a old, we had to get rid of some of that stuff. But we had a power plant. It  
24 made it so that we, we started to sell it. Instead of buying it, we started selling it.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about George Weaton?

27

28 **BOB HANNE:** George, who?

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Weaton. The plant manager.

31

32 **BOB HANNE:** Oh. I know him.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** Was he a good guy to work for? Was he, was he firm?

35

36 **BOB HANNE:** He was, uh, the manager. He was the big guy and, uh, he lived in Potter  
37 Township. He actually lived in Potter Township and if there was a, a blowout or  
38 something he would come. And he helped the men. And I'm real sure. Well, I didn't meet  
39 with, I didn't have, uh, I wasn't at any of his places where he had his, you know, he'd  
40 have meetings with his people. Well, I was down at, you know, the low end of it. But, uh,  
41 they had a good, he was a good man. A very good man.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was the plant manager after him?

44

45 **BOB HANNE:** I can't think of his name. I'm not gonna say if I can't cause I don't think  
46 he was as good. His son worked there. His son worked there.

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**INTERVIEWER:** So, you were there before there were unions and after there were unions.

**BOB HANNE:** That's right.

**INTERVIEWER:** How did, how did that change the environment for you working at the plant?

**BOB HANNE:** There was a little bit of, uh, between Weaton. He liked, uh, didn't like, like it okay. And there was a couple things that, uh, I'm sure that, that changed a lot of people's thinking because they voted for it. See they voted for that. And, uh, I wasn't part of that. But, um, but it turned out to be, uh, you know, not too bad. Not too bad. But it did change people's, uh, thinking of it. You know. That, some people used the union to do certain things and, you know, sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. But, uh, we, we let it, you know, it was not too, it was pretty good even after the union.

**INTERVIEWER:** What did you do when the plant shut down in '79?

**BOB HANNE:** I wasn't laid off.

**INTERVIEWER:** So where did, where were you working?

**BOB HANNE:** Oh.

**INTERVIEWER:** While the plant was shut down?

**BOB HANNE:** Well, I was sent to the power plant. The power plant was still running. So, I was down at the power plant. I left them and went down to the power plant. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** I understand your son worked at the company as well?

**BOB HANNE:** Yeah. He worked in the summer while he went to, oh, this was. We had, uh, uh, down in a, uh, I think it was, uh, uh, Kentucky. They had, they were in with, uh, the people had a coal mine and they took him down. We'd fly him down and they, they would be in the summertime. He would work down there and, uh, then he would come back and go to school.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were you the first person in your family to work at St. Joe Lead?

**BOB HANNE:** Yes. I think I was.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, you didn't have your father or uncles didn't?

1 (0:16:18)

2

3 **BOB HANNE:** Um. No. I got my brother. He worked there too. He was with the, he  
4 was a, a chemist, chemist.

5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did he start before or after you?

7

8 **BOB HANNE:** After me. He was a bricklayer a while and then, then he went to Geneva  
9 College and became, uh, with their, uh, Chris, he was, uh, he worked in over the, with  
10 the, uh, chemistry people. Okay. Then my son, George, he worked down there too. He  
11 worked down there. My, George worked down there a good bit. He was with  
12 management of the power plant. He, he's a big shot down at, well, all three of them men  
13 were boys who worked for 'em.

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any particular department that you enjoyed most to, to  
16 work in?

17

18 **BOB HANNE:** Mine was just, uh, electrical. Was the, cause we got everywhere. We  
19 went everywhere over all the whole plant. I mean, uh, we went from one end, not just like  
20 a group here. We went everywhere. We had got, got, um, electrician is nothing to work  
21 with because it can get you and kill you. We, we didn't have any like that there. You  
22 know, like I think, uh, something fell on somebody, but nothing, you know. No. I got to  
23 take that back. I'm not going to say, but there was, uh, one of the men fell off, fell off of a  
24 pull and killed, got killed. He went to put, uh, a thing around him and it slipped and he  
25 fell down and he got killed. And they, see like when you go up with the spurs up a thing  
26 like this here you wrap around it with it and snap it here. Well, somehow or another, it  
27 didn't snap. He leaned back and he just went down and was killed. I was walking. No.  
28 That was, uh, when the other one, the other people working on the stack, the guy fell off  
29 the top of the stack and went all the way down. That wasn't an electrician. That wasn't an  
30 electrician. That was somebody else. Those are the ones. But we've had in the whole  
31 plant there has been a few bad ones that happened.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** We have to end on a good note.

34

35 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. We can't talk about like that. So.

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** So, tell us something good to end with.

38

39 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. Uh. Yeah. We had more time. Yeah. But, uh, we had a lot of, we  
40 had a good time. Yeah.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you look forward to going to work?

43

44 **BOB HANNE:** Pardon?

45

46 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you look forward to going to work?

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2 (0:19:02)

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4 **BOB HANNE:** Yeah. My wife said I used to love that better than her.

5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** [Laughter]

7

8 **BOB HANNE:** Well, I better get going here. [Inaudible]

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very, very much.

11

12 (END)



**Richard Romisher**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

1 **RICHARD ROMISHER**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

3  
4 **St. Joe Alumni Breakfast, Towne Square Restaurant, Beaver, PA**

5  
6 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF ("INTERVIEWER")  
7 RICHARD ROMISHER

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please state and spell your full name?

10  
11 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** First name is Richard. Last name R-O-M-I-S-H-E-R.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Your date of birth and your full address.

14  
15 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** [REDACTED], Aliquippa, Pennsylvania.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year  
18 did you stop working for the company?

19  
20 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** I started there in 1970 for summer help. I worked three  
21 months. And then, I went back in 1972 full time. And then, uh, I retired when the plant  
22 shut down two years ago, two and a half years ago.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you come to St. Joe for a job?

25  
26 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** Well, I had a wife and a small child and after working there  
27 in the summer I didn't want to work there ever again, but I had to. And my dad worked  
28 there. So, I went down and my dad said, "Go down and work for a year. Get yourself  
29 straightened out and then get out of there." And then 42 years later, I left. [Laughter]

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** So, did you grow up around the plant?

32  
33 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** Uh-hmm.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of those experiences for you having, uh, your dad  
36 working there?

37  
38 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** Well, they used to pay twice a month and then the guys  
39 could come down after a certain time and pick up their paychecks. And when I was, I  
40 would always ride down with my dad. Then, when I got about 14 I think it was, he would  
41 let me drive down to there. From, uh, we lived in Monaca and I'd drive down to the plant  
42 and he would go and get his paycheck and then I'd drive back. A big thrill for me.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you use some of the facilities there when you were a kid?

45  
46 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** No. You mean like the bowling alleys. No. I never did.

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**INTERVIEWER:** How about when you were working there?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** No. [Laughter] I got, I did my job and got out of there.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was your job at the plant?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** I started out in the furnace plant. I worked there and then I went to the power plant for a while. Then I went to the compressor house for a while and when I was in the compressor house the plant shut down in '79. And then when I came back I went back to the furnace plant and then back to the compressor house and I worked in the compressor house for about 20 years after that, and then I went to the electricians. I went through their apprentice program down there. I worked in the electricians for about 17 years and that's where I retired from.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you tell me a little more what the compressor plant was for?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** The compressor house took all the waste gas off the furnaces, compressed it, and then the plant used it in refinery and sinter plant for, uh, heat.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did any of those processes have to change with changing environmental standards?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** No. Not really. Basically, it was all the same all the years.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh. So, then you went to the apprentice program, could you tell me a little bit about that?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** That was a four-year, self-taught program. Uh. You basically had to learn on your own what you were doing and mostly on the job experience. But it was a nice job. I liked it.

**INTERVIEWER:** And you came out of that as an electrician.

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** And where did you work, um, as an electrician in the plant?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** You work all over. You work over the whole plant. Yeah. The last I think five years that I worked there I was in the motor shop. They had a motor shop where they repaired motors and I did that. That was a real nice job.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was that your favorite part of the work, working at the plant?

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**RICHARD ROMISHER:** Probably, yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Of your various jobs. Overall, um, what was the best part about working at the plant? A favorite memory?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** I would say the most fun I ever had there was the summer of '74. We went from three shifts, they went to four shifts, and there was a bunch of young guys there. We were working there and just had a blast.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why was that?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** Dumping water on each other and [laughter] pulling all kind of pranks on each other. That didn't last real long, but it was a lot of fun that summer.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why that summer did the shifts change from three shifts to four shifts?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** The union came in the year before and said you can't work the three-shift schedule because we would, if we were on midnight, we'd finish up Sunday morning and have to come out four to twelve that afternoon or if we were on daylight that was, we had a long change. We finished up daylight on Saturday, come out, uh, Sunday midnight. So, you always had that short change two weeks out of three. They decided to put another shift on and eliminate that.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** I think it's good. It's unbelievable the changes they do down there and it seems like, like a first-class operation coming in. The way they changed the highway around. The way, uh, moving all the land around developing there. I think it's pretty neat. Hopefully it's good for the county.

**INTERVIEWER:** Anything else you would like to add?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** No. [Laughter]

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Someone asked me to ask you about Art?

**RICHARD ROMISHER:** About what?

**INTERVIEWER:** Art?



1 **RICHARD ROMISHER:** Oh. [Laughter] He was a foreman down there that we drove  
2 insane. [Laughter] A buddy of mine and I, he was, uh, he was a hard taskmaster, and we  
3 were very young then. And we just drove him nuts. [Laughter]  
4 (END)

**Perry Tice**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

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**PERRY TICE**  
**INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

**St. Joe Alumni Breakfast, Towne Square Restaurant, Beaver, PA**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
PERRY TICE

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you please state and spell your full name?

**PERRY TICE:** Perry Tice, P-E-R-R-Y, T-I-C-E.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And your date of birth and address please.

**PERRY TICE:** Uh, [REDACTED], and I'm at [REDACTED], Rochester, PA.

**INTERVIEWER:** What year did you start working at St. Joe Lead?

**PERRY TICE:** 1966.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what year did you either stop working or retire from there?

**PERRY TICE:** Well, when they closed one time in 1979, I left and got a pretty good job. So, uh, when they called me to come back and help start the place up, I said no.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PERRY TICE:** And I worked out in other areas for about 10 years before I went back, but then I went back and I stayed until, in the power plant part of the mill, until it closed. I think it was 2013, I think.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you started in 1966, what department were you working in?

**PERRY TICE:** The roaster plant.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you briefly summarize what happened in the roaster plant?

**PERRY TICE:** Yeah. They brought the raw ore or the raw product in and we roasted it and got the, uh, oh, we made one side of the department, it would go down to the acid plant and make acid and then the other part was sent over to be refined into the raw zinc.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you work in other departments during your time at St. Joe?

**PERRY TICE:** Oh, the first 13 years I worked all in the roaster plant and then when I got rehired I worked in the furnace plant and then I bid down into the power plant, which became a separate entity.

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**INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall if anything about your first day on the job? Your first impression of being a St. Joe employee?

**PERRY TICE:** Well, my father worked there, so he pretty much had me ready for what I was going to see, but hot and dirty. That's what I remember.

**INTERVIEWER:** What, what was your father's job there?

**PERRY TICE:** Well, he originally, he worked in the furnace plant, but when I started in there he was in transportation. So, he had a little better job. Not so hot and not so dirty.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, did you grow up as a St. Joe kid?

**PERRY TICE:** Yeah. Yeah. We went to all the Christmas parties and everything. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was the, the best part about working at the plant?

**PERRY TICE:** It, it was like family. Every, all the, you know, you had all friends and, and everybody knew everybody and, and actually a lot of people were family, literally.

**INTERVIEWER:** And you mentioned you did, uh, you had a different job when you came back after the plant shut down.

**PERRY TICE:** Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** And could you just tell me a little bit about what you were doing in the power plant?

**PERRY TICE:** Okay. Uh. When I got rehired I went to the furnace plant and I worked there for numerous years. But, yeah, when I went to the power plant then, uh, there was a pretty good turnover after I got down there, and normally you have to spend a long time learning to do those jobs, but you know, somebody had to do 'em so we had to move up pretty quick. And, uh, when they asked me to be a power plant operator I, the first time they asked me, I turned them down. I said, "You know, I don't feel like I know this place good enough." But they came to me again and I said, "Alright, I'll give it a try." So, I did it. I worked operator until they finally closed.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um. What do you think about Shell coming to the area now?

**PERRY TICE:** Uh. I have mixed feelings, but I think it's, I think it's all going to turn out good. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you come pretty consistently to the alumni breakfasts?

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**PERRY TICE:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. I like, well like I said, I, I like reminiscing and this is a good place to do it right here. You know, young people all the way up till the guys that are, you know, in their 80s.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did this alumni breakfast start before the plant shut down?

**PERRY TICE:** Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Well, originally it started as a retiree breakfast, and then as the, when the plant started folding, closing, then they started having just, you know, anybody that could come that worked there. You know, but originally it was just a retirees' breakfast.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is there anything else in particular you'd like to tell me about your experience at the plant?

**PERRY TICE:** Uh. I can't think of anything else?

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember anything about the County Home?

**PERRY TICE:** Well, a little bit. Uh. When I was a kid, my dad brought me down and back then they had guards that had to go around and clock different areas. So, we rode around with a guard. This was after hours, you know. And, uh, he was friends with my dad. They, they both worked together, and he took us inside that, back then it was just empty building, you know, they weren't using it for anything. Took us inside there and he showed us all around the different areas and down in the basement where there was like an exercise room and they even had like a, probably, you couldn't tell, but it must've been probably like a padded cell. You know, they had different things down in the basement. So, as a little kid, that was pretty exciting to see all that, you know. Spooky even back then cause it was nighttime. But, um, and then as years went on, then when I, when they started using the building they turned part, part of it into offices. So, I was in there a few times and as a laborer, I worked in there, uh, moving furniture around. So, we got to see other areas that I had never seen before. Back in the back of the building, you know, they had a storage area back there. Uh. But it was, it was pretty interesting and I like on Tuesdays in the Beaver County Times they have articles in there about history and they've put some articles in there. I like reading all that stuff about the County Home.

**INTERVIEWER:** Perry, thank you very much.

**PERRY TICE:** Okay. Thank you.

(END)



**Edwin Duane Zinkan**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

1 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

3  
4 **St. Joe Alumni Breakfast, Towne Square Restaurant, Beaver, PA**

5  
6 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“”)  
7 EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN  
8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** Please state your full name and spell it.

10  
11 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Edwin Duane Zinkan, E-D-W-I-N, D-U-A-N-E, Z-I-N-K-  
12 A-N.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Your date of birth and full address.

15  
16 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** [REDACTED]. Uh. My address is [REDACTED]  
17 [REDACTED], Beaver, PA 15009.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and when did you  
20 stop working for the company?

21  
22 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** I worked for 'em two different periods, 1964 and I retired  
23 in 2001.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** So, for the first period that you started in 1964 when did you stop  
26 and then start up again?

27  
28 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** I can't remember the dates.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

31  
32 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Uh. Right offhand.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. Why did you come to work at St. Joe in 1964?

35  
36 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Well, I needed the job simple as that. Uh. I had just gotten  
37 out of the service and needed a job. That's simple.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** What job were you hired for at the company?

40  
41 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Labor. We all started, most of us started in labor.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** And give me a little more information about where you moved from  
44 the labor, from the yard I'm presuming is where you started.

45  
46 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Yeah.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Where did you go from there? Where did you work throughout the plant?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** I worked at the sinter plant and I, then I became a technician. I went through a school program that they provided at Penn State, and, uh, and then, then I had already been awarded a job in the research department. They had a program and I don't know whether anybody had mentioned this to you or not. They, they sent, uh, some of us to school for like four years part time to get an Associate degree. And, and then we all went. Most of us ended up in, uh, in the research department, technical, some technical aspect.

**INTERVIEWER:** What aspect of research did you get involved with?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** You know, I, in whatever. Uh. We had a large research department, well over a hundred people. And I, I was in anything they wanted. Uh. Problems in the plant, the development. Uh. And we, we did a lot of work because of the environment. It was, it wasn't environmentally the best place to be, you know, so.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the things that you did that, um, addressed that problem of the environmental concerns?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Well, I, uh, they gave me a project one time. They, uh, they had a fire at the power plant. Had a water stream that dumped into the Ohio River and they had particulate matter was out of the line with the regulations. And they sent me to, to, to investigate that and see what we could do because they were committed to spend X amount of dollars to correct the problem and they needed to know specifically what it was. And, and I did that and, uh, the problem was very simple to, uh, to resolve. It was a matter of how well, how this sampling of the stream was and what had happened is that the people that, that were doing the sampling didn't have the proper technique and they were sampling when, when the conditions were not very good and instead of taking an overall sample they took it when the conditions were bad. So, uh, all they had to do is change their, uh, their sampling procedure and we were within spec. So, I travelled. I, uh, I had projects in Missouri that I worked on. Uh. I had a project in Eastern Pennsylvania that I worked. Uh. We, we did a lot of travelling. Did a lot of work outside the plant for a long time.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who was your supervisor in the research department?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** I had several over the years. Uh. Bob Lund was the chief, chief, uh, engineer most of the time. I worked for Chuck Bounds. Uh. I worked with Don Freshcorn, uh, Larry Blash. Uh. Geez. A lot, a lot of 'em over, over a period of 30 something years you had a lot of 'em.

1 (0:04:45)

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you participate in the activities, um, that the company offered?

4

5 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Like?

6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Recreational activities.

8

9 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Ah, yeah. Yeah. They were a great company. They were a  
10 great company for a family. When I went there, uh, you probably know this, they had a  
11 Christmas party and they had a, a day in Idora Park and they had a volleyball team that  
12 was, uh, nationwide known, rated nationally. Uh. They had softball teams. They had a  
13 gymnasium, a bowling alley. They, they were a family-oriented company at the time.  
14 They, they did things from within. Uh. Yeah. It was just a, a really nice company to work  
15 for.

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. What was the, the best part or a favorite memory about working  
18 at St. Joe Lead?

19

20 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** I don't know that I have any favorite. Not really. No. I  
21 don't know. I don't have a favorite.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

24

25 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Well, I, I liked the work. I liked the work, the technical  
26 work. Uh. I, I was paid well and, uh, it was a, it was a dirty mill. That's, that's just the  
27 way I'd explain it. But I started out shoveling junk or trash or whatever. Cleaned  
28 sweeping floors and stuff. But then after I got into the technical, technical end I really  
29 enjoyed that.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

32

33 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Uh. Nothing much. [Laughter]

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Emotionally?

36

37 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** No. No. I was ready to retire. Uh. I, I had gotten into a  
38 position where I had more idle time than I liked and, and I thought it was, it's time to get  
39 out.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

42

43 **EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** I think it's great for, for the county. I think it's wonderful.  
44 It, it, uh, all the good jobs have gone away and now some are gonna come back. And it's  
45 progress, and, uh, we were stagnant here for a number of years. Lost a lot of industry  
46 over the last 30 years.

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(0:07:17)

**INTERVIEWER:** Anything else you'd like to add?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Not really. I was a little reluctant to even sit down here. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** I'm glad you did.

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Well, I, I was too.

**INTERVIEWER:** How long, how long have you been coordinating the alumni breakfast?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Oh. Several years now. I can't tell you for sure how many, five or six. Yeah. It's nice. These guys, you know, lived together. We worked one, once upon a time we worked six days a week and all the overtime we wanted to pick up. And these people have been together for many, many years.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you ever had any women who were part of this alumni breakfast?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Yes. Uh.

**INTERVIEWER:** Any who are still around?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Uh. One. Uh. When I first started coming to this, there were four women. They were older and, and they, they quit coming for one reason or another. And since I've taken over there's only been one that came and, and she doesn't come because she doesn't want to be the only woman here.

**INTERVIEWER:** What's her name?

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Sandra, oh, what. I can't think of it now. Anyway, and I understand she's, she's, uh, uh, handicapped somewhat now.

**INTERVIEWER:** I think I actually spoke with her on the phone.

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** Yeah. Someone probably mentioned her before. She's a great girl. Sandra Ott. Yeah. Okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much.

**EDWIN DUANE ZINKAN:** You're welcome.  
(END)



**In-Depth Interviews  
2016-2017**

**Chuck Andrews**

**Bob Beatty**

**Terri Belczyk**

**John DeChellis**

**Mike Deelo**

**Terry Frank**

**Victor Hall**

**Thomas E. Janeck**

**Fred Knight**

**Bruce Megill**

**Sam Mullin**

**John Murtha**

**John Pusateri**

**Jim Reese**

**Earl "Butch" Shamp**

**Ted Simmons**

**Gary Specht**

**Herman Specht**

**Joe Strupek**

**John Wakeley**

**Dr. Thomas Weyand**

**Chuck Andrews**  
**Interview @ September 28, 2016**

## **CHUCK ANDREWS**

### **Summary**

The interview with Chuck Andrews took place in a conference room at INMETCO in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, on September 28, 2016. Chuck worked for St. Joe and its successor owners from the fall of 1972 until the first plant closure in 1979; he returned in 1992, working until April 2016. He comes from a family that worked at the Monaca smelter: father, uncle, father-in-law, and brother-in-law. Chuck started off in the yard, assigned to furnace basement cleanup and oxide bagging, before obtaining a position in the leach plant. He spent most of his career as a draftsman in the engineering department.

Chuck talks about the yard as the entry point for most workers, how new hires flowed through the yard pool to fill temporary positions, and the bid process to move from one job to the next and to different departments. He reflects on what it was like to work basement cleanup and zinc oxide bagging. Chuck explains the operations that took place in the sinter plant, where his father worked, and the leach plant, where cadmium waste was recycled into cadmium products. He outlines the shift schedule that kept the plant operating 24/7, 365 days a year and the on-the-job training to do the various jobs.

In Chuck's discussion about working in engineering as a draftsman, he highlights the impact of new environmental regulations in the 1970s, specifically creating the need for dust collector projects. Also mentioned are other environmental concerns and measures the company took to address them: emissions, employee health issues, and reforestation efforts going back to the 1960s. He explains the shift in the plant from using mined ores to recycling hazardous waste as a metal source when the smelter reopened in 1980.

Chuck covers a number of topics pertaining to employee benefits and relations, and changes when the union was voted in. These topics include working holidays, double shifts, vacation time, sick pay (or lack thereof for hourly workers), medical facilities, race relations, employee evaluations, and pay increases. Among the perks he describes are the cafeteria, the auditorium and its recreational amenities, the sense of family, and the social life of ten-year clubs, Christmas parties, dances, and buffets—primarily before unionization. He also reflects on change in the esprit de corps in the 1980s and '90s, use of the auditorium until it was mothballed, and factors leading to the final shutdown in 2014.

Chuck shares a few notable anecdotes like snack runs on a three-wheeled bicycle to the cafeteria to purchase snacks for the shift. Other stories include ghosts at the County Home, World War II tank farms, and the cafeteria serving "Jonestown" punch on the last day it was open before the 1979 plant shutdown. He offers a strong sense of the camaraderie that typified St. Joe's.

1 **CHUCK ANDREWS**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 09/28/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 CHUCK ANDREWS

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Today is September 28, 2016. This is an interview with Chuck  
8 Andrews, and this interview is taking place at INMETO in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania.

9  
10 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. It is.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Chuck, could you just state and spell your name, please?

13  
14 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Chuck Andrews. C-H-U-C-K A-N-D-R-E-W-S.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay and your date of birth and current address.

17  
18 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** [REDACTED], Freedom,  
19 Pennsylvania 15042.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Uh. Chuck, are you currently working?

22  
23 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I'm working part-time for INMETCO.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** And what are you doing here at INMETCO?

26  
27 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. INMETCO had a fire last fall and burned down two-thirds  
28 of their storage facilities, and I'm here as a consultant to, uh, make new storage facilities.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. When did you start with St. Joe Lead?

31  
32 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** St. Joe I started in, uh, the fall of 1972.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** And when did you stop working at St. Joe Lead?

35  
36 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. The plant shut down in 1979 two days before Christmas.  
37 Um. Uh. So I worked that period of time, probably eight years, and then I went to North  
38 Carolina for a firm for, uh, twelve years. In '92, I had an opportunity to come back, I did,  
39 and I worked again, which was, uh, Zinc Corporation of America then. Uh. '92 till, uh,  
40 uh, April or excuse, yeah, April 2016.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So we'll be talking more about your experiences working with  
43 St. Joe between 1972 and '79.

44  
45 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Okay.  
46

1 0: 01:55

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** And then from 1992 to the spring of 2016.

4

5 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh-hmm.

6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Are you, are you from this area?

8

9 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. I am. I'm from down in Beaver County.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And how did you find out or apply for a job at St. Joe back in  
12 1972?

13

14 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I just went to the front door and, uh, I don't know if I could say  
15 this or not, but, uh, Vietnam was big then. I had just gotten back from Vietnam and, uh,  
16 there was a sign on the door "Vietnam Veterans and Blacks Only Apply." So, um, I was  
17 half of that. So I went in and applied for a job and, uh, they called me back. They called  
18 me back and, uh, I started.

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** And did you look into other options for local employment when you  
21 got back from Vietnam?

22

23 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. Yes. Yes. I did. Nova or it was Coppers. Whatever it is just  
24 down the street. There and a couple of the other, the other steel mills. But, um, my father  
25 worked at St. Joe. So, uh, I guess you might say I had a little inroad. So...

26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. In general, do you know if your coworkers moved to this  
28 area because St. Joe's offered employment or did St. Joe's employ people who happened  
29 to live in the area?

30

31 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Mostly you lived in the area. I didn't know too many people  
32 that, uh, relocated to come there because steel was big then. And, uh, you could get a job  
33 basically anywhere. But, no.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. During your time with the company, did people refer to the  
36 plant as being in Josephtown or being in Monaca?

37

38 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Both. Uh. More Monaca than Josephtown or Potter  
39 Township, but, uh, uh, on some old maps you could see that it was designated as  
40 Josephtown.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. Can you just discern any time in which people stopped  
43 calling this Josephtown?

44

45 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Yeah. I would say probably in the, uh, about 1960. It was  
46 just, you know, Monaca, Center Township was becoming bigger then. And, uh, they, uh,



1 it was the older school people that called it Josephtown and as the younger people come  
2 up they, they didn't.

3  
4 0:04:15

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So what position were you initially hired for when you started  
7 at St. Joe's in 1972?

8  
9 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I was initially in what they call the pool, where everybody  
10 would, uh, just gather in one area and then whatever department needed help they would  
11 send you to that department. And, uh, so after probably a month, uh, you were assigned  
12 to a department and I went to the leach plant.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Is that, that group where you worked together, is that what  
15 was considered the yard?

16  
17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. The yard pool. Yes.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And from one day to the next would you be pulled on to  
20 different jobs?

21  
22 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** You might be. Uh. You might be assigned for a week. You  
23 might be assigned for two or three days, but it's just that, uh, if, if you knew where you  
24 were going to be in the furnace plant so to speak, uh, for a week, you would just go right  
25 to the furnace plant, but, uh, when your time was up, uh, to help you would go back to the  
26 pool or the yard pool.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And what was your work schedule?

29  
30 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** It was daylight.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Daylight.

33  
34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** And how long was a shift and how many days a week?

37  
38 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** It would be, uh, eight-hour shifts and you got I think a half an  
39 hour for lunch. So you'd come in at, uh, let me see it'd be, you'd probably come in about  
40 seven o'clock and you'd leave at about three or three-thirty or something like that.

41  
42 0:05:36

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** And then what were the subsequent shifts?  
45

1 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. It was, uh, uh, well daylight and then there was four to  
2 twelve, uh, and there was the, uh, graveyard shift, uh, eleven to seven.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you, did one tend to stay on the same shift or were, did they  
5 rotate?

6  
7 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** No. They rotated three shifts. You worked a week on, uh,  
8 daylight and then you, uh, NED, uh, let's see. I called it NED because, uh, daylight,  
9 evening turn and, um night turn, evening turn, and daylight. Excuse me. And, uh, then  
10 you got every, it was like, at that time there was six days, we were working six days. So  
11 you would work, uh, a week of daylight, a week of evening turn, a week of night turn.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** How hard was that to adjust to in your daily life?

14  
15 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Tough. It was very tough. And, uh, especially night turn  
16 because, uh, you're just coming off of daylight and then you go onto night turn and you're  
17 tired anyhow. Then you sleep during the day, and it was hard to adjust. It probably took  
18 a couple of days to get into the groove of night turn or evening turn or something.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** How did that, um, affect family life?

21  
22 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. You lived around it.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

25  
26 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Cause you had a job.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. Okay. So could you please, um, describe what the leach  
29 plant actually does or did and what your responsibilities within there were?

30  
31 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Actually. They took, uh, the leach plant took, uh, cadmium  
32 waste and they, uh, mixed it with acid and they made cadmium balls, sticks, and flakes  
33 and they would, uh, send them out to the customer, whatever the customer wanted. But  
34 my job was to make these, uh, they called them pigs. It looked something like a saucer,  
35 about three inches, uh, thick and, uh, you would melt those down and you would, uh,  
36 skim off the, uh, the, the dross and, uh, send it down and they would make the flakes and  
37 the balls and things like that. But it was a cadmium, uh, producing area.

38  
39 0:07:46

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was the commercial use of cadmium? Who were, who  
42 were the customers and what were they doing with it?

43  
44 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Um. Truthfully, I don't know. [Laughter] I'm sorry.

45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. And, um, what kind of training did the company provide  
2 for your job in the leach plant?

3  
4 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well, we, uh, usually you come in as an entry level and then, uh,  
5 the guy that was going up to the next job would work with you for a week and you  
6 would, uh, you would learn that job and then he would go onto his job and then on up the  
7 line.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. Are you familiar with the apprentice training program?

10  
11 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. I am.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** And was that still going on during your time here?

14  
15 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. It was.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So could you talk a little bit about that program and the  
18 training that somebody got rising through the apprentice program versus somebody  
19 whose position here starts in the yard and they rise up through the yard?

20  
21 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. Uh. It was a, it was an option that you, you took tests and  
22 I think it was a four-year course. I could be wrong. And you took tests to, uh, establish  
23 whether you would be, um, better in maintenance or electrical or, uh, some of the other  
24 crafts in the shops where they, uh, made the actual equipment and stuff like, or the, uh,  
25 shoots and things. And, um, uh, you took that test. I never took the apprentice test  
26 myself but, uh, well who you will interview, Terry Frank, was big into the apprentice  
27 program. And, uh, like I say, then you just went into this program and they would teach  
28 you electrical or maintenance or the different crafts that they had. And they were  
29 specialized and they were very good at their craft.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Did everybody have the choice of starting off in the apprentice  
32 program, training program?

33  
34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. You could. Anybody could bid on it. Uh. If you wanted  
35 to. I particularly didn't want to.

36  
37 0:09:42

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** And as, as far as once you're working with it, with your training  
40 either through, from the yard and getting trained on the job or having gone through the  
41 apprentice program, what were the relationships between people who went two different  
42 pathways to get their training?

43  
44 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. Basically nothing. It was, uh, I worked in my department,  
45 the leach department, leaching plant, and, uh, if there was a problem with, uh, one thing  
46 or another, they would call in one of the apprentices. Like, uh, if you had an electrical

1 problem, then they would call the, uh, electrical people in, who was maybe in training or  
2 they've already graduated and they were bona fide electricians and they would just come  
3 to your department and, uh, fix what needed to be fixed.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the rapport between people who had come in in different ways,  
6 everybody?

7  
8 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Everybody. Everybody was friends. Yeah. And in fact, you  
9 probably knew the guy anyhow. And, uh, it was just like old home week? But...

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. A lot of families and...

12  
13 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** A lot of. Yes.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Working here.

16  
17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh-hmm.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** You mentioned that your father had worked here?

20  
21 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. Dad started in 1949 and, uh...

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What's your dad's name?

24  
25 0:10:53

26  
27 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Same as mine. Charles R. Andrews.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

30  
31 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. And, uh, he, um, I think he retired in '81.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. We'll talk a little bit more about your dad later.

34  
35 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. In fact, my dad, my uncle, my brother-in-law, and, uh,  
36 myself we all worked down there at one time or another.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. All right. Um. What do you recall about your first day on the  
39 job?

40  
41 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Dirty. Very dirty. Cause the new, the newbies or the rookies,  
42 they put you in a hole. I mean it was the darkest, dankest, dirtiest hole because you were  
43 new and you, as you worked on up the line you got better jobs. But...

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the hole itself?

46

1 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** The, they, the furnace plant at one time had five small furnaces  
2 and they progressed to the bigger furnaces and they eventually shut the small ones down.  
3 But, uh, there was four feet of room underneath the furnace, um, and you were given a  
4 shovel that was about two feet long and you had to climb underneath these furnaces and  
5 all the slag that would come off of the tables, uh, would go onto the floor and of course it  
6 would build up. So you had to get down in there with this little bitty shovel and shovel it  
7 out and clean it out every day. Every day. And it was a dirty job.

8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** So how long were you in the hole until you got moved into another  
10 job within the, the yard?

11

12 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Usually you were in there for about a week at a time. I got. I was  
13 assigned to the furnace plant for a week and then, like I said, progression. I got and then I  
14 got stepped up to a better job. I got put over in the bag, uh, oxide bagging, which, uh, was  
15 all white instead of all black.

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** That was still before you got your position in leach?

18

19 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. It is. Yeah.

20

21 0:12:50

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Just curious if you're moved up after a week to, out of the  
24 hole...

25

26 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah.

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there the, was there a constant influx of new people?

29

30 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh, yeah.

31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Joining the company, who then...

33

34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. Coming in behind me. Yes. And they, they would get put  
35 in the hole.

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** Any idea how many people a week or a month that they were hiring  
38 if there were new people to run through the system?

39

40 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. It's, it's hard to say, but, uh, whenever I went into the pool I  
41 would imagine, uh, the yard pool, uh, there was probably thirty to thirty-five guys there  
42 and then they would pick from there.

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

45



1 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** And there was a lot of, not dissension but, uh, a lot of people  
2 quit. People would go in the hole for one day and say, "I got to do better than this." But,  
3 uh, I had a, uh, young son at that time and I needed a job and I stuck with it, you know,  
4 but a lot of people would quit and of course they'd hire in behind them, so...

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. Okay.

7  
8 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Only the strong survived. [Laughter]

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Then what did you do, uh, in the oxide department?

11  
12 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I, uh, I bagged fifty-five pound, uh, bags of zinc oxide. It's just a  
13 white powder. It looks like heroin. [Laughter] And then you, uh, bag so many and you  
14 put 'em on a pallet and they take it away and you had your quota for the day, but, uh, it  
15 was a good job. Uh. I liked that job.

16  
17 0:14:12

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** And how long were you bagging the oxide?

20  
21 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I would probably I would say, hmm, maybe four to six weeks.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And did you get training for that?

24  
25 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** The same training as I would say for the leach plant, you know.  
26 A guy come in. It wasn't a, a mind numbing job, you know. But, uh, you just, he showed  
27 you how to do it and he stuck with you for a couple of days and then, and then you're on  
28 your own. Of course, there was guys everywhere. If you had a problem, if you had a, uh,  
29 uh, a plug up or something like that, everybody would just come on in and help you.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Ever have any big bag spills?

32  
33 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Yes. Yeah. There'd be, you know, where the bag would  
34 blow. There, there was, uh, a like a horn that came out and you put the bag over it, you  
35 hit the button and the bag filled up and then as soon as it, the, uh, scale would tell you it's  
36 fifty-five pounds. It quit and then you folded it in and put it on the rack. But sometimes  
37 the bag would blow off and then now your blowing oxide everywhere and of course a  
38 guy came over and laughed at you, you know, but you had to clean it up too.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Were those processes eventually mechanized?

41  
42 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. All of it.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** When, when did that happen?

45

1 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. Long before I got there. So, uh, it was already there when I  
2 got there.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

5  
6 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** It was well, well run. I must admit.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** How, how many people worked in the oxide bagging?

9  
10 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** It was probably about eight guys on a shift if I can remember.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** And then, um, you ended up from there...

13  
14 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Until and then I got put into the leach plant.

15  
16 0:15:49

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And your job responsibilities in the leach plant, could you  
19 talk about that?

20  
21 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. In the leach plant?

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

24  
25 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. I was to make these pigs, they called them, uh, their  
26 ingots. You might call. It looked like a three-time bigger than a hockey puck and, uh, you  
27 pressed them out. You, your, it was called sponge. After you mixed, uh, the dust with the  
28 acid it made a sponge, they call it. And then you put the sponge in a mold and you make  
29 these molds, these pigs. Then, you, uh, put them in the, uh, a drum that melted them  
30 down and then you poured it into another drum that, uh, they made the flakes and the  
31 balls out of.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

34  
35 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** But there was different. There was probably five different jobs in  
36 that area and, uh, I, I, there wasn't a lot of progression, uh, because the guys were  
37 younger and, you know, and you don't move up that well. But, uh, I stayed on the press  
38 operator for, uh, well my eighteen months that I was there.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** And where did things go from the leach plant after these things were  
41 made?

42  
43 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well they, uh, they went, like I say, into this melting pot. And  
44 then it went into another pot where, where they made the, uh, the sticks and the balls and  
45 the flakes.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. And from there once the sticks and the balls and the  
2 flakes...  
3  
4 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** They went into boxes or bags or however the customer wanted it  
5 and then it was shipped out.  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And was shipping at that point done by rail, by barge, by  
8 trucks?  
9  
10 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. You name it. Yeah. All three. Yes.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And, um, so you were about eighteen months in...  
13  
14 0:17:34  
15  
16 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** In the leach plant?  
19  
20 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** In the leach plant. Yes.  
21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** And then where was your next place?  
23  
24 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. They had a bidding process inside the plant. You, if you  
25 had spent X amount of time in your department you couldn't bid right out. Uh. You  
26 could, uh, bid to like another department. You could go from the leach plant to the  
27 furnace plant and, um, and all would, and it was on the main board everywhere. And they  
28 would, uh, say there's, uh, entry level, I don't know, mechanic or something in the leach,  
29 in the, uh, furnace plant. And all it would cost you was a, uh, your signature. And then  
30 they would take everybody's, uh, applications and look at it and if they thought you  
31 qualified you could go over in that department. Well, a bid came down for entry level  
32 draftsman and I had, uh, been to Penn State and I had a lot of, uh, calculus and that sort of  
33 thing and I thought well all it's gonna cost me is my signature so I applied for it. And, uh,  
34 I don't know, it was probably, I don't know, six months later after a couple of interviews  
35 I went up to the, uh, I got the job. And, uh, the rest of this, uh, like I say, I've been in  
36 engineering ever since.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And what were your responsibilities in engineering as a  
39 draftsman?  
40  
41 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Just, uh, mostly detailing at first like, uh, we were, uh, divided  
42 into three groups, D1, D2, D3. The D1s were just, uh, entry level and then the D2s were,  
43 uh, they would do some layout but mostly it was, uh, detailing like building chutes and  
44 drawing chutes and, uh, uh, whatever else needed, ladders or whatever. And, uh, the D3  
45 did mostly layouts and, um, so whenever I came in I, uh, was given a job to, uh, uh,  
46 measure all the shafts in the plant and there was thousands of shafts and a lot of 'em were

1 duplicated. So I, uh, I had to go through all these shafts and find out which one was  
2 duplicates and which ones wasn't and I found several hundred that were the same. But,  
3 uh, but as you were there you, uh, you got to move up and you did some simple detailing  
4 like chute, like I say, chutes or whatever needed detailing and then I eventually moved up  
5 to, into a D2 and, uh, and did some light layouts and chutes and things like that.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** And you were there for how many years in engineering?

8  
9 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. From '74, May of '74 until December of '79, I was in the  
10 engineering department.

11  
12 0:20:22

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. Were you involved at all with supervising construction if  
15 some of these changes had to be made based upon the work that you were designing?

16  
17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. Yeah. Changes forever in engineering and, um, yeah there  
18 would be, uh, there might be a problem or something like that. Uh. Something unforeseen  
19 out in the plant and they would say, "Well you can't do that." So it would come back and  
20 you would make a revision. That same drawing, but you may move a column or a post  
21 over six inches to get away from, uh, a particular obstruction.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any particularly large new construction projects that you  
24 were involved with while you were in the engineering department, like new furnaces or  
25 new, new plants?

26  
27 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. Yes. There was, uh, several, uh, that, that's when  
28 environmental started coming in, in the, uh, in the '70s. And they, uh, we did several very  
29 large, uh, dust collector projects. Uh. I remember they were, uh, it was \$6 million, but,  
30 and, uh, which does not seem like much today. But, uh, that was big bucks back then in,  
31 in the '70s. And I remember working on that. A lot of ductwork. We had ducts running  
32 everywhere from department to department or to big houses and the, we did a lot of  
33 ductwork too.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that part of addressing environmental concerns?

36  
37 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. Yes. It is.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please talk a little bit more about what some of the  
40 environmental concerns were in the '70s and what measures the company took to address  
41 them?

42  
43 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well St. Joe was, St. Joe was always under the gun for, uh,  
44 emissions. In fact, they would have people sitting on the hill, um, we called it the smoke  
45 watchers in the evening, where they would, uh, watch and see where smoke or dust or  
46 something may be arising and they would write you up. So, um, once you get these, uh,

1 write-ups, they would try and address these problems. And, um, but they were forever  
2 trying to get, uh, them to keep the dust levels down and that sort of thing.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** How about from a health perspective, employee health? Um.

5  
6 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** It was terrible. It was, it was bad. Uh. We were all, uh, we all  
7 were required to wear safety, uh, long sleeve shirts, safety glasses, of course hats and, uh,  
8 you were given a respirator and if you were in the hole, like I started out in, they gave  
9 you a respirator. But, uh, most of the time you just breathed what was breathed and, um,  
10 um. There was a hill on the, I would say, the west side of the plant that, uh, there was a  
11 lot of acids that came out of the stack and stacks and, uh, at one time that hill was just  
12 barren because of the, uh, emission that come out of there. And, uh, they cleaned 'em up.  
13 They really did and in fact that, well there, the hill is not there now, but uh, um, but they  
14 cleaned it up very nicely.

15  
16 0:23:31

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Was any reforestation done there?

19  
20 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. They, uh, they in fact, uh, in '65 before I even  
21 started down there, I was in the, uh, uh, scouts and, um, they, uh, provided trees for us to  
22 plant and, uh, of course the trees are all gone now because Shell. But, uh, we walked so  
23 and planted a tree and there were thousands of trees that we planted just for that purpose.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. Okay. At least into the 1960s, management adjusted the  
26 workweek between 40 and 48 hours per week depending upon the financial situation of  
27 the plant. Typically driven by economic forces like supply, demand and prices.

28  
29 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** During your years, were your hours ever cut back and if so what was  
32 going on at the time to make that necessary?

33  
34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well in the early '70s, we were working six days a week. Very  
35 early. You know, just about whenever I started and I just got a piece of that and then they  
36 dropped back to a 40-hour work week and, um, uh, a lot of guys, uh, it, it took a financial  
37 crunch. I mean, uh, you would go in the, uh, locker rooms and you'd see boats and trailers  
38 and all sorts of things for sale because they overextended themselves and, um, uh, but  
39 they had warned us that a 40-hour work week was coming and, uh, so everybody knew  
40 about it and, uh, well they had to make the best of what it was. But I wasn't there too  
41 long before that.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. Okay. How was working on holidays handled? How did  
44 you get time off for vacations and holidays?

45



1 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well, you, you didn't. If you were scheduled to work, you  
2 worked and...

3

4 **INTERVIEWER:** Three hundred and sixty-five days a year?

5

6 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** That's right. That's correct. But you got a bump in pay. Like you  
7 got holiday pay or you got, I think, it was time and a half, um, you got for the holidays.  
8 And, uh, and if that time and a half work some how come out on a Sunday, you would,  
9 uh, you'd get double time and a half, you know. Like if you worked a double, you know,  
10 if you would work an eight-hour shift and then the guy ahead of you called off, he was  
11 sick or whatever and you would double over and you'd work sixteen hours, you'd get time  
12 and a half for, uh, so, um. But it didn't impact me, but, uh, yes. If you were scheduled to  
13 work Christmas, you worked it.

14

15 0:26:12

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you get paid vacation time?

18

19 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. Yeah. I got, uh, I believe it was two weeks or maybe it was  
20 a week to start out. Yep. Yes. You did. A week or two weeks. Yeah.

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And what other employee benefits?

23

24 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well, you got, uh, they had so many, uh, perks and so many  
25 clubs, so many, uh, things that you could do. It was a family-oriented place. It was really,  
26 uh, really close knit and, um, uh, of course you had your insurances and you had, uh, I  
27 don't think they had eye insurance then. But, but you had your basic insurance and, uh,  
28 and a job.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** If you called in sick, were you paid for the day?

31

32 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** No. No you weren't. No work. No pay.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that through, throughout your entire employment there?

35

36 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** No. Once I became, in the engineering department and salary,  
37 you were, uh, absolved of that. You know. You were, you were, uh, you, you got paid for  
38 your 40 hours a week, um, regardless.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. Was there a, a system in place for evaluating employees  
41 for promotions or were there bonuses?

42

43 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yearly. Everybody got a yearly, uh, evaluation and, uh, now this  
44 is in engineering. Uh, uh, but, uh, and in the plant I must admit. But, uh, mostly once I  
45 got into salary, they, um, they evaluated you every year and of course they watched what  
46 you did throughout the year. But, uh, uh, but usually it was like a three to five percent

1 increase at the end of the year. Unless you were really a slacker and then, uh, you  
2 wouldn't get as much. But, uh...

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** When did, your career here, when did you make the transition from  
5 being an hourly worker to salaried?

6  
7 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** 1974.

8  
9 0:28:06

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** So that coincides with when the unions came in.

12  
13 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Yes.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** So let's talk about the unions and...

16  
17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I have an interesting story about that.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** And why at that point...

20  
21 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** The unions came into the plant.

24  
25 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. Uh. Like I say, uh, they'd been trying to get a union in for  
26 years. Fifties, sixties, seventies. But, uh, but as younger people came in, uh, that may  
27 have worked in other plants that had unions. You know, they, they, um, they took a vote  
28 and then in, like I say, '74, uh, the union came in. I, uh, for whatever reason I wasn't a  
29 real union man and, uh, but anyhow you go along with the flow. You know. If you have  
30 to join a union, you join a union. Uh. As I was in the leach plant, uh, the job ahead of me  
31 was, uh, taken by a man out of the yard, out of the yard pool. I didn't think about it, and  
32 he worked there for about a month. And he didn't, uh, I didn't think about it cause I  
33 thought I'd get that rate for the next job and, uh, nothing was happening. I got my  
34 paycheck and nothing was happening. So I went to my shop steward, as I'm supposed to  
35 do and, uh, they found out that, uh, I was supposed to have gotten that job and, uh, and  
36 then I did get put in that job. Uh. It was a temporary thing. But, uh, after, after it was all  
37 said and done, I was the first person to get, uh, compensation with the new union and I  
38 was a foreman's son. [Laughs] So, uh, that, not that it didn't go well with everybody else,  
39 but it was a little piece of history there. But, uh, the first, uh, claim against the union,  
40 against St. Joe was, uh, by a foreman's son, and I got it. So, uh, and I got all my back pay.  
41 So...

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** How did being, having the unions benefit the workers here?

44  
45 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Downhill. I mean the, uh, St. Joe was a, a great place to  
46 work. You had, um, every department had a bowling team, had a volleyball team, tennis

1 team, baseball or softball team. I mean they had their own athletic director. That's all he  
2 did was athletic direction for the whole plant. They had Christmas parties that you can't  
3 imagine how great they were. And, um, they had, uh, yearly they went to Idora Park in  
4 Youngstown. They took over the entire park and all the employees, uh, whether, no  
5 matter what shift you were, you could go there and, uh, after the union come in it was  
6 gone.

7  
8 0:31:01

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Why?

11  
12 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Because they figured that they'd let the union provide now.  
13 Because this is what they wanted because, uh, St. Joe went from 1930 to 1974 without  
14 and everybody was happy and then all of a sudden the union comes in and they said,  
15 "Well if that's what they want, if they want the union, let the union provide a, uh,  
16 something." And it all, all the stuff went away. Perks.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have some idea of what percent of the plant was union  
19 versus...

20  
21 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Non.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Nonunion?

24  
25 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I would say it was, uh, at the time of the vote?

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

28  
29 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** It was probably, uh, sixty/forty.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And do you know how strong the support was to go with the  
32 unions within that sixty percent?

33  
34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. They were radical. I would say.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

37  
38 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Cause, uh, I, some of my friends became, uh, like president of  
39 the union and they had, I don't know, vice president. They had several different, uh, and  
40 they were all vying for this position to, uh, I don't, to satisfy their own.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you think, um, there was any anticipation of what the downside  
43 would be in going with the union as far as employee life here at the company?

44  
45 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** No. I don't think they did. I really don't. Uh. Because, uh, all  
46 they were thinking about was, uh, you know, uh, just like the other steel mills in the area,

1 you know, uh, if they're not happy they're gonna strike. And, um, and as far as I can  
2 remember in '77 there was one wildcat strike and, uh, that was it. And I don't, I do not  
3 believe there was any strikes ever, uh, after that.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you think wages improved significantly from having the unions  
6 here?

7  
8 0:32:58

9  
10 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** They increased some, but not significantly.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** How about benefits?

13  
14 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. They, I imagine they would stay, they would've stayed  
15 about the same.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, did, um, hourly workers start getting medical?

18  
19 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. Oh, yeah. They got theirs...

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** I mean, um, if they called out sick. Sick days.

22  
23 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they get paid for them once they were union?

26  
27 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** No. No. It was the same way. You know. No work, no pay.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. Okay. Uh. The cafeteria.

30  
31 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Wonderful.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Let's talk about the cafeteria.

34  
35 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Wonderful. Uh. They had their own beef farm. In fact, I used to  
36 deliver papers to Mr. Hartenbaugh at his farm.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was, where was the farm located?

39  
40 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** In Center Township probably about five miles from the plant.  
41 And, uh, I remember, Mr. or Mr. and Mrs. Hartenbaugh, you know, like I say, they had  
42 their own farm. And they had all the beef cattle and they sold them, uh, specifically to St.  
43 Joe. And, uh, you would go down there and get a meal you would not believe for thirty-  
44 five cents. Thirty-five, of course, you know, we're talking era 1970 but, um, uh, it was, it  
45 was great. Uh. A good meal all the time.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What was one of your favorites?  
2  
3 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. You name it. They had chili that would just knock your  
4 socks off and, and, but, uh, um. They had a variety every day. Every day. There was,  
5 there was a different, uh, a different menu.  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** With people working round the clock, so you have three shifts of  
8 people, was the cafeteria serving a dinner meal at all times of the day?  
9  
10 0:34:43  
11  
12 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. All times.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Or...  
15  
16 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. It was all there. Uh. In the morning, if you'd take, usually  
17 you had a break in the morning, uh, the youngest guy on the shift would, uh, they had all  
18 these little three-wheeled bicycles and everybody, you used to get little coupons that you  
19 could buy and, uh, everybody would give him their little coupons and you would go  
20 down and get a drink, get a bag of chips or something like that and then they'd come back  
21 on the break and, uh, yeah. It was open all the time. Great meals. Wonderful place.  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Whom did you usually sit with when you were there?  
24  
25 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I'm sorry.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Whom did you sit with when you were?  
28  
29 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. Usually the guys on the shift.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.  
32  
33 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** The guys that didn't bring their lunch.  
34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm.  
36  
37 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Like I say, if you went down to the cafeteria, you know, you'd,  
38 you'd sit with anybody. But if, but if there was another guy on your shift going down, you  
39 usually sit with them.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I'm just trying to understand if, um, if you sort of stick with  
42 people who were in your department or if you sit anywhere with anybody?  
43  
44 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh, you could sit anywhere. Just, just anywhere. Just go on in  
45 and, uh, sit down.  
46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** And how about people who were management? Were they mingling  
2 with everybody?

3  
4 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Sitting at the same tables?

7  
8 0:35:44

9  
10 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Same table. Yeah. Cause usually everybody knew everybody  
11 else. And, uh, me being in the plant at one time I knew a lot of guys and, as did the other  
12 guys in the engineering department. But, uh, yeah, we'd go down.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you, what do you remember about the lunch women, the women  
15 who worked there?

16  
17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** There. Oh, I knew several of them personally. And they, they  
18 were older than I were, but, uh, very, very nice. Extremely nice. It was just, uh, just what  
19 can I do for you? You know, and uh, a little note in I think it was November, just before  
20 they shut down. The last day of the, uh, cafeteria, they, they shut the cafeteria down and,  
21 uh, they had their usual menu of things and then they got to the drinks and then they had  
22 water, coffee. Uh, and this is, well I should've said before but, uh, this is just before the,  
23 uh, Guyana Massacre down in, uh, where all the people committed suicide. They had  
24 coffee, water, tea, you know all these things and then somebody wrote in Jonestown  
25 punch, you know, because the plant was shutting down, you know. And everybody take a  
26 drink of Jonestown punch. But, uh, but the cafeteria was very, very good.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the cafeteria still running 24/7 up until the point when it shut  
29 down?

30  
31 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Or were there reduced hours before that?

34  
35 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** As far as I know, it was 24/7. I could be wrong, but I didn't go  
36 over too much. But, uh, I could be wrong.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** So the auditorium served several functions.

39  
40 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please describe your recollections of the building and its  
43 use for business as well as recreational and social functions?

44  
45 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well they had, down below they had, uh, a four-lane bowling  
46 alley. And, uh, ping pong tables. There was a pool table down there and then you went

1 upstairs, a full size basketball court with, uh, of course, uh, folding seats that came down.  
2 And then upstairs of that, they had a complete weight room with, uh, free weights that,  
3 uh, anybody could go in and use, uh, at any time. Now, at Christmastime they would  
4 have the, uh, the Christmas play there. Not the play, but, uh, Santa Claus and all the kids  
5 would come in. Kids of the employees would come in and just, you had, uh, beforehand  
6 you had three gifts to pick from, you know, and it, it was great gifts, toys, and for the  
7 kids. Big bags of candy. It was wonderful. But they had, they would, uh, just, uh,  
8 decorate the place like you wouldn't believe and, um, in fact I have pictures at home. I  
9 forgot about those. That, uh, maybe I can get to you and, uh, of the, uh, decorated  
10 Christmas areas. You know. It's really nice. Cause I went there as a kid because dad was  
11 there and then after, uh, I got a job there my son and I and wife would go there.

12

13 0:39:06

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm.

16

17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** And, uh, but it was, uh, in later years it was used as a storage  
18 facility. They stored, uh, bag house bags in there. And, uh, and it went into a disrepair  
19 and basically it was, uh, condemned.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** When the plant reopened in 1980, was the auditorium still in use?

22

23 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. It was. Yes. It was.

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** So at what point was it mothballed?

26

27 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well, when I came back in '92, it was mothballed. So if I was to  
28 guess I would imagine it was about the same time they made their move to the Poor  
29 Farm, the offices. So I would say in the mid-'80s because, uh, uh, people that owned the  
30 plant then all they wanted was, uh, revenue. They didn't want to, they didn't care about  
31 the upkeep of the plant and the plant went downhill very quickly and the main office and  
32 the, uh, auditorium, uh, the repairs that needed to be done on it they didn't do anything.  
33 And the roof collapsed and, uh, and the buildings were condemned.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. Outside of, um, company sponsored activities and the  
36 walls of the plant, to what extent was your family and social life connected to other St.  
37 Joe colleagues and their families?

38

39 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well, uh, before my time, um, they used to have a thing called a  
40 ten-year club, where, uh, every year they would have, uh, well periodically through the  
41 year, but they would have these dances and, uh, uh, buffets and, uh, pre-union of course.  
42 And, uh, but they had several of these groups that, uh, your spouses were allowed to, uh,  
43 come in and, you know, participate. It was a big dance. It was, uh, very, very nice.  
44 Dad and my mother used to go to them. But, um, myself I didn't. You know, and then of  
45 course the, the Christmas, uh, thing for the kids and, uh, the trips to, uh, Idora Park in  
46 Youngstown, you know, was another one. So, uh, I think that's all within that area.

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0:41:19

**INTERVIEWER:** Did your, your friends outside of the workplace, were they also St. Joe employees?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. Several of them were. You know, you, uh, got to know a guy on your shift or something like and you'd say, "Well, let's, let's go, you know, somewhere in Pittsburgh, you know. Let's, let's get together or do something." Yes. You would very much, if they lived in the area, you know, close to you, but uh...

**INTERVIEWER:** Was that kind of camaraderie still present say in the '80s, the '90s, do you know?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** I, it's hard to say. But I would say, no. You know, the people were more, uh, uh, individualized or, uh, or I forget the word I'm looking for, but, uh, I would say no. You know. They, uh, everybody had their own little thing and, and they did it and, uh, I could, you know, there was some. But I wouldn't say as much as way back.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. You mentioned that your father worked at the plant.

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And your brother-in-law?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** My, and, and my uncle.

**INTERVIEWER:** And your uncle. Could you please talk a little bit more about your family's experiences working at the plant? Where, when they started and what departments they worked in?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Dad worked in the sinter plant, which was right across the alley from the leach plant. So I would see him periodically. We weren't on the same shift, but we'd see each other every now and then. Uh. He worked there from '49 to '81 as I said before. And, um, uh. He was, it, it was a good job.

**INTERVIEWER:** What, what did he do in the sinter plant? What was the sinter plant and what did he do?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. They, uh, they took the raw material from the, uh, furnace plant and they ran it through a, what they called a sinter machine to leach out the zinc. And then slag was left over and the zinc of course our product was, was, uh, retained and, uh, he worked his way up from, uh, you know, entry level to a foreman, to a shift foreman. So, um, and with an eighth grade education I thought he was the smartest man in the world. And, uh, but he worked there the whole time and, uh, uh, and then my

1 uncle. He started down there I would say in the mid-'70s, uh, as a janitor in the main  
2 office and, uh, then he, through the bidding process he got into the furnace plant. And,  
3 uh, my wife's father worked down there also. I forgot to mention that. My father-in-law  
4 worked down there. And he worked with my uncle, and then, uh, my brother-in-law, Roy,  
5 he worked in the acid plant. And, um, he come on, he had a bad accident and I think he  
6 later just, uh, retired because, cause of the accident.

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10 **INTERVIEWER:** An accident at the plant?

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12 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened?

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16 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** He was on a scaffold, probably 30 feet in the air and you had to  
17 go from these, different, uh, tanks to check things and he fell through the grating. And he  
18 fell about thirty feet and really messed up, uh, messed up his legs and, uh, he just  
19 eventually just retired.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of medical facilities did they have at the plant?

22  
23 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** At the one time, they had a full ambulance and, um, fire trucks.  
24 They had, you know, everybody, if you were on a shift and the whistle went off you  
25 could leave your job and go to the ambulance or the, uh, but then and they had a nurse  
26 there 24/7. They had a nurse there, and, um, um, it was, free flu shots. This and that.  
27 Anyhow, whatever you needed. And they had a yearly, uh, physical that you had to go in  
28 and take. And, uh, if you were in a high lead area, which the leach plant was, you had to,  
29 uh, go over there once a month and, uh, give 'em a urine sample and they would test you  
30 for high leads or whatever might be in your system. And, uh, a lot of guys who didn't  
31 wear the respirators, um, had to put, get off, off duty because, uh, they couldn't be in that  
32 area anymore. But, uh, it, they took care of us.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** What, was there disability insurance?

35  
36 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. There was. Yeah. If, if it was bad enough, yeah. Like my  
37 brother-in-law, he got the disability insurance.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And, um, when the plant reopened in 1980, was there still a  
40 nurse there?

41  
42 0:45:55

43  
44 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** No. Not that I can remember. Of course, I wasn't there. You  
45 know, from '80 to '92, I, uh, I was, uh, in Charlotte, North Carolina. But, uh, I can't say  
46 that there was or wasn't.

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**INTERVIEWER:** When you came back in '92, was there?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** No. There wasn't. No. Um. They would call a doctor in, like I say, for these physicals once a year. But as far as a presence of a nurse there, I, I can't remember one being there.

**INTERVIEWER:** So if there was a medical emergency was...

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** They would, uh, bring the, they would bring an outside ambulance in, and I was burnt on the left side, the left side of my face in the leach plant. I mean one of these pigs, that I call, you had to put in this solution and one dropped in that I didn't see and, uh, it splashed my face and I got caustic all over the side of my face. And, um, I went down and, uh, laid there until a doctor came in and, uh, he put some salve on it, which I thought it was a lot worse than it was. But he put some salve on it and sent me back to the, to the job. But, uh, if bad enough, they would call an outside ambulance in.

**INTERVIEWER:** After having left in 1979, what changes were there in what the plant was manufacturing?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well, they had, uh, they had mines in Balmat, New York, where they would mine all the ores that they needed to make zinc and, uh, mines were getting low. So they sold them and they became a total recycle plant. In fact, we were the largest recycle plant in the world and that's why they bought INMETCO too. Cause they recycle here. So everything was, uh, recycled. You know, everything that had any, uh, zinc in it at all, uh, they would either purchase or, uh, or be given to and, um, that's how they made, so it, it went from, uh, a plant that, uh, produced their own feed to a plant that was given the feed and they would recycle it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So all the materials then were recycled there or did they buy, also buy recycled materials?

0:48:32

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Most of the time, it was given to us. Because, uh, there's what you call electric arc furn, EAF dust, electric arc furnace dust. And it's a hazardous waste. And, um, most of the time the steel companies would bury it or, uh, landfill it somewhere and at a great cost to them and, uh, and it was probably 15 to 20 percent zinc laden. So, uh, they made a deal with a lot of different steel companies to give this to get it off of their hands cause it was a hazardous waste. They gave it to St. Joe or ZCA at that time and, uh, we were entering that into our system to make, uh, to leach out I would say the, uh, the zinc.

**INTERVIEWER:** What new technologies were introduced into the plant or new facilities to be able to do that?



1  
2 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well several of the departments were eliminated. The acid plant,  
3 the roaster plant, um, a couple other ones too. And it was, uh, basically just entered into  
4 the furnace plant where they would, uh, cook the ore and then send it to the sinter plant,  
5 go through the sinter machine and through the whole process again, but it was, uh, a  
6 couple of steps was eliminated. I'm not sure if that is exactly right. You'd have to have,  
7 uh, maybe a chemist or something say that, but, uh, uh, but it wasn't a big change.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** With those steps and departments that were eliminated, were people  
10 repositioned into other jobs?

11  
12 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** The, it went by seniority. Yeah. And, uh, they absorbed as many  
13 people as they could into other departments and the other ones were let go.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. With the, there were several changes in ownership.

16  
17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh-hmm.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Starting with the Fluor Corporation in 1981 and then in 1987 St. Joe  
20 Resources Company and the New Jersey Zinc Company combined to form ZCA.

21  
22 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Owned by Horsehead, um, which then filed for bankruptcy and...

25  
26 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Several times.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Bought by Sun Capitol in 2003 under the Horsehead Corporate  
29 name. How did these changes in ownership impact operations, policies, labor relations  
30 and the culture of the plant, all those turnovers in a fairly short amount of time?

31  
32 0:51:03

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34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Some people, uh, who, who perhaps grew up in the plant, I'll  
35 say, they were brought up through the plant, uh, and had, uh, an interest in the plant that,  
36 you know, they, they've been there forever. There was, uh, there was a couple of groups  
37 in there that, as I mentioned before, all they wanted was revenue. All they wanted was  
38 money and to hell with the plant. And the plant went into a deep disrepair and, uh, it was  
39 falling down to the point where, uh, it was, uh, hazardous to work in a lot of areas. And,  
40 um, and then it was sold to a group that, uh, uh, was of old St. Joe employ, not  
41 employees, but, uh, hierarchy and, uh, they started bringing it back. And then whenever I  
42 got back, uh, I would say it was probably in the late 2000s when, uh, Horsehead absorbed  
43 ZCA and it all became Horsehead, uh, that the plant started to, uh, get better. But, uh, but  
44 several of those owners just didn't care. They didn't care at all.

45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So Horsehead Corporation acquired the assets of Horsehead  
2 Industries in 2003. So between that time, 2003, and when the final shutdown of the  
3 smelter happened in 2014, what were the operations going on at the plant and what were  
4 some of the particular challenges that ultimately led to it being closed down?  
5

6 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes. Uh. The plant was a dinosaur. You know. It was, uh, built  
7 in 1930. All of the, uh, operations were old. There was new plants being built in the  
8 south, uh, Clarksburg and, uh, different areas. They had, uh, electric, electric arc  
9 furnaces, new furnaces that was much more efficient than, uh, what they had here and  
10 being in the engineering department, uh, we started on layouts for a new chemical plant  
11 rather than a manufacturing plant. And, um, and it was just a matter of years before this  
12 would shut down that they could get the new one up and running, which they never did.  
13 But, um, but the place was just so old, it was falling down and, um, it was terrible.  
14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there still a demand for what was being produced here?  
16

17 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh, yes. Yeah. I think, uh, uh, I don't know what their costs  
18 were, but they were making a profit and the, uh, the zinc was, uh, highly, uh, needed  
19 everywhere. In fact, we had, uh, customers for our zinc oxide, which, uh, Michelin, they  
20 wanted nothing but our oxide. They said it was the best. And that's, uh, I don't know  
21 why, maybe that's why Michelin tires are so good. I don't know, but, uh, they, uh. But  
22 they, we had specific customers, but as the years went on and, uh, the manufacturing kind  
23 of went down. We started losing these customers and, um, it, uh, final demise was there.  
24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. I'd like to pick your brain a little bit about some things  
26 from past history.  
27

28 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah.  
29

30 0:54:46  
31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Which may be just things you would've heard from your father.  
33

34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh-hmm.  
35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. The building known as the clubhouse.  
37

38 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh-huh.  
39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** It was an old farmhouse that belonged to Raymond Jeffries, uh, from  
41 whom St. Joe purchased the land for the plant in 1930.  
42

43 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh-hmm.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** The clubhouse was used as a boarding house for unmarried  
46 management and clerical staff. Do you recall anything about this building and use?

1  
2 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Vaguely. I do, but I do remember, uh, uh, some of the, you  
3 know, there weren't a lot of cars back then, uh, back in the '30s and stuff like that. And  
4 they needed people to, uh, be close to the plant and, uh, what they would do is, uh, uh,  
5 they would board these people there and, uh, so they knew that the, the guy was within  
6 walking distance of the plant, and he could be there at a moment's notice.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Do you know if they charged them rent for that responsibility?

9  
10 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. That I don't know. Uh. I don't know.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** And when did this, these boardinghouses cease?

13  
14 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh. Well as the plant expanded, uh, it just took over that area  
15 and if, if I'm not mistaken, uh, it went, it went away when the parking lot was put in.  
16 And I, that date, I don't know. But, uh, but it went on for several years.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. Okay. Do you, do you know what local people were doing  
19 for employment around here before St. Joe's established a smelter in the early '30s?

20  
21 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I would say farming because none of the big steel mills were up  
22 and running then. Um. Uh. Cause they all kind of come in at the same time in the '30s  
23 and '40s and stuff like that. I would say it was just farming.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm.

26  
27 0:56:38

28  
29 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Agriculture. Yeah.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What do you know about the tank farms?

32  
33 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** The tank farm. I've known about that for twenty some years.  
34 And, uh, U. S. Air Force, uh, back, it was towards the end of the war, World War II, uh,  
35 they needed a supply of gasoline. A ready supply of gasoline. So they built these five, I  
36 believe it was a 100,000-gallon tanks in the ground, uh, with a pumping system from one  
37 to the other and then probably I would say five miles down the road to the Ohio River  
38 where the barges would come in and out whenever they needed it. They were never  
39 filled. I think we, after we purchased the property it was, uh, they used, uh, heating oil in  
40 there for, in one of the tanks. But, um, on the ground what they did was they built a farm  
41 and, uh, they had a barn, they had a house. Now if you went into this house, you had  
42 about 18 inches of room to get around this tremendous generator that they had. And, uh,  
43 the generator was used of course to pump the, uh, gasoline back to the Ohio. And, uh,  
44 from the air, which I saw aerial photographs at one time, it was a farm. So if ever Japan,  
45 Germany, whatsoever, may have invaded the United States and going over this area, it  
46 was a farm. I mean it was just a farm. And, uh, but, uh, underground they had all this

1 secret stuff and as I said the Air Force never used it. I believe it was the Air Force and,  
2 um, they purchased the land and, um, but it was, it was a great story.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Why, why did St. Joe purchase the land? I mean that's...

5  
6 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well they had a boat dock close to there, down the, uh, Raccoon  
7 Creek and I think it was just, uh, they got a good deal on it, and I think it was for perhaps  
8 future expansion. And they did use the one tank for, uh, oil but, um, they really never  
9 used it. In fact it was, uh, kids on bikes, uh, motorbikes and things like that knocked  
10 down the fence and, um, uh, but they never used it.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Relative to where the plant is on the map.

13  
14 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Where were the tank farms?

17  
18 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I would say, here's 18 scale, the tank farm would be way over  
19 here. It was probably about, uh, probably about six miles away. You had to go down a  
20 long, winding road to get to it.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Did St. Joe ever do anything with the property?

23  
24 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Nothing. Nothing. Nothing at all.

25  
26 0:59:43

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

29  
30 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** In fact I heard, read in the paper the other day that, uh, they gave  
31 it to Potter Township, that piece of property, and Potter Township was gonna restore the  
32 buildings and turn it into a, a park. So, um, what they're going to do with the underground  
33 tanks, I don't know. But...

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Uh. While we're on the subject of World War II...

36  
37 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. I understand that there were more women working here.

40  
41 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yes.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** During the war years.

44  
45 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. Just like in the, uh, you know, uh, was it Rosie, uh, Rosie  
46 the Riveter. Yeah. Yes. There were.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Could you please share any Rosie Riveter the stories you know about at St. Joe?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** I, uh, that was pre my father and pre me of course but, uh, I, I don't know. I, I do remember people talking about them and, uh, when the war was over the ladies were disgruntled because they had a good job but, um, beyond that I don't know. I'm sorry.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Any idea of where they were working within the plant?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh, just, you know, wherever they were needed.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah, wherever they were needed.

**INTERVIEWER:** So they made it into the, the plant departments not just clerical.

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh, yes. Yes. Oh, yes, yes. They were in the plant itself and, uh, they had their, you know, as everybody there is supervision and, um, and, you know, like I say, there, uh, the, the jobs were, uh, you weren't swinging a hammer a lot is what I mean, you know, and there, like the job that I had in the leach plant was very easy to do. You know. And they, they may have provided a job, uh, uh, service for that sort of a job, you know. And, but, uh, I'm, I'm not that familiar with it.

1:02:23

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. What jobs did women hold at St. Joe's while you were working there in the '70s and then later years?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah. Mostly in the cafeteria, uh, clerical, um, that, that sort of job. It was, there was maybe one or two like in the, uh, in the labs where they would, uh, process the material that, uh, that was being sent out, but, uh, mostly it was clerical, like I said, cafeteria.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you aware of any efforts to recruit more women to work at the company?

**CHUCK ANDREWS:** Not that I know of.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. Looking through, company publications from the 1960s, it seems there were very few if any African-Americans on the St. Joe workforce. How would you characterize the racial, ethnic mix by the '70s when you were working here and how did that change or not change over time?



1 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well as, yeah, as I said whenever I applied for my job they were  
2 hiring only Vietnam Veterans and blacks. And, uh, uh, I remember there was, uh, not a  
3 lot of vets, but, uh, there were I would say a couple of dozen blacks that was put in the  
4 area. Uh. It was hard work. They had a hard time keeping up, uh, the black population in  
5 the plant because they would quit. You know. There was a few that did go on and, uh, the  
6 one that worked with my uncle in the, um, furnace plant became a foreman.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?

9  
10 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** His name was Paris. Um. It was his first name, and I'm sorry I  
11 don't know his last, but, uh, uh, and a lot of other guys were very upset about that. But,  
12 uh, you know, that's, it goes with the times.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Well that's what my next question was.

15  
16 1:03:37

17  
18 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Yeah.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** What, how were the race relations when you did have blacks  
21 working here?

22  
23 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. I, I worked with, uh, in the pool mostly, in the yard pool.  
24 Uh. There was a lot of blacks there and they would send us out on a job to clean out some  
25 hole. Had no, had no problems at all. In fact, we were in this hole, there was four of us.  
26 There were two white guys and two black guys and of course two black guys went off  
27 together and so we were, we would go down into the hole for like fifteen or twenty  
28 minutes at a time because it was extensive and then they would come out and you'd get a  
29 10 or 20-minute break. So, uh, the foreman came by and the, me and the other white guy  
30 was standing there and he says, "Who's down in the hole?" And my buddy says, "The B  
31 Team." And he says, um, "Oh, are you the A team?" And he says, "No, we're the W  
32 Team." [Laughter] So the blacks were in the hole, but, uh, but I had no racial problems  
33 whatsoever, you know, with working with anybody and I did work with several of them.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm. How about other co-workers here?

36  
37 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Oh. Everybody had their issues. You know. Some would, uh,  
38 you know, just were anti-black and, uh, they wouldn't accept them and, uh, but you  
39 know, others like myself, you know, I had just gotten out of the service and I'd work with  
40 hundreds and hundreds of different people and, um, I had no problem. We were all a  
41 team.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Why was the company actively recruiting, um, blacks for  
44 employment at that time?

1 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Just race relations. You know. It's just that, I, I think that, uh,  
2 you figure the '60s and '70s was, uh, a very, uh, tumultuous times. And, uh, they, I think  
3 they needed a quota of, uh, so many black people and, uh, as they would reach it, you  
4 know, and you would have to hire more. But like again, it was hard work. It was very  
5 hard work. And a lot of white people quit too because they, uh, they couldn't accept the  
6 hard work, but like again I was married and had a young son and, uh, I needed a job. So I  
7 stuck with it.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Okay the County Home.

10  
11 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Uh-hmm.

12  
13 1:06:03

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** You said you knew some things about the Poor House that used to be  
16 here.

17  
18 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well the, uh, it was built I believe at the turn of 1900, right in  
19 that area, 1899, 1900, and it was used for, uh, people who couldn't afford hospital care. It  
20 was for, and, uh, they would come down there. But their care I, uh, I'm not real sure of.  
21 You know. I think they were treated as, as second-class citizens and, um, but, uh, you did  
22 get free care down there. And, uh, they would, uh, later years when they were tearing it  
23 down. Um. They found cells. Actual like jail cells down in the bowels. I never saw them.  
24 I saw pictures of them. I guess the ones that they couldn't control that they just put in the  
25 cell. You know what I mean. You know, think of 1910, 1920, you know, uh, mental  
26 illness, physical illness and stuff like that. But it, I've seen pictures from across the river  
27 of that era and, uh, before the trees grew up and there would be people sitting on the  
28 veranda in the front in, uh, wheelchairs, you know, with blankets over 'em and stuff like  
29 that. And to look at the pictures they were very serene. But then to hear the stories it was  
30 something different. And, um, I had to go down into the, uh, there was drainage  
31 problems. They had a lot of drainage problems down there. So I had to go down in there  
32 and, uh, figure out how to get rid of the water because it flooded a lot and that was the  
33 reason why they left there because all this flooding and, uh, the poltergeists that were  
34 there. And, uh, Terry, uh, Terry Frank will tell you stories about that, uh, a lot of stories  
35 come out of there of, uh, ghosts, different things, spooky stuff. And, uh, a lady came in,  
36 her first day on the job. She was a, uh, cleaning lady and she was in there about seven  
37 o'clock walking down the hall. One light was on and she stopped and she says, "Excuse  
38 me." She says, uh, "I thought everybody was gone." The man looked up and he had no  
39 face and the woman dropped her bucket on her first day and left. Terry was down in the  
40 bottom, uh, showing people around and, uh, there was a vision I'll say came out of one of  
41 the rooms down there and just stood there and shook and then left just like that. A lot of  
42 stories. A lot of, a lot of stories down there, but think of what went on back then, way  
43 back then. You know, uh, like I say, the questionable, uh, medical, uh, techniques that  
44 they had back then. You know and, uh, who knows.

45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever hear any stories of somebody from the home wandering  
2 into the plant area?

3  
4 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** No, I didn't. No, I didn't. I've, it was within probably the last 15  
5 years they found a body, uh, now of course it was skeletonized, but, uh, they did find a  
6 body and they found, they went through, uh, rigorous measures to try and find out who it  
7 may have been and it was one of the local, I don't even know if it was Mr. Stone or not,  
8 but it was one of the local people that had, uh, just passed way years and years ago. But,  
9 uh, stories about people over into the plant, no, I can't say that I have.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. All right. Uh. Who were some of your most, um, memorable  
12 work colleagues and why?

13  
14 1:10:07

15  
16 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** You look up to people that are ahead of you. Like in high school,  
17 you looked up to the, uh, freshman, not the freshman, but the juniors and seniors, you  
18 know, sort of thing. But these people, uh, were teaching you your job and, uh, some of  
19 'em wasn't worth the powder to blow 'em up and other ones had a vested interest in the  
20 company and they wanted to run it good. And, um, uh, my, uh, foreman in, in the leach  
21 plant, uh, Al Macom, uh, he, uh, he was one. And I had known Al for a long time cause  
22 he was my dad's friend and, um, he would take the time to show you the different places  
23 and different things. You know, as a young guy, you, uh, you admire something like that  
24 or I did anyhow. And then, uh, once I got into the engineering department, uh, I knew  
25 nothing. I mean I was entry level. I'm lucky I knew which end of the pencil to use and,  
26 um, there was, uh, three guys in particular John Bragg, uh, Norm Strauss, and Ralph  
27 Zinkham that, uh, really they were D3s as I had mentioned before and they took you  
28 under your wing and they, you know, they just didn't throw you to the dogs, you know,  
29 they, they showed you what to do and how to handle things and stuff like that and Bill  
30 Howell also. He was my, uh, immediate boss. You know. And, uh, again they just, uh,  
31 took their time, you know, they were old school and they, they were very, very nice  
32 people and I, uh, credit them with, uh, my advancement and, uh, in the, in the engineering  
33 design field.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part, a favorite memory or anecdote about working  
36 at the zinc plant?

37  
38 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I think, uh, the camaraderie, you know. I mean, uh, you're there  
39 a third of your life so to speak and, uh, you, you get to know the guys at the plant and,  
40 and it's the daily thing. It's the, uh, uh, back and forth kidding and, uh, different things  
41 like that, uh, uh, I don't know just sticks out in your mind, you know. They were, they  
42 were your friends, you know, as I said before if you, if you had a problem they would  
43 come together and they would help you with your, with your problems, you know. And,  
44 uh, and later on in the engineering department, you know, uh, it got down to just two of  
45 us and, uh, and an engineer and, uh, it was the same way. You know, we, we were best  
46 friends and, uh, you look forward to coming to work and I have always enjoyed what I

1 did. I mean drafting and design was, I wanted to do it since the seventh grade and I  
2 fortunately had an opportunity to do it and I enjoy it to this day. But, uh, it was just, like I  
3 say, the camaraderie, you know and, and the pay was good and, uh, everything that went  
4 into it.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

7  
8 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Well they could've let me go on my terms. I, uh, I was let go in,  
9 uh, April of this year, uh, 2016. I was going to work until probably the end of the year  
10 and, uh, but, uh, they cleaned out the entire engineering department. And, uh, but as far  
11 as the company itself they treated me well. They treated me very well. I got, uh, I was a  
12 good employee. I don't want to ring my own bell, but I was a good employee and I gave  
13 them a 110 percent every day and they recognized that. And, uh, they, uh, uh, they kept  
14 me on when, uh, I probably should've been let go and some other people were let go. It  
15 was down to the point when like I say there was just two of us, you know, and, uh, it  
16 could've been one of anybody go, but, uh, but they kept me on and I, uh, I'm appreciative  
17 of that.

18  
19 1:14:18

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

22  
23 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** Just saying goodbye. You know, I, uh, just, uh, it was tough.  
24 You know. It was a whole different group of people in the, uh, twin towers, which where  
25 they're at now and, uh, but you got, you got to know the people. Again, they, they're your  
26 friends and, uh, it was just saying goodbye. You know. It's, it's, uh, the different stories  
27 and that sort of thing, but, uh, but, it wasn't long, two months. I was retired for eight  
28 weeks before they called me up here to INMETCO for, uh, my services and, uh, but I  
29 know everybody here also but, uh, it was, uh, probably saying goodbye. It was tough.  
30 You know. Working all those years.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

33  
34 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** I think it's great. It's wonderful. Uh. They can't get it built fast  
35 enough, you know. I hope it, uh, uh, it's, it's a shame all the people that lost their job at St.  
36 Joe or ZCA or Horsehead, uh, but they, uh, I don't think they will reap what Shell has to  
37 offer, uh, because they'll, they'll have aged themselves out. But it will be, uh, a great  
38 boom for, uh, the, uh, for the Beaver Valley and in that area, you know. They're, they're  
39 building so many, uh, hotels and motels, uh, eating places, you know, they're  
40 restructuring all the roads and different things like that, and I think it'll be great and, uh,  
41 thumbs up. I really do. But one thing I'd like to add on that Shell thing, you know. Uh. A  
42 lot of people that worked down at St. Joe, uh, when I was down there or whenever, they  
43 had a machine to run. They had a job to do. You know. I did the sinter machine or I did  
44 this machine over here. And they may have only had an eighth-grade, like my dad,  
45 eighth-grade, uh, education, but they were good workers. They knew that job inside and  
46 out. They had a good job. They got a good pay and then when they shut down, myself I

1 had a, I had a, uh, a skill. You know I could go anywhere I wanted and I could get a job  
2 as a designer. You know. No problem. But this guy, Bill whatever, knew his job but he  
3 can't relate that to something on the outside. So I feel so bad for all of those 650 people  
4 that were let go that didn't have a skill but were so good at what they did. And it's just  
5 heart wrenching sometimes, you know. And I see them on the outside and they'll say,  
6 "Hey, Chuck. Where you working?" You know. And I'll say well here or there. "Oh,  
7 you'll still with them." Uh. You know. Or something like that, but I just feel bad, you  
8 know. And then they go into the fast food industry or, you know, something a lot less  
9 than what they were doing and, and certainly not at that pay. My opinion.

10  
11 1:17:38

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Well this concludes our interview unless you would like to add  
14 anything else. Any other thoughts about your experiences?

15  
16 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** It was, uh, as my father said in 1949, uh, it's a great place to  
17 work. You know, you could get a future there and I admired my father to the nth degree  
18 and, uh, I wanted to, uh, be just like him and, uh, and after, uh, I got back out of the  
19 service, you know, I, I was able to do that. But, uh, I moved in a different direction, like I  
20 say, in the engineering and, uh, uh, so many people that came and went and, uh, had great  
21 jobs experienced, uh, the wonderful, uh, perks in different things that was available down  
22 there and that, the ones that did take advantage and the ones unfortunately that didn't take  
23 advantage, you know. Uh. But it was steady work. It was good work. It was hard work,  
24 but, uh, it, it was a great place to work and, uh, I hated to see it go away. My dad I  
25 remember sit, him sitting in his chair saying, "I thought it would never happen." But it  
26 did and I, and I saw it coming long before being in engineering, you know, and, uh, saw  
27 it coming and, uh, I hope their ventures in North Carolina gets straightened out so they  
28 can get back on track. That's my thoughts.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much.

31  
32 **CHUCK ANDREWS:** You're quite welcome. I'm glad to do it for you.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you.

35  
36 (END)



**Bob Beatty**  
**Interview @ November 17, 2016**

## **BOB BEATTY**

### **Summary**

The interview with Bob Beatty took place on November 17, 2016, at the dining room table in his home in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. Bob worked for St. Joe and its successor companies from October 1966 to the April 2014 shutdown. In his 47 years he worked in three main areas—the furnace, refinery, and lab—and held a number of positions, rising from laborer to foreman after going through the company’s foreman training program. Bob had several objects on hand to display: safety awards, service awards, and a zinc name plate from when he was a foreman.

Bob discusses the hiring process from job application through the first day on the job, including safety orientation. He describes in more depth the ongoing efforts for a safe workplace. Bob explores his work experience in the furnace plant, the refinery, and the lab as a sample processor. Of particular note is the detail in which he describes the operations of the refinery, how materials moved between the furnace plant and the refinery, and the uses of products from the refinery. One such use was for zinc oxide in the making of wet toner for the early generation of copy machines.

Bob talks about the range of materials testing being done in the lab, including taking samples of concentrates arriving from the mines in boxcars, as well as the equipment and technology used in the lab. Bob comments on the reduced scale of the lab after the 1979 shutdown and the testing of water for environmental purposes as part of the lab’s activities.

One of the distinguishing features of Bob’s interview is the people he recollects—those who worked alongside him and those who held support positions in personnel, security, safety, and human resources. He recalls plant manager Chuck Henderson and the “message of the day” he communicated to employees. Bob talks about the years of friendship and nice people, Christmas parties, the cafeteria, an employee gas pump, banquets, and a 10-year club; he also comments on the impact unions, ZCA and Horsehead had on these benefits. An interesting side note is St. Joe sponsoring radio broadcasts as part of its presence in the community.

1 **BOB BEATTY**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/17/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 BOB BEATTY

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Bob Beatty. November 17, 2016. Um. Please state  
8 and spell your full name.

9  
10 **BOB BEATTY:** Robert E. Beatty, B-E-A-T-T-Y.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Your date of birth and full address please.

13  
14 **BOB BEATTY:** [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania  
15 15010.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?

18  
19 **BOB BEATTY:** I'm retired.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area or did you come here because  
22 of employment opportunity at St. Joe?

23  
24 **BOB BEATTY:** No. I grew up and was raised in Rochester. And then, I eventually  
25 ended up living in Beaver Falls. Went to Beaver Falls High School and that's, uh, where  
26 I've been all my life.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any family members who worked at St. Joe Lead?

29  
30 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. My father worked there back when I was, I don't remember,  
31 maybe six, seven, eight, and nine years old. Something like that.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** What was your dad's name?

34  
35 **BOB BEATTY:** Robert L. Beatty.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was his position at the plant?

38  
39 **BOB BEATTY:** I think he worked in the structural shop, and, uh, some of things I just  
40 remember basically are going to the Christmas party. Uh. That's about all. I think in about  
41 1955 or '54. Something like that. Uh. Uh. Was when he finished up working there. We  
42 moved to California for a few years before coming back here. So that's when, all when I  
43 was a kid.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember any stories that your dad told you about working  
46 at St. Joe Lead?

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(0:01:52)

**BOB BEATTY:** No. Not really. No. I know back in that day. That was in the early '50s or maybe late '40s. That, uh, he didn't have a car. So he always rode with my neighbor across the street. They rode together cause he had a car. He was one of the lucky ones to have a car. So, uh, that's all I can remember basically. What he was doing back in those days.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if, if everybody drove to the plant or was there, uh, any kind of public bus transportation?

**BOB BEATTY:** Uh. Basically, everybody drove. Uh. Any buses really didn't come down past there. It wasn't until the Beaver Valley Mall opened up that there was any bus service whatsoever, and it basically would take people to the, to the mall. We did have a couple folks that worked in the lab, who were temporaries, and they lived in Pittsburgh. So they would take the, the bus to the mall, and then they would hike it down to the plant. So, but that was, uh, that's about all I can remember on that.

**INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year did you stop working for the company? And then we'll fill in what you did in between those two dates.

**BOB BEATTY:** Oh, okay. I can give you. It was October 3, 1966 when I started, and then it was, uh, April 30, 2014 when, uh, that was our, everybody's last day.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were your other options for local employment that you considered in 1966?

**BOB BEATTY:** Oh. There, there was all kind of things you could do. I, I, from the time I graduated high school in '61, I had quite of a variety of different jobs. Uh. I started out making popsicles for 50 cents an hour and then graduated to working at a candy company driving a delivery truck and then, uh, there was, then I got a job at Babcock and Wilcox. Uh. That was maybe in 1962.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of company is that?

**BOB BEATTY:** They made tubular products, and, uh, they were very big in Beaver Falls. Very big. They were the mainstay of the, of the city. And if you worked at B&W, you were okay. Well I worked there for a while, but, uh, unfortunately when you're the youngest, you only work so long and then they would lay you off and I was laid off more than what I worked. So, uh, I think at that point I went to driving a door-to-door, uh, baked goods truck. It was called Liberty Baking Company. I did that and, uh, then I worked at, uh, the loan company being the guy that calls everybody and pesters them as to why they hadn't made their payments, and I didn't really like that. And then I worked for Wonder Bread delivering bread to stores. And then last but not least before I went to

1 St. Joe, I worked for Metropolitan Life selling life insurance, and that was cool as long  
2 as, uh, you could sell a lot of insurance in order to make ends meet. But in my travels  
3 talking to different people, uh, when I was selling insurance a lot of 'em worked at St.  
4 Joe. And a lot of them had nothing but high praises about working at St. Joe. And that's  
5 back in the day when everybody, when it was you worked six days a week. That was  
6 mandatory. That was the schedule and that made it good because, uh, even the local radio  
7 station. That was back in the day when people listened to AM radio and it was WBVP.  
8 And, uh, St. Joe was one of their sponsors of like basketball games and football games,  
9 and the commercial would be, you know, this, "this portion is brought to you by St. Joe  
10 and remember someone you know works at St. Joe," is what the saying was on the radio.  
11 And, uh, so I figured well, I'll give it a shot. So I went down and put in my application  
12 and, uh, got hired and, uh, that was, huh, kinda like how it all started. And 47 years and  
13 seven months later I was out the door. So, it didn't last very long. [Laughs]

14

15 (0:06:24)

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** How, how, um, soon after you applied did you find out that you were  
18 hired?

19

20 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh. I don't really remember it. Uh. I had an interview maybe a month  
21 after I put in my application. I don't remember. But everybody was interviewed by the,  
22 like these are things that, I can't remember with things that happened two weeks ago, but  
23 I can remember the personnel man's name was Joe Nard. And he was the guy that did all  
24 the interviewing. And, uh, I went there in my suit and tie because I was out trying to  
25 hustle some insurance before that. Uh. He didn't think I'd make it. He said, "I don't if  
26 you'd like working in the plant getting your hands dirty and that so, but I'm going to take  
27 a chance on you," he said, "and give it a shot." So it was, uh, just maybe, he told me he  
28 hired me there, and it was like a couple weeks after I gave my notice I was able to start  
29 down there.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Was a medical examination part of the application process?

32

33 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. You did have to take a physical and so forth. And, uh...

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Did that happen at the plant?

36

37 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. I don't remember. I don't really remember that. I remember my  
38 first day at the plant. You know. That's always a memorable thing when you start there  
39 and the different things that they would put us through, uh, basically to see [Inaudible]  
40 filling out your paperwork and, uh, then, uh, and the safety director, who at that time was,  
41 I can again remember, Sam McNaugher, and, uh, they called him Safety Sam was the  
42 guy's name. And he always wore a green work shirt and green pant with the, uh, the  
43 Wrangler or something made the thing so they matched. So he always wore green a little  
44 black bowtie and his safety glasses and his, uh, safety shoes and his, uh, the Safari Sam  
45 hat as they called it. Rather than a regular hard hat it was like, it looked like a safari hat.  
46 It was round. Uh. And, uh, he explained about all the different things and about how to be



1 careful when, when you're doing stuff with your back and that. And then, it just, it was  
2 just an orientation type thing and then, and then they get to go and at that time St. Joe had  
3 their own little shoe store, uh, in the guard shanty that they had there and there was a guy  
4 there. We went over and they told us, "Well, okay. We'll buy you your first pair of shoes  
5 and after that you're on your own." So, so we did get a pair of safety shoes and then, uh,  
6 we had the cafeteria on site at that time. Oh. Great food. Great, great food. Well, here we  
7 are like little ducks in a row following Sam down to the cafeteria and into the cafeteria in  
8 front of everybody and of course you could tell, "Oh. Here comes the new recruits." And,  
9 uh, then they gave, gave us all a pair of gloves and said, "We'll give you your first pair of  
10 gloves, but after that you have to, you got to buy your own gloves." And, uh, so then it  
11 was, uh, interesting. Then they, that only took like a half a day if I remember correctly.  
12 We could, we got to eat our lunch and then we had to report to what they called the yard  
13 department, which was like a general laborers' department. And, uh, the guy, uh, took me  
14 out and there was a hole. That's all I remember. I had to dig, dig the hole and dig it.  
15 Throw. I don't know what they were doing with it, but, uh, so that was like a temporary  
16 stop there. So that was kind of like the first day. That's what I can remember. But I can  
17 remember the guy saying, "Okay. You be shoveling here, and when I come back you  
18 better not be sitting down taking a break either." [Laughs] So those were the good old  
19 days.

20

21 (0:10:16)

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you just say again Sam's last name? Safety Sam's last name.

24

25 **BOB BEATTY:** McNaugher.

26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know how to spell that?

28

29 **BOB BEATTY:** M-C-N-A... I'm not really sure though. Mc, McNaugher. He, he was  
30 an elderly gentleman at that time, at least to us he was. So I don't know. Uh. I forget  
31 where he was from. But, uh, they said he always wore his safety glasses and safety shoes  
32 at home too when he was cutting grass or working in the yard. So and it was, it had a lot  
33 of unique individuals at St. Joe, who had been there quite a while. But everybody was  
34 very nice, very nice. And it just made it, uh, I mean you had the confidence, you know,  
35 that these guys had been there for a long time, you know, long before 1966. So it was, uh,  
36 pretty neat.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** Who were some of these other individuals that stand out in your  
39 mind?

40

41 **BOB BEATTY:** Well, there were, there was the, uh, guy who was in charge of security.  
42 His name was Curly Rohr. Uh. He was in, in security. And I mentioned Joe Nard. He was  
43 the personnel man. Uh. There was an HR man. If I remember, it was Cliff Conklin. Then,  
44 uh, hmm. I'm trying to think back there. There was a different, some of the different. The  
45 plant manager was Chuck Henderson at that time. And...

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you get to know him at all?

2  
3 (0:11:50)

4  
5 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. He, he was a visible type guy, and he also had a thing  
6 on the, uh, telephone. That, uh, if you dialed a phone number, 378, extension 378, it was  
7 the message of the day. And every day he changed, had a different message on there. And  
8 it was general things of what was what, and if there wasn't anything happening or  
9 whatever it was basically about, you know, safety and or if there was any things that you  
10 needed to know. He would talk there, and when he wasn't there it was, uh, the assistant  
11 plant manager, who was Bill McCullough. And, uh, he would be on there. But, uh, they  
12 were both very visible. They, you know, just show up in the department, uh, just to see  
13 what's going on. They didn't lock themselves in the, in the office down there. So it was,  
14 uh, a very personable thing and through just the different organizations that, uh, that we  
15 had down there. There was the 10-year club. Uh. We had our own credit union, and so if  
16 you, uh, did anything with the credit union, uh, they had a credit union banquet. And, uh,  
17 we were always active in that and going to those things. So you got to know these guys.  
18 So, it was, uh, pretty neat, again, as I said that.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Did, did Chuck Henderson and Bill McCullough make attempts to  
21 get you and your coworkers?

22  
23 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh, yeah. They would come around, you know, and say, "Hey. How  
24 you doing?" Shake your hand, you know. Keep up the good work. That type of stuff. You  
25 know. And it was, uh, the yard department was short lived because that is where they'd  
26 base it and they would send you out to the different departments that needed somebody.  
27 And in my case, it was the furnace plant that needed some laborers. And with labor,  
28 basically you become what they called a cleanup man. It was down in the basement of the  
29 furnace. Uh. We're down there. It was, it was a dangerous place to work because this is  
30 where the bottoms of the furnaces were and everything was under pressure down in, uh,  
31 what they called the hole and, uh, you had to basically clean up around the furnaces and  
32 there was electricity running through the furnaces. This was the bottom of there, and they  
33 were cleaning out the slag out of the bottom of the furnaces and of course that made a  
34 mess and you had to sweep that up and so forth. But that did not last very long and ended  
35 up getting up to go to the, what they called, the condenser floor. This is where the molten  
36 metal is actually tapped out of the furnaces, uh, into ladles and then the ladles, er, would  
37 pour the slabs and for the most part the furnace plant, uh, was, uh, all slabs. So we were  
38 doing 50-pound slabs and, uh, they said St. Joe on them. They were the, that was in the,  
39 in the mold that was on a bench. There was like 26 of these molds and, or 25. That's been  
40 a while ago. I forget, but then you would have a, make up a stack of zinc, which is like 50  
41 slabs high, and they had, uh, feet that they would, they would cast also that they would sit  
42 on and that's how they, they shipped out the things and they would take it out to the  
43 warehouse and then the shipping department would then put bands on them and that's  
44 how they would be shipped out either by railroad or by truck, maybe flatbed trucks and  
45 that and, uh, they, they sold a lot of zinc and they did. They did, did quite well and, uh,  
46 so.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did you work in the basement of the furnace plant?

3  
4 (0:15:46)

5  
6 **BOB BEATTY:** Hmm. Maybe six months. Maybe. I don't know.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Is that, um, shorter than, that is typical?

9  
10 **BOB BEATTY:** It all depends on what the openings are in, in the department. Uh. They  
11 always urge you to bid on something when, when jobs came up. There were different  
12 jobs that come up for bid like the condenser helper, uh, and there was a top floor. There  
13 was, uh, utility gang. There was bricklayers. And normally like the utility gang and  
14 bricklayers you didn't have a chance of getting that job. So it depends on where your  
15 plant seniority carried you at the time.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Why were those jobs so difficult to get?

18  
19 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. Because they were mainly daylight and, uh, the rest of it, the rest  
20 of us were working three shifts. And you were assigned to a shift and, um, you just  
21 waited until a bid come up and file your bid and if you got it or you didn't, didn't. Uh.  
22 But then a lot of times they'd be short and they'd just basically assign you. You're going  
23 to go up and work on the condenser floor. They need you to work on the condenser floor  
24 today. So you go up there and you learn how to do that and you meet a lot of different  
25 guys, uh, on your shift and that had been there for a long time and the foreman. I don't  
26 remember a lot of the foremen's names. But, uh, then if they needed from like the  
27 bricklayer to help with the bricklayers it was a temporary assignment and you'd go work  
28 with the bricklayers today. We are going to need you to go work for the utility gang today  
29 or they are short up on the top floor, we need you to go there. And that was back in the  
30 days before there was a union and a lot of guys didn't like this stuff. And, uh, so there  
31 was a few that decided, "Hey, we need to get a union in here." So, but before the union  
32 there was, uh, it was very nice. Like I said, it had a cafeteria. It was there 24 hours a day  
33 and, uh, the food was great. The people there who ran the cafeteria they always ran  
34 specials. You knew every day pretty much what's, what was going to be there, and they  
35 had breakfast in the morning. I mean a full breakfast. You could get sausage, eggs and  
36 home fries and toast and coffee. And everybody had meal tickets. You could get these  
37 and they were like little stubs that had, uh, the values of those on there, and so you'd get a  
38 \$5 meal book, and then you would have that meal book and you would take that when  
39 you get to the cash register. And that, you know, it wasn't that expensive. So it might cost  
40 you a dollar and a quarter. So you'd take a dollar and a quarter out of, out of the stubs and  
41 give 'em to 'em and then we would go from there. So...

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. When you would be pulled out from one assignment to another  
44 to fill in, did somebody train you to do the job for that day?

45

1 **BOB BEATTY:** You would. Uh. Normally it was pretty simple. It wasn't anything  
2 spectacular. They need you to help whatever. So it really, it wasn't anything you needed a  
3 whole lot of training on. But whoever you, they wouldn't, they wouldn't just have you do  
4 it by yourself. You would be with somebody and, uh, so, it, uh, you got to learn a lot of  
5 different things about the, the furnaces and, uh, how they operate. But, uh, there just  
6 never was a, uh, a full time assignment there. And eventually I ended up bidding from the  
7 furnace plant, uh, over to the refinery.

8  
9 (0:19:19)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Before we, before we jump to the refinery, I just want to ask a  
12 question.

13  
14 **BOB BEATTY:** I'm sorry.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Before we jump over to the refinery, I wanted to talk a little bit more  
17 about safety.

18  
19 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** I mean you have some things here that represent years of, of safety in  
22 the, uh, if you want to maybe show us what these are and we'll talk about them. I want to  
23 understand more about the efforts that were made to, uh, have a safe workplace.

24  
25 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. Everybody, we had to have safety meetings. You had safety  
26 meetings once a month I think it was, where the foreman, uh, would, uh, like if you're  
27 going to have a safety meeting at such and such a time wherever it might be. Uh. And so  
28 the guys would have to go and we'd sit down and he'd cover a topic as to whatever it,  
29 whatever it might be, you know, about safe lifting practices, you know, and you know  
30 how to protect your back and how to work around the molten metal and be careful about  
31 this and, uh, always wear your face shield whenever you're close to the furnace and that  
32 and when you're skimming off the, the slabs and that you're handling actually the molten  
33 metal and the skimmings that were on there and make sure you, you know, wearing your  
34 safety equipment which would be a face shield and your gloves, uh, your apron and  
35 would've had leggings at that time that fastened around your legs and, and were like on  
36 the, on the bridge of your, your safety shoe. So the, and you'd get splattered of course and  
37 always had little burn marks on, on the shirts or on the, on the coats. That was back when  
38 basically we were just, uh, there wasn't any. Only the guys working up close on the  
39 furnace would wear a coat, but other than that, uh, it was just long sleeve shirts.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** This is the first I've heard anybody mention wearing a face shield.

42  
43 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Was, was that required when you started in the furnace plant in  
46 1966?

1  
2 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. Any time that your around the molten metal working around  
3 that, uh, they had face shields that you had to wear and basically it was, uh, some sort of  
4 plastic that would, uh, it was on a [Inaudible]. Uh. Like a welder's thing, the welder puts  
5 it down like that. Only instead of it being closed with just a little window, it was full.  
6 Like that and it was the same type. It was curved here and that and it would flip up. You  
7 would put on your hat and here tighten it up and you could pull it down. And you had  
8 whenever you're handling the molten metal, the skimming and or what they called  
9 dipping out the condenser, any time you're working around that you had to make sure you  
10 had your face shield on.

11  
12 (0:22:10)

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** And did the company supply those?

15  
16 **BOB BEATTY:** Yes. Uh-hmm.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** What about respirators in the furnace plant?

19  
20 **BOB BEATTY:** [Clears throat] Yeah. They had respirators. Uh. They weren't as  
21 elaborate as they were, uh, in the later days. But a lot of 'em were like little canisters that  
22 you would wear. And there was a lot of guys that just put hankies around their face back  
23 in the early days.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Well how could you wear a respirator and have the face shield down  
26 at the same time?

27  
28 **BOB BEATTY:** Normally it wasn't the, uh, the type of job that you would, that was a  
29 lot of dust so you didn't need to wear the respirator while you were doing the, the  
30 skimming. Cause it was basically molten metal and so it wouldn't, you didn't have to  
31 wear that.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** So where were the respirators required?

34  
35 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. Where there was dust. Where you were doing sweeping. Uh. Of  
36 course, just, just in, in the mill like that there's a lot of dust out there that accumulates on  
37 the floors and whatever might be. And you had different areas, which you had to make  
38 sure you took care of sweeping and cleaning and so forth. So whenever you're doing that  
39 that would generate dust just from the, the sweeping part of it. So that's when you would  
40 be required to wear your respirator. The guys would basically just wear 'em down here  
41 until they would need it and then you could pull it up on your face and do that. So and if  
42 you were working on and around the molten metal you didn't need the respirator because  
43 there wasn't any dust.

44



1 **INTERVIEWER:** From the minute you arrived at the plant in the morning and either  
2 parked your car or got out of the car with whomever you, you got there with, what, what  
3 was the procedure between that point to getting to the start of your job that day?  
4

5 **BOB BEATTY:** In the beginning?  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.  
8

9 (0:24:05)  
10

11 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh, it was basically, we had, there was, uh, change houses they called  
12 'em. One was a personnel change house and one was the, uh, gate house, where the guard,  
13 where the guard shanty and so forth was. Uh. But my locker, uh, everybody was issued a  
14 locker and you wore your work clothes. Uh. And you'd basically go to your locker and  
15 unlock your locker. Change from your street clothes into your work clothes and then go  
16 to your department and punch in. Everybody had a time card. We were payroll at that  
17 time. And so you would punch in in the furnace plant and put it in a rack and then go to  
18 wherever the assembly point was, wherever everybody gets their job assignments and go  
19 there. And wait for the foreman or group leader to come in and tell you what you were  
20 going to be doing today.  
21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** If you had a shift that started at say eight o'clock in the morning,  
23 what time did you need to be in that parking lot to go through your, your change house  
24 and get to where you needed to be to punch in by eight o'clock?  
25

26 **BOB BEATTY:** Probably by 7:30.  
27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** So your day actually was about a half hour longer.  
29

30 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah, something like that. Some guys. Other guys were always the late  
31 last minute Charlies too, that would come running in and just made it, you know. That  
32 type thing, which was a lot of guys there. And my dad instituted in me that basically to  
33 always give yourself time in case something happens to get to work. Don't worry about  
34 being there early. If you're there early, that's a plus. But, uh, so that, that was a help for  
35 me personally on that, but, uh, like I said there was always a lot of guys that were last  
36 minute Charlies that would come running in the change house and running back out and  
37 running to the department. But they really weren't supposed to be running in the plants.  
38 So sometimes they'd get yelled out not to be running.  
39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the process at the end of the day? When your shift...  
41

42 **BOB BEATTY:** Punch out in the furnace plant, uh, walk over to the change house, uh,  
43 hang up your work clothes and go in the shower, get your shower, get dried off, put on  
44 your street clothes and adios. See you tomorrow. So...  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** That seems like it was a very long day or night depending upon when  
2 you were working.

3  
4 **BOB BEATTY:** Not really. Back then we were young so it didn't really make a  
5 difference, you know. There was a lot of guys that worked doubles too. Worked a lot of  
6 doubles back in those days.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there increased safety hazards when, when the guys started  
9 working double shifts?

10  
11 (0:26:50)

12  
13 **BOB BEATTY:** I'm sorry. What?

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there increased safety hazards when you worked double shifts  
16 just from being exhausted?

17  
18 **BOB BEATTY:** Some people say, but, uh, really there didn't seem to be more of the  
19 things, more of an accident prone from being tired. But a lot of guys, huh, a lot of guys  
20 made a living working doubles. I'll tell you that. And six days and seven days. And, uh,  
21 so the work was there, uh, for you to make a decent living.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the overtime pay?

24  
25 **BOB BEATTY:** Time and a half of your regular rate. Back in those days, it wasn't a  
26 whole lot of money either. Maybe two bucks, \$2.50, back in the '60s.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** If you had to work on Christmas or Thanksgiving, was the pay any  
29 different from working on those holidays?

30  
31 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm. Double time and a half. Double time and a half.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** And that was before the unions?

34  
35 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. Uh-hmm. And if you, uh, worked a double one there, it was like  
36 triple time that you were getting. So that really made some nice pays.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So you mentioned that you went from the furnace plant to the  
39 refinery. Um. First could you describe a little about the process that was taking place in  
40 the refinery?

41  
42 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. The refinery was basically just what it says. It refined the metal.  
43 Uh. The metal that was being made in the furnace plant is what they called Prime  
44 Western or PW metal. And that was made just, it was made from the zinc concentrate that  
45 comes in and adding secondary materials to it. Uh. So it was in higher levels of the  
46 contaminates of, uh, of, to the zinc. Like lead, cadmium, iron, uh, was higher and what

1 they would do they would take the furnace metal from the furnace plant. There was a, uh,  
2 what they call a hoisting well, where this great big ladle. I mean maybe as big as this  
3 room. They would fill up from the furnace and they would then run it along the trolley  
4 track into the hoisting, uh, well and they would close doors and then push the button and  
5 this would've been, would go up maybe, I think it was maybe three floors and there was  
6 a, uh, like a tunnel what it really was. It was a walkway or where the furnace ladle would  
7 go up to the top and then there was a rail that would go and this was an enclosed  
8 connection between the furnace plant and the refinery. And this, the wheels would  
9 automatically kick in like a little, like a little powered, uh, I'm trying to think of what they  
10 called it, but that's not going to come to me. But anyhow it would automatically then just  
11 roll, like this little power trolley track and go and carry this ladle all the way over to the  
12 refinery. And there was a man at the top in the refinery would then take that and there  
13 was, depending upon how many columns, refining columns that were in operation, uh,  
14 they would then take and pour this ladle cause it had a big wheel on the side and they  
15 would pour this into the top of the refining column. And then what happens there and like  
16 four stories, I think it was four stories. There's trays. They're, just were like, I don't know.  
17 They might be as big as my table maybe that deep and there was a hole at the end of it.  
18 And what it would do, this refining column was being fired by gas burners and depends  
19 upon you get at a certain temperature different elements, like iron, lead, cadmium. They,  
20 uh, they start to boil, and so they were at a lower boiling rate than zinc was. So these  
21 trays were like down through this column maybe three stories and there was a hole in  
22 each tray. So the, the metal would run in here, down to this hole and drop down into there  
23 and the hole was down at the other end, and it would run back and forth. So it was like a  
24 zigzag all the way down to the column and this, they would, the heat from the burners  
25 would then boil these, uh, contaminates for the iron, lead, cadmium, and the zinc would  
26 then not boil. So it remains molten and it would go down through the column. And the,  
27 uh, I might have that bass backwards. Uh. It might be. That's, uh, cause it's been a couple  
28 of years before I actually analyzed this stuff. But it was vice versa. I'm sorry. The zinc  
29 boiled before the rest of the stuff because the rest of the stuff came down through the  
30 column and came out the bottom of the column. And it was the zinc that was boiling off  
31 first. Add that correction. Take that out of there. The first part. Yeah. It was the zinc had  
32 a lower boiling point. So it would boil first and the vapors would then come off. It's like,  
33 uh, boiling water and how vapor ends up steam. Well this vapor from the zinc would then  
34 be, uh, pulled into a, uh, a chamber so that it would then become 99.999% zinc. The  
35 contaminates then went to the bottom of the column in there and so that's kind of like  
36 what they were doing. People wanted high purity zinc and, uh, where a lot of people,  
37 some people don't need to worry about it. They'll just want the PW zinc.

38

39 (0:33:23)

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Who wanted the high purity zinc and for, for what market?

42

43 **BOB BEATTY:** Well a lot of our metal in the refinery was made into zinc oxide and  
44 the, uh, zinc oxide when it is pure like that is used in the pharmaceutical business. Uh.  
45 Cause we sold a lot of what we call USP, United States Pharmaceutical grade oxide. And,  
46 uh, that was like very, very low cadmium, iron, and lead cause it was all boiled out of

1 there and then it was put into combustion chambers right there in the refinery and would  
2 be sucked through by fans and it was just like, uh, the steam or water turns to snow when  
3 the temperature is the right temperature. That's the same way with the zinc oxide, what  
4 happened that the zinc vapor then exposed to this temperature in the air would then turn  
5 into white powder and that was and pulled over into what they called the packing  
6 stations. And they would pack this zinc oxide. And it just looked like white baby powder  
7 is what it does. So pharmaceutical grade companies, uh, the rubber industry, all the tire  
8 manufacturers have to use zinc oxide in just in the process. So we sold to all the major  
9 tire manufacturers the zinc oxide.

10  
11 (0:35:01)

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Now what about the iron, lead, and cadmium that went through the  
14 refinery system and made it to the bottom?

15  
16 **BOB BEATTY:** It would then be recycled back up through the column again because,  
17 uh, there was still some zinc in it. So they would then take that and what they called the  
18 runoff at the bottom of the column. They had a graphite tube with a, where the metal was  
19 just running out and it would drip down and go down into a pot, and then this pot would  
20 be and, uh, they had, uh, guys down there that were called runoff men. And they would  
21 take the smaller ladles, uh, and pump out this, what's there and take it back upstairs and  
22 pour it through the column again and just keep recycling it through.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** How many, how many times would they typically recycle a given  
25 batch of, um, of zinc?

26  
27 **BOB BEATTY:** All night long. All day long. They just, you have to keep it going  
28 because there is a constant flow of metal coming through that, uh, refining column. They,  
29 they, they can't let it run, run out. So that when it was initially poured in the very top  
30 floor of the refinery, it would be poured into a pot right directly down below the next  
31 floor and from this pot the metal would then be put through and it would start, you know,  
32 going through the refining column.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** I guess what I'm asking is how many times would the metal that had  
35 started at the top run through the system, be put back up for another round of refining it,  
36 it runs through the system. I mean, how many cycles would a batch typically go through  
37 till you could feel like you got every possible bit of zinc out of there?

38  
39 **BOB BEATTY:** Well because it's constant feed going through there, it's, it's constant. In  
40 other words, like you just don't go and eventually just. And what they had to do, uh,  
41 eventually the lead and the iron would be in the bottom of their pots and they'd have to  
42 get those out and they would have to iron dross, what they would call. And then they  
43 would either have to de-lead, and they would take samples, pin samples, what they called  
44 runoff samples, uh, and send them to the lab. And whenever the lead and the cadmium  
45 and the iron got so high that's what dictated it, okay, well, we got to clean it out, which is  
46 not a fun job. So...

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**INTERVIEWER:** What was done with the, the lead and the iron and the cadmium?

**BOB BEATTY:** It was then sent down to the, uh, uh, secondary materials department and then they would be in metal skids and then what they would do, that was called dross. They would then send that up to the furnace plant by railroad car and they would take that up to the top floor of the furnace plant and that would be dumped into the top of the furnaces and re-melted to send back down through again.

(0:38:14)

**INTERVIEWER:** So this was, so the lead, the cadmium, and the iron were put back in the furnace?

**BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why?

**BOB BEATTY:** That's how you get rid of it. It just, it just melts down and comes together with the PW metal. That there that, uh, what they called the Prime Western, which has very high limits. I think it was like one, one percent lead that they could, uh, they could take and so forth. So that's, that, it's all just a process that the engineers figure out, you know. Uh. A low level guy that was just there making sure that you dumped the slabs when he was supposed to. [Laughs]

**INTERVIEWER:** So if I understand this correctly. When the refinery could do all it could do to get the highest quality zinc out, the left over iron, lead, and cadmium went back into the furnace to, to mix with zinc concentrate.

**BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** To make more liquid...

**BOB BEATTY:** Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** Zinc. But if ultimately you don't want to have a high concentrate of iron, lead, and cadmium in your zinc, why is it being added to zinc that's starting the process?

**BOB BEATTY:** Well, the, they had secondary materials. It's a lot of junk. It's stuff from galvanizers that comes in, and that was also put into the top of the furnaces too. And it was all melted down and to become Prime Western zinc. And it's not that high level. It just kind of like, it's neutralized in, in the system and the, you know, in the furnaces. It gets melted down with the fresh stuff that's in there and dilutes it out so it keeps it low enough to, uh, and again that's all monitored by taking samples of what they call the, the

1 molten zinc to see what their levels were and as far as all the secrets as to what they did  
2 over there to control that I really don't know what they would do.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any market, um, to sell the cadmium or the iron or the lead  
5 rather than use it in recycling it in the process?

6  
7 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. I don't think so. I think it was. Years ago they had, uh, a part of the  
8 plant where they would make cadmium balls. That they would do something with  
9 cadmium. But, uh, I don't really know that much about that, what they would do with  
10 that.

11  
12 (0:40:53)

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. And what was your role in the refinery when you started  
15 working there?

16  
17 **BOB BEATTY:** I was what they called a caster helper. And basically it was the same  
18 type situation as over in the furnace plant where you would pour the, the molten zinc into  
19 the molds and they would solidify. You'd flip 'em. Flip the mold and throw it on a pile.  
20 But at the refinery they also made ingots. They had, uh, big molds made with big ingots,  
21 uh, from that. So we would do that and that's what our job was. There was a guy called  
22 the caster. Uh. He would, uh, then tap out the pot that was being filled from the columns.  
23 Tap it out in and put it in a, uh, ladle and then pour it into the things and go back and get  
24 that while it was cooling off. We had to dump 'em and stack 'em up.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the ingots used for?

27  
28 **BOB BEATTY:** Um. Just the handling I think. Basically, whenever they would sell  
29 them to whatever customers. Some people liked the 50-pound slabs. Other people had the  
30 capabilities with a crane or whatever might be that they would much rather use ingots  
31 rather than slabs.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** How much did an ingot weight?

34  
35 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh. I want to say 2,600 pounds. Something like that.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Twenty-six-hundred pounds?

38  
39 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm. Yeah. They were fairly big. Maybe about, between if  
40 measuring from the floor up to your knee, maybe a little bit higher than that and maybe  
41 three foot by maybe two and a half feet.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** So those were also made in a mold?

44  
45 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. They, they had a mold. Yeah. Uh-hmm.

46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** How could you physically handle emptying that mold and the 2,600-  
2 pound ingot?

3  
4 **BOB BEATTY:** Well what they had. The mold was, was, uh, rectangular and on the end  
5 of each one there was like a lifting, uh, claw put in there in the mold. And then they'd fill  
6 it up to pretty much the top of the mold and these, uh, they had a name for them. These  
7 lugs, lifting lugs on the end were actually embedded like teeth in the, into the ingot and  
8 there, then there was a flat. They stood up like this and there was a hole in 'em and, uh,  
9 that's how we lifted it out. We'd put a bar in there and then put, uh, had a crane that would  
10 lift them by these lifting lugs and then once the, the ingot was out of the mold then you  
11 would just take a sledgehammer and bam, knock those off and they would be put back  
12 into the mold again to be used for the next ingot.

13

14 (0:43:53)

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if these molds were fabricated at the plant?

17

18 **BOB BEATTY:** No. They had some place special I think where they, uh, got these  
19 made. I know they didn't make 'em there.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if they were designed at the plant?

22

23 **BOB BEATTY:** Probably. I would think so way back when. So...

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did you work in the refinery?

26

27 **BOB BEATTY:** Um. Till 19, I think it was the fall of 1969. And then, uh, I bid into the  
28 laboratory.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** If you were to compare your experience working in the furnace with  
31 working in the refinery, what did you prefer about each of those places?

32

33 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. The refinery was cleaner than the furnace plant, and it was, uh, I  
34 don't remember exactly when they built it. I know it was somewhat on the new side  
35 whenever, uh, I went over there. But it was part of the, uh, the department was part of the  
36 furnace plant. So, uh, your seniority carried over when you went over to the refinery as  
37 far as furnace plant time went. But, uh, you know, again, it's just one of those things that,  
38 uh, while it's hot in the summer, it's cold in the wintertime. You know and you just gotta  
39 and the lab seemed like a decent place and it came for a bid and I had enough seniority  
40 and I lucked out and got the bid.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** How many people did it take to operate the refinery on a given shift?

43

44 **BOB BEATTY:** Heavens, I don't know. I'm guessing. Let's see. Oh, maybe, there might  
45 be two casters and two or three caster helpers. Maybe five. Let's see five and the runoff

1 men, six, seven. Uh. Eight for a top floor guy. A feed operator and helpers. There might  
2 be maybe 15, 15 guys maybe.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And in the, on a given furnace shift. I'm trying to get a sense  
5 of the, the distribution of where people worked to keep these operations going.

6  
7 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm.

8  
9 (0:46:32)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** How many people in one department versus the other?

12  
13 **BOB BEATTY:** It was a lot more in the furnace plant because there was a lot more  
14 things that had to be done in there. So there might've been 30 to 40 guys in the furnace  
15 plant.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** With, when you work among 30 to 40 guys versus working among  
18 say 15 guys, did you feel a difference in the camaraderie of working in those  
19 departments?

20  
21 **BOB BEATTY:** No. Not really because you're kind of like isolated with a just a few. If  
22 you were in the basement of the furnace plant, that's where you were. You didn't wander  
23 from any other position. So then if you were on the condenser floor, it was the same way.  
24 If you were on furnace nine, you were there. And guys, uh, cause you had to pay  
25 attention to what you were doing there on the furnace, you were there. So it didn't make  
26 any difference there. You were only just surrounded by maybe just the guys that are in  
27 the immediate vicinity and it was the same. The. Over in the refinery, uh, it was, it was  
28 more open and we were closer to each other so we could as far as proximity we would be  
29 able to associate with that. And you were able to, to get breaks too. Because that is hot  
30 work and so forth and then once you pumped the pot down so far, uh, then you take a  
31 break for a while.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** So how often would you get a break?

34  
35 **BOB BEATTY:** Um. Maybe half hour or 45 minutes, an hour. Something like that. But  
36 you were basically, you were dedicated to keeping that pot. It was a holding pot of the  
37 metal that's being fed into that coming down from, from the columns and that's a constant  
38 flow of metal. So you just. If you let that pot get too full, guess what, it's running on the  
39 floor. So they had, uh, pneumatic, uh, pumps. It was. It looked like a, like a screw that  
40 were down in the molten metal and they would, it was run by air and they, they would put  
41 the ladle in front of the, in front of the chute and they would turn on this thing. And it  
42 went rrr like that and it would actually bring the metal up and pump it into a thing and  
43 into the ladle and if that, what they call it. If it was running hard that day, it was all you  
44 could do to keep up with it. You had to have a constant. And they would have, if they  
45 knew that they would give you two guys dumping. And, uh, so, cause there was, there  
46 were like 50, 50, 20, no 25 molds and it would divide it in half. So if one was 12 and the

1 other one was 13. So when the, when you didn't have a whole lot of metal to move and it  
2 was running pretty slow, then you could just have one caster helper just dumping and the,  
3 the guy pouring the stuff would help you. But whenever it was running hard, they gave  
4 you two caster helpers. That meant you were going to work your behind off that day.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** But why was it different from one day to the next? Why would it be  
7 different from one day to the next?

8  
9 (0:49:55)

10  
11 **BOB BEATTY:** Just the, the nature of the beast. It depends on how fast they were  
12 feeding it, how much metal the furnace plant had to send over to you on that. And this,  
13 the whole, the whole scenario of that was it was a 24-hour operation, 24/7. And you  
14 basically you couldn't just shut the furnace off and just walk away from it. You had to  
15 keep. Cause it constantly made metal. And you had a constant feed and you had a  
16 constant getting rid of the waste at the bottom and this metal being sent over to the  
17 refinery was the same way. It went into a pot and it was feeding the refinery and the  
18 column. The column needed metal and it was there always running through there. Cause  
19 if it, if it doesn't run through there it freezes up.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** How were you able to walk away for say at least 30 minutes to go to  
22 the cafeteria and have a meal?

23  
24 **BOB BEATTY:** You would have a lunch relief time guy that would help, come and take  
25 your place if need be. So, you know, and some of the, a lot of guys didn't go there if we  
26 had, uh, guys would take, take the orders and go over to the cafeteria and bring it back.  
27 So it was, uh, but then that all went bye-bye in 1979. So...

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** You were out of the refinery by then?

30  
31 **BOB BEATTY:** Yes. I was in the lab for 10 years.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. Let's talk about your transition into the, the lab. Um. Why  
34 the switch to the lab and when?

35  
36 **BOB BEATTY:** Okay. Well I bid into the laboratory and, uh, as a, uh, sample  
37 processor. And that's where we have to analyze everything that goes into everything as  
38 far as that. From the raw material, the zinc concentrate that we were receiving at that time  
39 from Canada, from New York, and some down in Missouri and so forth. We, uh, we had  
40 to, uh, sample one the zinc concentrate cars coming in. Uh. Take samples of that. Uh.  
41 Then we had to run samples every day from the roaster plant, which was all their  
42 different samples, which was the zinc concentrate and then from what they called the  
43 sinter plant, which made sinters, which looked like little rocks that fed the furnaces and  
44 that was a mixture of, uh, zinc concentrate and what, uh, secondary materials. The fine  
45 particles of the secondaries, uh, went into the sinter plant. So we would analyze samples

1 from the sinter plant. Analyze samples from the furnace plant. And, uh, this was all in  
2 the, back in the sample lab it was all crushing and grinding equipment.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was the sample lab located?

5  
6 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. Maybe a hundred yards from the refinery out near the railroad  
7 tracks. Right at the very beginning. I can...

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** If I brought out a map, could you identify where it was?

10  
11 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh, yeah. Right here. Met control lab.

12  
13 (0:53:34)

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So that's your samples, sample test.

16  
17 **BOB BEATTY:** That's, uh, that's all the met control lab. The back part of it is where we  
18 had the, uh, all the, uh, crushing and grinding equipment. It was like isolated. When I,  
19 when I first went over we weren't there. When I first went over in, in '69, we were over  
20 in like the middle of the plant and, uh, we were like two separate locations. One was just  
21 off the end of the, uh, east end of the furnace plant. We, uh, had the sample preparation  
22 part, the crushing and grinding equipment. Then we would, the samples come over in  
23 buckets and we'd put it through a jaw crusher, crush it up and then put it through a  
24 grinder and make it into a fine powder. Put it in an envelope that was marked as  
25 identification as to, uh, sinter daylight and the date, 11, 11/16. And then we had to walk  
26 the samples over by the storeroom. There was the old A lab. The A lab at that time. Uh.  
27 And that's where in the basement we had, uh, a grinding equipment and a press, a pellet  
28 press. We would then press these into aluminum rings. They would end up, you know,  
29 looking like a 50-cent piece and that would be identified there. Uh. Then and that was in  
30 '69 when I went over. They were in the, that's when they were building the met lab over,  
31 which were by the railroad tracks there. And, uh, it was a state-of-the-art facility at that  
32 time. And, uh, so everything was kind of like segregated out the back part of the  
33 laboratory was, was where all the dirty crushing and grinding and noisy stuff would be  
34 happening back there. And they were called sample processers back in that position. We  
35 were a payroll, uh, job. And, uh, we took care of, uh, analyzing everything that went into  
36 the making of zinc and also then in other parts of the lab we would test the final product  
37 there. So.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Was, was sample processing considered part of the research  
40 department?

41  
42 **BOB BEATTY:** No. Not at that time. Huh-uh. No. It was always a separate plant,  
43 separate, uh, department. So.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Why, why did you switch over to sample processing?  
46

1 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. Daylight and evening shift. It was only two shifts then. Plus it paid  
2 more money at that time, and I was a sample processor, which meant I, I got to grind the  
3 samples and press them into discs. Uh. But in the beginning it was going out and  
4 sampling railroad cars. Easier to open gondola cars that, uh, the zinc concentrate came in  
5 and that was, uh, that was fun.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Tell me a little bit more about, uh, working with that.

8  
9 **BOB BEATTY:** Well the sample cars come in and, uh, at that time we were going great  
10 guns and there might be 30-40 railroad cars that needed to be sampled that day and that,  
11 have you ever seen a posthole digger where you hold one end of it and I hold one end.  
12 There's was an auger that goes down in the ground and digs a, a posthole and it pulls.  
13 When it is turning, like an auger it...

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, yeah.

16  
17 (0:57:19)

18  
19 **BOB BEATTY:** Pulls the dirt up through there. Uh. Well that's what we would use to  
20 sample the railroad cars that come in. And depending upon how many railroad cars we  
21 had and if it was raining or foggy or sunshiny or snow or whatever it might be, you're  
22 there.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Would you take one sample per railroad car?

25  
26 **BOB BEATTY:** Yes, but it, we would, would go in a pattern down through from one  
27 end to the other into the railroad car and that would be identified with the railroad car  
28 number and put into, and put it into a bucket and put a tag in with that and put in the truck  
29 and go to the next car. And do the same thing. Take the sample, write the railroad car  
30 number down, put it in the bucket and put it in the truck.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** If these cars were coming in from the same mine, from the same  
33 source, why would the contents from one car be different from the next car?

34  
35 **BOB BEATTY:** Good question, you know. But, uh, it's one of those things, they paid,  
36 they have contracts. And mainly, uh, at that time, it was paying. They paid for the zinc  
37 concentrate on the zinc content. So, uh, I don't trust you, you don't trust me. That type of  
38 thing. That's what we would say. You know. We want to make sure they're sending us  
39 what they say they're sending us. And, uh, so that's, those samples would then be taken  
40 from each car. Then there was stuff from, uh, from our own mine in Balmat, New York.  
41 Uh. St. Joe had their own zinc concentrate mine in Balmat. They called it Balmat zinc  
42 concentrate. And, uh, it came in, in, uh, regular railroad cars, enclosed railroad cars, like  
43 boxcars that you had the door slid. And of course those doors, they never were a joy to  
44 open. You always had to use maybe a come along with the chain thing in order to pry  
45 them open to get 'em started. And, uh, but that was. Well we received a lot of different  
46 zinc concentrates. It was just different ones. Uh. Kidd was one of six in my mind. It was

1 from Canada. A lot of it came from Canada cause that's where a lot of concentration of  
2 zinc concentrate is.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** So did you also have to test your own zinc that was coming in from,  
5 from the Balmat mines?

6  
7 **BOB BEATTY:** Yes. Uh-hmm. Same thing. In order to pay on zinc content.

8  
9 (1:00:06)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh. I, I figured if the company owns it then that same issue wouldn't  
12 be there.

13  
14 **BOB BEATTY:** Yep. Still had to do it. Still had to make sure. I don't. At that time,  
15 whether they took their samples when it left the plant up there or not, but, uh, there was  
16 one time they did have a tour of the Balmat mines and they were down in and guys went  
17 from our plant up there. I wasn't one of 'em that went. But, uh, they said it was pretty  
18 interesting. All these big machinery running around down in this mine. But in order to get  
19 all the machinery down there it had to go down in pieces down the mineshaft. They had  
20 to lower it down there and put it together back then underground. So, but then, uh, that  
21 eventually went bye-byes. And, uh, in the later years here we just didn't use, uh, the  
22 Canadian stuff cause it all, uh, they used it up I guess. You know. Whatever they found,  
23 the deposits of zinc concentrate.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** How was the, the sampling lab staffed? What, how many people?  
26 What were the different kinds of jobs? How was it supervised?

27  
28 **BOB BEATTY:** At one time, I'm guessing we had 50 people in the building working  
29 on, uh, just the sample lab. There was the, uh, there was the DR lab, which is the direct  
30 reading spectrometer lab. That's where we analyzed the zinc pins. The zinc metal pins.  
31 There was the x-ray lab, where we analyzed these little discs that we pressed for the raw  
32 materials that go into that. Uh. That was analyzed there. Then, there was the, uh, wet lab,  
33 where they analyzed, uh, the acid that was being made because back then we had our acid  
34 plant because we had a roaster plant in operation and the sulphur content was too high.  
35 You couldn't put it into the atmosphere. So they had to capture this sulphur coming off of  
36 that and put it into units in the acid plant and make sulfuric acid. So they, they analyzed  
37 the acid. Analyzed the water system, all the wells that were throughout the plant. They  
38 had to be analyzed there. Uh. We had, uh, different things that we also tested in the DR  
39 lab. It was zinc dust that was manufactured there, and that goes to the paint industry for  
40 zinc-rich paint, uh, that they like paint bridges with. And we had the, uh, zinc oxide that I  
41 told you that was made in the refinery that needed to be analyzed also. So that was  
42 analyzed on the DR until later in our history there. We had changed from running stuff on  
43 the direct reading spectrometer. Uh. We got the state of the art, what they called ICPs,  
44 which the technical name is inductively coupled plasma spectrometer. And that all had to  
45 be put in wet. So the samples instead of being run on the DR in a dry mode, which they  
46 would pack the sample into a carbon electrode an itty bitty digital thing, it was now



1 weighed up and put into solution and then it would be run on the ICPs, the oxide, the zinc  
2 dust. And we could even analyze the zinc metal by chipping it up and dissolving it in the,  
3 uh, acid and the water and it would be run on the ICPs. And at the very, at the very end  
4 that was basically the workhorse of the laboratory. We had two of those ICPs and, uh,  
5 what's great about those is that back in the beginning whenever I was up there the wet lab  
6 would also analyze this stuff. That was analyzed on what they called an AA, an atomic  
7 absorption unit. And if you were running water, if you needed to analyze six elements,  
8 let's just say six elements, uh, you had to put a lamp in the AA that was specifically set up  
9 to run lead and/or. So you would have to put that in the AA, calibrate it, standardized it,  
10 then run all your samples for lead. Okay. And then. Okay. Now you got to analyze  
11 cadmium. We'd take the lead lamp out and put the cadmium lamp in. Again, the same  
12 thing, calibrate it, standardized it, and run all the cad and send the same samples for  
13 cadmium. So it was, it took a while and it took manpower. So that's why you had to have  
14 so many people. But then the ICP, it was great. It ran everything in like a minute and a  
15 half. All the elements. You could tell it the periodic table and that's what's great with  
16 modern technology.

17

18 (1:05:42)

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** When was that introduced, the ICP, at, at the plant?

21

22 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh, lord. I'm trying to think. When we. There was a big transition in  
23 1979 when we shut down and then to when we reopened. Uh. For us in the laboratory, it  
24 was, there was no longer 15 to 20 guys in the sample lab or 15 guys in the sample lab  
25 and, uh, you know, six or eight guys that worked in the DR and x-ray. It became down to  
26 three or four people doing all of it. Because we were on a much smaller scale. And so it  
27 would be that you went back and you worked in the sample lab getting the stuff, the  
28 samples ready. Then, you would bring 'em over and you'd run 'em up in the wet lab on  
29 that. So when it was all said and done with, we maybe had 10, 11, 12 people total that  
30 were doing the work that was there. But a lot of stuff was simple. And I'm trying to  
31 remember when the ICPs first came into play. It was, hmm. It really wasn't that long ago.  
32 Maybe in the early 2000s, 2001, 2002. And, uh, that was when we. And we only had, uh,  
33 I had went from supervising a lot of guys, maybe 10 or 12, 15 guys down to supervising  
34 four or five and doing a lot of the stuff myself too, uh, which was nice. Uh. Everybody  
35 could do everything.

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you get so that you could know what to do  
38 in the tech process, the tech sampling?

39

40 **BOB BEATTY:** On the job training basically. It was, uh, you had good supervisors,  
41 guys that took me under their wing when I first got there and learned to, uh, when I got  
42 into supervision, when I went from running the samples in the sample lab and so forth.  
43 Then when I went into supervision I had, uh, some good people by that I mean one  
44 mentor was Harry Rose. He, this old DR, he taught me about all the inner workings of it  
45 and how to work on that and, uh, uh, being an instrument repair guy to help out with that.  
46 And the same way with the x-rays. Uh. He showed me how to do that and it was just

1 basically doing it. It was one of those things that you said, "Oh, well that broke again."  
2 Well, you know, now you know how you did it the last time. You got to do it again. And,  
3 uh, it was, uh, it was invaluable information. That, uh, we used to have an instrument  
4 repairman. We didn't have that anymore after 1979. Uh. You basically had to learn to do  
5 it yourself. Learn how to work on carbon analyzers and sulfur analyzers and BTU  
6 analyzers and ovens and, uh, sample preparation equipment and whatever it was you, you  
7 did it.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. It sounds like you had to develop a much broader skillset to  
10 work in, in the lab. Were you compensated more for having to have a much more diverse  
11 technical, uh, background?

12  
13 (1:09:23)

14  
15 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. They did change my title from, I forget what it was, because  
16 originally I was under the supervision of running photoconductive zinc oxide. Now you  
17 say, "What's that?" That was back in the day whenever copiers. If you wanted to buy a  
18 copy machine, there was two type. You could buy a Xerox, which was just take the  
19 papers and put 'em through there or you could buy what they called the wet toner, uh,  
20 copiers. And, uh, we made the oxide for the, the oxide that would be put on paper. The  
21 paper, it would be put on actually copy paper. And then it would go through the copier  
22 and it would go through a wet toner process and back in those days a lot of 'em would  
23 just curl up and that. And I don't know exactly when it was, but Xerox had to give up  
24 their patent on their dry toner type stuff for making copies and, uh, the photoconductive  
25 zinc oxide business kind of went bye-byes. And we had quite a few guys there, uh, when  
26 I first went, uh, into supervision because, uh, they had a foreman's training program that  
27 you had to go through. And then, uh, after I went through that I, uh, got assigned for the  
28 what they called PC oxide. And, uh, we had to do all kind of tests on this special stuff and  
29 then whenever Xerox released the patent all these companies realized, "Hey, that's the  
30 way to go." They did away with the, all that extra stuff because they would have to mix  
31 up toner. I mean, it was, it was black and goopy stuff that you had to pour into a tray and  
32 then the paper would have to go through that stuff and the, uh, it was actually ink in that,  
33 in the solution would then go on there. It was, it's a technical way on how, what happened  
34 in the copier in order to do that. But, uh, basically that nobody wanted to do it anymore  
35 and they eliminated all that stuff. And I guess there was big money in PC oxide. That's  
36 what they, they told me. When they lost that, they lost a lot of money on that.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there cut downs in the staff when that happened?

39  
40 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. We had, we had two shifts going with this. Everybody got laid  
41 off or not laid off they, they basically had to bid wherever their seniority would carry  
42 them throughout whatever jobs they could get in the plant. They really weren't laid off.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there still a job for you in the lab?

45

1 **BOB BEATTY:** Kinda sorta. [Laughs] They, uh, I, when we were gearing down  
2 whenever it was that, I got assigned to the acid plant because really the, when the PC  
3 oxide went bye-byes we, uh, uh, there was a guy that had a hip operation in the acid plant  
4 and somebody, they needed a supervisor to fill in. This was before 1979. And, uh, so I  
5 went to the acid plant. And became a foreman over in the acid plant for like six months.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** This was in '79?

8  
9 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. It had to be in, maybe '78 and part of '79 cause it was, I think, I,  
10 I'm not. I think it was December 18, 1979 when they pulled the plug on the plant. I think  
11 that was the day when we walked in and they all come and said, "Don't bother going to  
12 work. It's all over." Uh. So.

13  
14 (1:13:22)

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** What were you doing in the acid plant in that, I guess, brief time  
17 between when you got in there and the plant shut down?

18  
19 **BOB BEATTY:** Basically, I was supervising payroll people. So it was really not, that's  
20 when we had the union. So there really wasn't a whole lot you could do because you  
21 were salary and they were payroll, but there wasn't that many people. There was only  
22 maybe three to four guys on a shift. But that was keeping the acid, uh, flowing into the  
23 storage tanks. There were down along, uh, what they called the red ball route. And, uh,  
24 making sure that every, there was like two or three units they were running. Make sure  
25 that they were just doing what they were supposed to. And there was a control room and  
26 you could monitor that by watching the controls that were there. So, it, it wasn't that bad  
27 of a job, but, uh, it was mainly it was shift work. So.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the, the lab that you had been working in completely closed  
30 down?

31  
32 **BOB BEATTY:** No, that PC oxide was just a small portion that was being done now.  
33 So, no, the rest of the lab was still in operation and still going. And they had supervisors  
34 that were taking care of the sample prep lab and they had supervisors for the wet lab. Uh.  
35 So that was all being taken care of. And, uh...

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** So does, does your having switched in the refine, into the acid plant,  
38 um, suggest that there was not an opening for you to stay in the lab?

39  
40 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. That there wasn't, uh. No. Yeah. That's right. There wasn't  
41 really an opening. They really didn't need me there anymore.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

44  
45 **BOB BEATTY:** So.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit about the foreman's training program that  
2 you mentioned?

3  
4 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. That was a, uh, program that, uh, I don't know how they  
5 developed it, but it was developed and, uh, you went on what they called, you were  
6 selected for the foreman. You had to be recommended by your supervisor to, to go to the  
7 foreman's training program. So I was recommended to go there and, uh, you were  
8 assigned to a, a department other than what you worked in. So even though you worked  
9 in the lab, well then I was assigned to the oxide department. And then certain days  
10 through the week you'd have classes in the morning and they would have, uh, let's see.  
11 I'm trying to remember if there was a special guy that came in or what. It was all in-house  
12 basically cause I, I had in my file cabinet at work when I left, there was a, a big book. It  
13 was a big cardboard box type thing. It was hard. And there was all these different books  
14 in there that we covered and, uh, in the foreman's training thing. And it was just  
15 everything from soup to nuts on what, on how to handle people and what to do and just  
16 different things. Then they even had a one-week course towards the end of it at the  
17 Behrend Center of Penn State up in Erie that we went to. And it was, uh, this different  
18 supervisory things on how you learn about being a supervisor. And we also then, they  
19 had that you had to join the Dale Carnegie class, which all the foreman people, guys in  
20 foreman's training went to the, uh, up in Monaca to the Dale Carnegie class and learn  
21 how to treat people the way you'd want to be treated and how to talk to people. So we  
22 went to Dale Carnegie and when it was all said and done with that you had a little  
23 banquet and you were presented with a thing that you completed all this. And then from  
24 that point then, uh, you were assigned. You were kept either in where you were at the  
25 oxide department as I was. So and then that, that was pre-working at the PC oxide stuff.  
26 The PC oxide stuff was going gangbusters and then they needed me back in the lab. Uh.  
27 This was before I went to the acid plant, uh, to, uh, work with these guys because I, I  
28 used to do that job before I went on foreman's training. I was a PC oxide tester. Teach  
29 these guys cause we were going to have to have two shifts. There were two shifts and  
30 then everything went kaput. You know. We, that was about it there.

31  
32 (1:18:38)

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** After the 1979 shutdown, what did you do?

35  
36 **BOB BEATTY:** After?

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Well when it, when it reopened?

39  
40 **BOB BEATTY:** Well I went back to the lab. We, uh, it was like six months. It was  
41 December and it was in June I was called back to the laboratory. Uh.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Was it called the tech center at that point?

44  
45 **BOB BEATTY:** No. It was just called met control. The tech center was down in the old  
46 what they made into an office building, but that was still the tech center down there. But,

1 uh, they were doing some work with cadmium. No. Lead chloride. That's what it was.  
2 Lead chloride. And then at that time, Bob Sunderman, who was the plant manager or  
3 president. I think he was president. That somehow they negotiated in order to get some  
4 more zinc concentrate. So they were going to open up the plant as a mini-plant startup.  
5 They were going, only going to open up with a couple of furnaces and maybe one or two  
6 columns. There was like maybe six or seven refining columns. Uh. So they weren't going  
7 to open them all up. They started out mini. So it was back in June. Then as things got  
8 better and we started getting more production then we started calling more guys back to  
9 work in the lab. And everything that, when it was a shutdown, I wasn't in the lab  
10 whenever they shut down. I was in the acid plant. But I guess they had mothballed. They  
11 had equipment covered up and so forth. And, uh, so as we needed it, we'd take all the  
12 stuff off there and make sure it was working correctly. The crusher or the pulverizer or  
13 the grinder to make sure they were operational and it was just a few samples that would  
14 come in. So we only needed one person back there. That's kind of like how that  
15 developed.

16

17 (1:20:48)

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the role of the lab after the 1979 shutdown when the plant  
20 reopened in 1980?

21

22 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. It was, uh, we were testing lead chloride. Uh. We were also. There  
23 was no production as far as zinc metal. But the power plant was still operational and we  
24 had to test the coal that they were burning in the power plant, uh, for the BTU content. So  
25 we had to do BTU. Um. We were still micro helping customers. We've always helped the  
26 customers with analyzing their samples that they have. Their pots. Their galvanizing pots.  
27 So we were receiving pin samples in the morning or whatever by UPS from customers.  
28 There weren't very many. Just a few of those. Uh. We were testing all the water, all the  
29 water for environmental purposes, the wells and so forth. The groundwater monitoring  
30 had to be tested. We were doing that. So it was just not a whole lot of people, but they  
31 were just doing a little bit. Uh. Just to keep things going.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** How was the staffing different after the shutdown, um, not just the  
34 number of people working there, but which employees were, were hired back for the lab?

35

36 **BOB BEATTY:** It, well it was basically a pick and choose as to how we were going to  
37 do it, what we needed to do, and we'd maybe call a guy back, you know, one at a time or  
38 sometimes two at a time as things were going to pick up and it was basically those who  
39 were still remaining. The superintendent of the lab, the assistant superintendent, the other  
40 foremen, myself would all sit down and say, "Okay. Who do we have? Who's available?"  
41 Some guys went and got jobs elsewhere upon the shutdown, and, uh, so it was, "Okay.  
42 Who do we want to choose?" It was like draft day. And, uh, so we ended up getting a guy  
43 here and a guy there and we eventually ran out of who was available and went and, uh,  
44 started getting outsiders. And, uh, people putting in applications that they might have  
45 going through personnel and that. So.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have union workers in the lab?

2

3 **BOB BEATTY:** No.

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** Either before or after the shutdown?

6

7 **BOB BEATTY:** Before the shutdown, there was a union. There were. Union personnel  
8 were there. The sample people, the, uh, the, the DR, uh, operators, x-ray operators, they  
9 were payroll. How that ever came to be and why, because there was a mix and match,  
10 there was also, uh, the people who worked in the wet lab were salary people. So I don't  
11 know. That was before my time as to why they did it that way. But whenever 1980 came  
12 about, uh, those jobs were eliminated and so there was no more payroll people there and  
13 it was all salary in the lab and that's the way it was until the day we shut down.

14

15 (1:24:28)

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** There were a few changes of ownership that happened after that,  
18 ZCA, Horsehead. You were in the lab through all those years, correct?

19

20 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh-hmm.

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please talk a little bit about how the changes in ownership  
23 affected the activities of the lab and also the work environment?

24

25 **BOB BEATTY:** Well even going back to the union, pre-union, uh, it was mystifying to  
26 a lot of us as to, you know, there's a lot of guys felt that they were being treated unfairly.  
27 So that was the push for the union. But before that, uh, before the union in the '60s, uh,  
28 you worked six days a week. There was always something there. Like I said, there was  
29 the 10-year club. They had a 10-year club banquet. There was the, uh, credit union and  
30 they had a credit union banquet, but that was separate from the company. Uh. They had  
31 these Christmas parties that were just phenomenal for the kids. Uh. That was held in the  
32 gymnasium that we had there, and they had the gymnasium and they had volleyball and  
33 they had bowling. They had basketball. Kids from, uh, you know, the local  
34 neighborhoods would come down and play basketball down there and there was one  
35 gentleman that took care of that and the cafeteria and, uh, safety awards and, uh, the, uh,  
36 jackets and all different kind of stuff. And some of that did carry over once, uh, we  
37 started changing ownerships and once there was a union. But once the union was there  
38 unfortunately everybody went to five days a week. A lot of stuff was eliminated that the  
39 company no longer had the desire to continue on with that tradition that they had been  
40 continuing doing ever since they had original building of the smelter down there. And,  
41 uh, just the different things, you just wonder, uh, all the different name changes. We had  
42 St. Joe Lead Company. Well, there was a St. Joe Lead. Our parent company was in, uh, in  
43 Missouri. So, uh, but we didn't. There was never, ever any lead made or manufactured at  
44 that site. So then I want to say there was St. Joe Zinc. There was a St. Joe Resources.  
45 There was St. Joe's Minerals Corporation. Uh. There was Zinc Corporation of America.  
46 Then there was Horsehead. And even all through that it just seemed like, uh, it was just



1 different, you know. It really, a lot of it was just name changes to have name changes.  
2 Why? I'm sure that was corporate as to why they did that. Uh. Really didn't notice a  
3 whole lot of treatment being different. Uh. But it ended up getting we had very, we had  
4 salary profit sharing. Then it seemed like once, uh, Zinc Corporation and Horsehead took  
5 over, those things kind of like went bye-byes and maybe the market and the industry was  
6 getting tighter and, uh, the price of zinc was going lower. So they weren't making quite  
7 as much money as they were. And so we had, had some tough times. And, uh, it was just,  
8 it wasn't a surprise whenever it went because there was rumors, you know, that we were  
9 going to be sold to Shell Corporation, whereas Shell was going to buy everything. So it,  
10 uh, it still was a good place to work. It was still, uh, and, I, I attribute that to the people.  
11 You know. It's the people. And you miss, I miss the plant. It's just funny going by and  
12 seeing nothing there. And you just couldn't envision when the plant was standing that all  
13 these big machines could come and just obliterate it and, huh, it would be a flat field. But  
14 it was the people that, uh, really make it nice, like they were nice people. A lot of nice  
15 people that you get to know. Friends for life really. You don't get to see 'em as often as  
16 you used to, you know.

17

18 (1:29:18)

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Who were some of your most memorable work colleagues?

21

22 **BOB BEATTY:** Who?

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** Who were some of your most memorable work colleagues?

25

26 **BOB BEATTY:** Work. I'm sorry.

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** Your coworkers. What guys stand out in your mind that you went  
29 through all these years with?

30

31 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh. There was, uh, I mean, you know. Going back. I'm going to say  
32 like, uh, Harry Rose, uh, Bernie McFee who was the instrument repairman. Uh. Joe  
33 Palumbo was the computer guy. Uh. Then, uh, my good friend Frank Lynch. He's since  
34 passed. He was, uh, worked in the wet lab and Ken Haney who was, was in charge of the  
35 wet lab. These are the people that, uh, you know, had, uh, the guys that I worked with all,  
36 all the time. Bill Hume, uh, Joe Lowery, Barry Poland, uh, Eric Thompson, Bill Lauder.  
37 Every, everybody, you know, worked together and, uh, we, we had people that we would  
38 bring in from Bidwell. It was a lab, it was a training school and they would need 'em to  
39 come down for being internship because we were one of their sponsors. And, uh, one guy  
40 that stands out familiar was, he was a Vietnamese, uh, fellow. And, uh, his name was  
41 Quyen Nguyen and, uh, you talk about setting the bar high. The work ethics that, uh, this  
42 young fellow had was just phenomenal.

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** Was this in the lab?

45

1 **BOB BEATTY:** Yeah. This was in the lab. He worked in the lab. He was an intern, and  
2 then we hired him.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** How do you spell his name?

5  
6 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. It was Quyne, but it was different. I think it was H. I, I forget.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you just say the name again?

9  
10 **BOB BEATTY:** Quyen Nguyen. I think it was Whon. So it...But anyhow that was some  
11 of 'em. Now I'm sure that I, you know, that, that. Everybody that worked for me and that  
12 we had. And I don't know, I don't know if I mentioned Barry Poland. Uh. He was one of  
13 the first ones we hired as, after we brought the older people back, he was one of the first  
14 ones we hired from off the streets and that, and, uh, and then, uh, my boss that basically  
15 when, uh, we shut down, uh, Rick Lucas and then there was a character of the wet lab,  
16 George [Inaudible] and just so many other people. Just nice, nice people and, uh, it was  
17 just great being associated with them. You could, you could count on them to do anything  
18 anytime that you needed. They had. Everybody seemed to have the right attitude. They  
19 had to be flexible. Do different things at certain times because we were limited as to  
20 people. And, uh, hey, it was no problem. We'll take care of it. But it was, it was a good  
21 attitude.

22  
23 (1:32:45)

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have a favorite memory or anecdote about the plant?

26  
27 **BOB BEATTY:** Oh, geez. There's so many of 'em. Huh. You know, how do you single  
28 out just one? But, uh, it was. It was. It's not very. It's, it's things that stick in your mind.  
29 Uh. One. This is gruesome. It was a fellow who died. A young fellow who was in, uh,  
30 was summer help guy. And, uh, they were taking samples or something down in the  
31 sewer hole, down in a manhole and got overcome and I can remember this. It was a shift  
32 change and I can remember the ambulance was out front of the nurse's station and, uh, I  
33 could see him being carried across on a stretcher and that, that just stuck in my mind.  
34 You know, that's one of the not so nice things that happened. It was a shame that it, that it  
35 happened and, you know, it was, uh, it just sticks, I can just still see them carrying him  
36 across the, the parking lot to bring him over to the ambulance. But, on, on a lighter note,  
37 huh, uh, just the general things that you could do and just working with people and, uh, I,  
38 the banquets that we had. We had Bob Prince one time as a, uh, as a speaker for one of  
39 our 10-year club banquets and, uh, I used to be the master of ceremonies for those, uh,  
40 things and got to talk with, uh, with him and that, uh, we also had Myron Cope. Uh. He  
41 was an announcer for the Steelers, was there. And one, another thing that stands out in  
42 my mind was during the gas shortages back in the, er, '70s or whenever it might be  
43 whenever you could only, I don't know if you remember it or not. But you could only get  
44 gas on certain days according to your inspection sticker on that. We had a gas pump  
45 down there at the, at the plant and the company, uh, we could buy gas there, but then  
46 they, they staffed somebody actually and, and to keep track of all this. Uh. And that, that

1 was a good thing, you know. But we'd go down there and you'd sit in line to get gas.  
2 There was only one gas pump and get your, you were only allowed so many gallons and  
3 that was, uh, there. But that was another, a good thing, you know, that the plant did, you  
4 know. And it was, like they say, someone you know works at St. Joe. And that was, uh,  
5 that was good. And the Christmas parties, uh, just, we, uh, where the 10-year club was  
6 the guys that did this. And I was on the committee to go select toys. And we went up to  
7 make it a day up in Pittsburgh. And you would take the wives with you and go up there  
8 and we had to pick out the toys at this toy company for all the different age groups that  
9 we needed to select. And it took a while in order to do that. And then afterwards we were  
10 able to go up to the top of the Triangle and, uh, there was, uh, one fellow, Jimmy French.  
11 Him and his wife were there. And whenever we came to the ten, to the top of the Triangle  
12 and we were sitting there and when folks wanted drinks. Well of course Jim was all  
13 gussied up and everything and he, he wanted to see the wine list and he got some sort of a  
14 Chardonnay or whatever it might be. And, uh, this one guy Ralph Cartelli, he was, ran the  
15 store room and he was also there and his wife. And, uh, he was of course making fun of  
16 him. You know. He wanted just, uh, get a beer, but you know, Jimmy wanted to get a  
17 Chardonnay. Well afterwards they came around with this little tray they were holding and  
18 these little ice cream cones with little sherbet, little round sherbet scoop on it. They were  
19 only about that big and it was just, Ralph got a big kick out of it saying there was Jimmy  
20 wanting his Chardonnay and here I am sitting here with my little palette pleaser trying to  
21 eat as femininely and gently as I can. And it was a good time. A good day. We spent all  
22 day and it was good. And it was, uh, the company basically, you know, knew that they  
23 would do this for their employees and I think that's what made it so good is that, you  
24 know, they provided their employees back in the day. Then there was the days when you  
25 said, "Yeah. Right. They don't even know who we are." But I guess that's, uh, the other  
26 end of the spectrum. So.

27

28 (1:38:15)

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

31

32 **BOB BEATTY:** What do I recall? It was, uh, not a very good day. It was, uh, like a  
33 black cloud, you know, over everything. Everybody was very subdued. We knew it was  
34 coming and that, and then it got to the point where everybody just wanted to get out of  
35 there. And, uh, get all the stuff. And everybody had to go to personnel and listen to what's  
36 going to happen and sign the sheets and, and come back. But before that last day, we  
37 knew that's when the last day was coming. Everybody kind of like cleaned out their stuff  
38 and just left the stuff just to grab off the desk and say, "Okay. I'll see you." And, uh, that's  
39 tough. But the worst part is just going by and seeing there's nothing there. Before they  
40 started putting stuff up now. And it was, that was the worst part. It was just, uh, and then  
41 when you talk to us it is just like we never existed. And that, there was so many people's  
42 lives that were, you know, that were shaped by working at St. Joe. And that's when you  
43 say to people Horsehead, well, huh. Oh, no. No. St. Joe. Oh, okay. But you know it by St.  
44 Joe. And, uh, it was, uh, but it afforded me a good living. And, uh, it was, I was a kid that  
45 didn't go to college. A matter of fact I failed high school chemistry. [Laughs] And I  
46 ended up being the associate chemist. And, uh, so, it's funny how things work, but, uh,

1 just the short period of time that I was laid off there that was the only time for my entire  
2 47-year history. That, uh, the company would do its darnedest to keep people working.  
3 Even in the days whenever there was, they couldn't sell the zinc, they stockpiled it, uh,  
4 in, in parking lots or whatever. So that they could keep people working, which was great.  
5 And then once things are going gangbuster, the next thing you know the zinc is gone. So,  
6 but that, that's what was, was nice and that, uh, afforded me a good living and, uh, I'm  
7 grateful for that. It went fast. You know. Someone back in 1966 would say, "Gee, when  
8 you retire in 2014." You didn't think that day was ever coming, but the next thing you  
9 know you turn around three times and there it was. So and just the people that you know  
10 and the people that you've met and the acquaintances that'll live on forever that you just  
11 happen to see 'em somewhere at a restaurant or at the mall or at a ballgame or something  
12 like that. It's, uh, you know, it's just like old home-like. So.

13

14 (1:41:16)

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

17

18 **BOB BEATTY:** I think it's great. Uh. Just makes you wonder what. I just. It's just hard  
19 to fathom the money that's being spent and, uh, I realize that Shell is a very big  
20 corporation. It has lots of money to do it with. And what I understand what they've,  
21 everybody that they've con, come in contact with they've treated fairly. Uh. The people  
22 that they've bought out or whatever and then the, uh, communities. Helping out the  
23 communities, which I think is great. But, uh, you still just miss seeing the 400-foot stack  
24 and the buildings there when you go by. Uh. So it's progress I guess. And, uh, you just  
25 never know how, uh, how it'll affect the area and everybody's, you know, seem to be very  
26 positive about it. But I'm sure there's some guys or people that will say, you know, it's  
27 going to hurt us. It's going to, you know, give us more environmental problems and all  
28 that stuff. And these are all the naysayers, but you just got to look forward. They always  
29 used to throw stones at us anyhow because they said we killed off the hillsides there and  
30 that's why no trees grew. But, uh, the company was always good and I think Shell will be  
31 good. Good for the county and hopefully, uh, once they get it going people will be able to  
32 see a positive impact.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. Um. That concludes the prepared questions, but you had  
35 these objects here that you kept from your life at the plant. Could you talk about those a  
36 little bit, hold 'em up, and say what these are?

37

38 **BOB BEATTY:** Uh. This was a, from Zinc Corporation, ZCA. It was a safety award  
39 and I forget, uh, how we, uh, how many hours we had to work or whatever it might be,  
40 but they, the Zinc Corporation gave us a, uh, a watch for safety. Uh. Then there's a couple  
41 of tie tacks here. One was from St. Joe Minerals Corporation for when we had our 10-  
42 year, uh, banquet. That when you had 10 years in they gave you a tie tack. Then the same  
43 type of thing, the, when we were working with the research center, uh, at one point in  
44 time we were part of the research center during one of the transitions of different  
45 ownerships. Uh. Then I received a 15-year one. Then way back when, when we first  
46 started and worked in the furnace plant they gave us safety awards, those penknives. One

1 was St. Joe Lead Company that I had and then one was St. Joe Minerals Corporation. But  
2 after they started giving out penknives and guys kept getting cut on the penknives that  
3 they were giving out, uh, they kind of stopped doing that. Because they said they got too  
4 many first aid cases from the safety awards that they gave. [Laughter] And there's quite a  
5 few other things which I had, jackets that have since just worn out through the years. So.  
6 [Phone ringing]

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** You were just talking about, uh...

9  
10 (1:44:57)

11  
12 **BOB BEATTY:** The penknives. They basically stopped giving them because so many  
13 guys were getting first aid cases from getting cut during that, but and the jackets and, um,  
14 there was blankets and, uh, cushions and just different things that they would give you.  
15 At one time, we, Corningware, we used to get all of this different Corningware awards  
16 for safety because the Corning company used zinc oxide in the making of, uh, the, uh,  
17 Corningware. So we received that as safety awards. So it's just enough to keep your  
18 interest in safety. And there was guys that, who, uh, out in the plant who received cash  
19 awards for doing different things. They just tried different things through the years just to  
20 keep everyone happy and keep, keep their interest in safety, which is a big thing.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Thank you very much.

23  
24 **BOB BEATTY:** Is that it?

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** That's it.

27  
28 **BOB BEATTY:** Wow. That was easy.

29  
30 (END)

**Terri Belczyk**  
**Interview @ November 15, 2016**



## **TERRI BELCZYK**

### **Summary**

The interview with Terri Belczyk took place on November 15, 2016, in the conference room of Horsehead Corporation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she currently works as Director of Workers' Compensation. Terri's affiliation with the St. Joe zinc plant started in December 1971 as a clerk in the metallurgical control department. She subsequently became the administrative assistant to Bob Redelfs, superintendent of the research department. When St. Joe became Zinc Corporation of America (ZCA) in 1987, Terri became office manager and worked for CEOs Bob Sunderman and Bill Smelas, who shared the position, and then Gary Wickham. In the interview, Terri comments upon some of these people for whom she worked. In 2001, Terri became in charge of Workers' Compensation for the Monaca plant and the company's other sites, including mines in New York and a plant in Palmerton, PA.

Terri explains the role of the metallurgical control department in processing samples—zinc, lead, and other metal content—from departments throughout the plant and from other sites. She describes the staffing of the department, including women, the location/facility, its functioning independent of research and development, and how the metallurgical control department transitioned through the 1979 shutdown of the plant.

Terri talks about the changes in leadership and company names starting in 1987, and effectively having two companies on one site: the R&D part of Horsehead Industries and the zinc operation of ZCA. She describes the diverse responsibilities of an office manager, and the technologies brought in to support administrative activities of the plant. She provides insight into Workers' Compensation issues and the kinds of claims filed at the Monaca plant.

In segment 0:32:20-0:34:41, Terri talks about the County Home: its physical remnants and stories about its occupancy as a residential facility. She also explores the evolving uses of the building for research and then administrative functions during the ZCA period. Terri shares a woman's perspective of working at the plant and employment opportunities and recruitment efforts for women. She reminisces about the women who worked in the cafeteria. Terri also reflects upon St. Joe's participation in community events, training and educational programs, and the social and recreational activities that preceded unionization (1974) and the 1979 shutdown.

1 **TERRI BELCZYK**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/15/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 TERRI BELCZYK  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Terri Belczyk, November 15, 2016. Um. Terri, could  
8 you please state and spell your full name.  
9

10 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Terri, T-E-R-R-I. Belczyk, B-E-L-C-Z-Y-K.  
11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** Your date of birth and full address please. Answer only what you  
13 want.  
14

15 **TERRI BELCZYK:** [REDACTED].  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** And your address?  
18

19 **TERRI BELCZYK:** [REDACTED], Ambridge, Pennsylvania.  
20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Where are you currently working and doing what?  
22

23 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I'm currently working at Horsehead Corporation, and I am the  
24 director of Workers' Compensation.  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area?  
27

28 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. Originally, no. I was from Pittsburgh, but I moved to the  
29 Beaver County area, oh, probably middle school. So, I'm pretty much from the Beaver  
30 County area.  
31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any family members who worked at St. Joe Lead?  
33

34 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. My uncle John he was an electrical engineer. He worked here,  
35 uh, many years ago, and also my older brother, Rich, was a summer engineer and a  
36 research engineer, uh, for a couple of years.  
37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did your family move into the Beaver County area from  
39 Pittsburgh?  
40

41 **TERRI BELCZYK:** My mom's family was from this area. My dad's family was from  
42 Pittsburgh.  
43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** What education did you complete before working at St. Joe Lead?  
45

46 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I completed three years of college.

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(0:01:22)

**INTERVIEWER:** And what were you studying?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** I started out in elementary education and switched to business.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In, in what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year did you stop working for the company, which apparently you didn't?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** I didn't stop working there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right. Okay.

**TERRI BELCZYK:** But I started in December 1971 or 1972. I'm not sure which.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the alternative work opportunities in the area at that time and did you consider working any place else?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Actually, I worked for, um, probably six months at Hussey Copper in Leetsdale, but then that was right out of high school and I thought, "Oh, I'm gonna get married." You know, a high school sweetheart. And I said, "Uh. This isn't for me." So, that's when I quit and I went to college. And of course, he and I went our separate ways. Um. I'm trying to think if there. No. Really. That's it. I've worked here.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why did you pick St. Joe to work at?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** St. Joe had an excellent reputation, and it was well known in the area that if you worked for St. Joe, if you got in at St. Joe, that was really something. Um. So, I, I tried on my own one time and I didn't get called. So, then I went through an employment agency. Uh. Then they tested me and I got hired.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of testing was that?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** They did several tests. Uh. Spelling, uh, personality, math, grammar, and, uh, probably another one, verbal.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was it a specific job opening that you were applying for?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** No. I was just applying to come down here.

**INTERVIEWER:** What position were you initially hired for?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** I was hired as a clerk in the metallurgical control department and in that job, I did, um, production control reports for the plant.

1 (0:03:23)

2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about what that means?

4  
5 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. Well I would get, um, information every day from the plant on  
6 G - B, greatness minus brilliance, etc. and I just had to calculate the numbers out. Put a  
7 daily report. Put out a weekly report. I also exchanged assays when they, uh, when the lab  
8 went through and did assays on different types of metals and we called them umpires and  
9 I would exchange them with other companies.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you mean by exchanging them with other companies?

12  
13 **TERRI BELCZYK:** We had to, uh, compare results, and I think it had something to do  
14 with the billing of that, that product, the final product that came out.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the metallurgical control department part of a larger department,  
17 research, testing? How was it structured there?

18  
19 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Everybody funneled in samples from the plant. From the furnace  
20 plant, the roaster plant, they funneled it in. Even from, uh, other sites, they would funnel  
21 in. They would test it for lead, cadmium, different contents of material, of metals and  
22 then they would send that back out. So, we knew what we were producing. Uh. How  
23 much zinc was in there. Particularly the zinc. Uh. And how much lead. So, that's what,  
24 that's what we did. They had different, uh, analytical methods for doing all these different  
25 procedures and, um, that was basically the lab.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you receive to do your job?

28  
29 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Just some on the job training, and I did that job for a couple of  
30 years and then the head of the department, the superintendent, uh, Bob Redelfs, his, uh,  
31 admin assistant was leaving. So, I applied for the job and I took that over. He was also  
32 the technical recruiter, which was interesting. Because when we recruited people back in  
33 those days they, they put them through psychological testing and, um, and really in-depth  
34 interviews. So, I got to type up all that information. You know. It was kinda interesting.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if that's the only department where that kind of  
37 screening was taking place?

38  
39 **TERRI BELCZYK:** To that extent that department, we did have, uh, uh, a personnel  
40 department it was called back then. And they, they screened the hourly workers and  
41 people like me, the clerical help. Um. But the recruiting for the engineers and scientists  
42 was done at a higher level.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** So how many people were working in the metallurgical control  
45 department?

46

1 (0:05:59)

2

3 **TERRI BELCZYK:** We probably had about 60 people in that department.

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** And what were some of the various jobs that those 60 people filled?

6

7 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Um. Well we had a couple of scientists, uh, a couple of chemists,  
8 associate chemists, but most of them were called analysts and they actually did the  
9 analyses under direction of supervisors.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there other women working in the department?

12

13 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. There were a couple of analysts back then. Uh. I can  
14 remember a few that worked there and, and one stayed on and she actually worked here  
15 and, and became a, um, tech service person when she finished college.

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** So out of the 60 people in the department, how many women?

18

19 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Women. There were probably, well there were three or four of us  
20 who did the clerical work, and then there were probably two maybe three at times in the  
21 lab.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** How did it feel to be a woman working in a place that had so many  
24 men, more men working there?

25

26 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. You know. I never gave that a thought. We all got along so  
27 well there that it was kinda, uh, I don't like to use the term family, but it almost was. I  
28 mean, we went out together. Everybody just got along so well.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was your immediate supervisor and what do you recall about  
31 him or her and his, his leadership and running the department?

32

33 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Actually I had a couple of immediate supervisors. I had, uh, Bob  
34 Sunderman. I had Tom Janeck initially. [Clears throat] And then I had, uh, Bob Redelfs,  
35 who was the superintendent when I moved over to tech services. Tom Janeck and Bob  
36 Sunderman were more when I was in the production control clerk job when I first was  
37 hired. Redelfs was the technical recruiter, as well as the superintendent and then when he  
38 left the company, Jim Derby who was a chemist there, uh, was my supervisor.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** And Bob Sunderman ended up becoming plant manager at some  
41 point?

42

43 **TERRI BELCZYK:** He did. He did.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Can you tell me a little bit more about him?

46

1 (0:08:21)

2  
3 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Bob was, um, he was an unusual character. I mean, he was, he was  
4 very bright, but he was very down to earth. He, he's one of those guys, he had an  
5 aneurysm when he was at the age of 16, and he recovered from it. And they said it was  
6 probably his age, his youth, you know, that really helped him get through it. So, he had to  
7 learn how to write with his left hand. A West Virginia graduate. He was extremely fair.  
8 He was, I remember one time I went out and bought a couple vans for the company, and  
9 he says, "Just get stripped, you know. Just, just basic vans. Nothing, no, no power locks."  
10 So, I go down and I said, "You can't buy one with nothing in it." So, I had power locks. I  
11 had, uh, um, cassette in there, you know, and, and he never asked me any questions, you  
12 know. I just bought 'em and we, we had 'em on site. So, one day one of the ladies comes  
13 and she says, "Ah, Terri, I like that van." She says, "That tape player is great!" And he  
14 comes running out of his office and he said, "I thought I told you." But he, it was all in  
15 fun. You know. It was, it was very laid back with, with Bob.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the vans used for?

18  
19 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. Different people used 'em when they were on the road. Um.  
20 Bob was the kind of guy and I, I know this for a fact cause I did it. I was going to New  
21 York and taking some family to a wedding. He let me take the van. He says, "Go ahead.  
22 Go." It was just different back then. Um. You know. People weren't so worried about  
23 what if you have an accident? Who's going to be liable? Uh. But mostly for company  
24 business travel. So, some, sometimes I took 'em to Ohio to deliver samples, you know,  
25 when no one else could do it. You know. We, we kinda all did odd jobs. When I say, you  
26 know, we were admin assistants or I worked for the CEO at one time. Uh. You did  
27 whatever. You did whatever and didn't question it.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of hours did the job require?

30  
31 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Eight to five, but I've been there until 11 or 12 o'clock at night too  
32 when I had to. Uh. Getting out the annual reports. You know. Back then, you had to, you  
33 didn't download them, you ran copies and then ran 'em out to Fedex at the airport to have  
34 'em overnighted. Um. One time I was doing a customer outing up at our mines in Upstate  
35 New York and I was going on vacation, so I didn't leave till I had all those invitations  
36 out. So, you know, it was a midnight night but typically eight to five.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Now, those responsibilities don't sound like something you would do  
39 in the metallurgical...

40  
41 **TERRI BELCZYK:** No. Because that's when...

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Later job that you had.

44  
45 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I should have said that. Yes. I did move.

46



1 (0:10:50)

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Let's, let's go through your career path here and get an idea of  
4 the different jobs you've, you've held.

5

6 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Okay. I started out in the metallurgical lab, and I was there for, I  
7 want to say, five or six years. And then I moved into, um, then I moved in as an admin  
8 assistant and we eventually moved down to the research lab and I worked down at  
9 research and then we had a change in company. And I became the, um, office manager  
10 and worked for the CEO.

11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** When was, when was that change?

13

14 **TERRI BELCZYK:** That was in '87.

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

17

18 **TERRI BELCZYK:** And then in 2001, my boss was talking about, you know, we need  
19 somebody devoted to doing Workers' Comp and I thought, well, you know, back then  
20 you were still making coffee and, you know, ordering lunches and sometimes at some  
21 point you say, "Oh. I'm done with that." And I says, "Well, you know, how about letting  
22 me have a stab at it because there is nobody else here that's doing it." So, I kind of taught  
23 myself and, you know, just read up and I, they says, "Okay. Fine. We're gonna put you in  
24 charge of Workers' Comp and if you can handle it, then the job's yours."

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** So...

27

28 **TERRI BELCZYK:** So...

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Before that you were the office manager...

31

32 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Office manager.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** For the CEO.

35

36 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh-hmm.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** And who was the CEO at that point?

39

40 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. There was a, uh, actually, uh, Bob Sunderman and Bill Smelas  
41 kinda shared that position.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you spell that second person's name?

44

1 **TERRI BELCZYK:** S-M-E-L-A-S. And the, uh, Gary Wickham came in and he was  
2 the overall CEO of the company and Bob was then, um, I want to say CFO. But then I  
3 worked for Gary Wickham.

4  
5 (0:12:36)

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** It seems like there was a lot of change over in the leadership.

8  
9 **TERRI BELCZYK:** It was...

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you address that please?

12  
13 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Yeah. Because we changed company names. We were St. Joe  
14 Minerals with our corporate headquarters in, uh, New York City. And then our, then we  
15 became, I think, we went back to St. Joe Lead and we had our headquarters in Clayton,  
16 Missouri. And then we became Zinc, uh, Zinc Corporation of America, and we were that  
17 from '87 until we became Horsehead Corporation and even as Horsehead we changed.  
18 We were Horsehead Corp, Horsehead Corporation. Uh. So, the name changed, so people  
19 changed. We merged with, uh, New Jersey Zinc Company in, in East, Eastern PA back in  
20 '87. That's when we became Zinc Corporation of America.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you in, in your job feel the difference as the ownership and  
23 leadership were changing?

24  
25 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. As, as far as you mean the company culture?

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** That, that and your job responsibilities.

28  
29 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Yeah. Well my job responsibilities changed because my jobs  
30 changed. Um. Uh. You know, when I went from, uh, an admin to the, the office manager  
31 it, that was the biggest change. Uh. Aside from going from that to being, uh, the  
32 Workers' Comp person. So, the big change in, in, uh, the office manager was, you know,  
33 my whole, my whole job, uh, everything changed. I mean now I'm in charge of calling  
34 cards at the time and all the office equipment, you know, fax machines. I ordered all that.  
35 I, I, um, I took care of buying the, the plant vehicles, uh, just, just my job just totally  
36 changed. You know, I had to do the annual review. Uh. I had to learn how to do the cost  
37 accounting, some cost accounting for, to fill in when somebody else was gone. I was in  
38 charge of the mailroom and the switchboard operator we had at the time. So, yes, my job,  
39 uh, in fact I was in charge of, um, indirectly all of the admin assistants. So, and that was,  
40 that was a job because, you know, I don't want to go to the board. I don't want to do this.  
41 I'm going on vacation. Who's gonna fill in? You know, so, it, but it was, it was good. It  
42 was very good.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** How about a change in the, the culture of the plant?

45  
46 **TERRI BELCZYK:** The company?

1  
2 (0:14:58)

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

5  
6 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. It didn't change a whole lot because we had a lot of the same  
7 people. So, while we had different reporting structures and they wanted different,  
8 different things done differently they, uh, the, the culture was pretty, pretty much the  
9 same at that time. Uh-hmm. And it's still good. The culture even when I switched over to  
10 Workers' Comp and then we became Horsehead Corporation it, it was still, uh, it's still a  
11 good culture.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened to your job when the plant shut down in 1979?

14  
15 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. I was still in the metallurgical control lab at '79 and I was  
16 actually given the option of staying or leaving. And I initially was gonna leave and I  
17 came in and I said, uh, Jim Derby was my boss at the time. I says, "You know, I think I'm  
18 gonna stay." And there were eight of us left out of that 62. So, the day after Christmas  
19 when we came back all those people were gone, and that was a real shock. It was, it was  
20 heartbreaking because some of those people. I mean, they had no idea what they were  
21 going to do, where they were gonna go. And, uh, but you know, we, we came back. We  
22 rebuilt. Some people came back and, and, uh, we reopened the plant, uh, a year or so later  
23 under Bob Sunderman. Hired back a lot of those people. Uh. Not nearly as many as we  
24 had before. I think we had maybe 1,200 people and I, I'm not sure how many we had  
25 before that. But it was not nearly the size in the production that we put out. But it was,  
26 but it was still very good.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Why is it that the metallurgical control department was still open and  
29 operating even though the plant had shut down in '79?

30  
31 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Probably because they still had some leftover work, maybe, uh,  
32 assays that had to be done. Um. And again, there were only eight people. So, there wasn't  
33 a whole lot of work. But I'm not sure that maybe the acid plant, something made,  
34 something had to have been going on that they were kept there, but I'm not exactly sure  
35 what it was.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** At one point were computers or other new technologies brought into  
38 the, the administrative end of running this, this company?

39  
40 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. Well actually I probably had one of the first prototypes of an  
41 electronic typewriter that you fed these magnetic cards into, um, and most of them still  
42 were working typewriters. I'm just trying to think of when we actually made a big change  
43 to using, uh, computers. I, I honestly can't recall when that happened. But we were pretty,  
44 pretty much up with the, the equipment changes when they came through even with the,  
45 the copiers and that, you know. When they came to color copying and [Inaudible]  
46 duplexes. We pretty much changed as they became available on the market. Cause I

1 remember the old cellphones. They were about this big and, you know, we had guys that  
2 says, "Geez, I lost it." I says, "How could you lose that huge thing?" You know. Um. But  
3 that's what they were like. They were, and they had a bag. I mean it was, it was  
4 unbelievable with what they are now. But, um, we changed as, as times changed we  
5 changed.

6  
7 (0:18:22)

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the initial uses of computers in the, in an  
10 administrative capacity?

11  
12 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Um. Probably mostly to type, Word. Uh. And then as, as admin  
13 assistants became fewer and fewer and had to do more and more work, then they used the  
14 Excel, had to do spreadsheets. You know. Um. It's a different world for those people  
15 today and so many men will rough draft even now, you know, papers and stuff and then  
16 they hand 'em over to some of the girls to clean 'em up, format 'em and I think that's,  
17 that's still going on today.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Let's go back to December of 1971.

20  
21 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Okay.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about your first day on the job?

24  
25 **TERRI BELCZYK:** It was the end of December and, um, geez, I was lost. But my  
26 brother was still there. My uncle was still there. So, I felt like, well, you know, there's  
27 somebody I know and, uh, I had training. I did know the one lady that worked there was  
28 helping to train me. Uh. It was Christmastime so everybody was in a good mood. We had  
29 a party like the second day I was there. After work, the whole department went. Uh. It  
30 was, it was nice. It was, it was fine. I remember even one day I came into work and on  
31 my desk, was this huge orange. It was the biggest orange I ever saw. And I thought, "Oh,  
32 this is great. Somebody left me an orange." So, I peeled it, you know, and I ate it. And  
33 everyone's laughing. Well, here the analysts in the lab took needles and shot it full of  
34 Vodka. And, you know, it was. [Laughter] And they were getting the biggest kick out of  
35 it because I'm enjoying this, uh, I didn't know. But, you know, back in the day you could  
36 do stuff like that. And it, it was not a big deal. But, uh, yeah, I remember that day.  
37 [Laughter]

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So, you started right around Christmastime.

40  
41 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh-hmm. I think it was like December 21st I started. I only had  
42 two days of working and somebody said to me, they says, "You ought to start before the  
43 end of the year because you'll be eligible for vacation come January 1." I said, "Well,  
44 why would I wait till the first of the year then if I could end up with two weeks' vacation  
45 in two weeks." You know, so, uh, that was probably the, the main reason I started when I  
46 did. So.

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**INTERVIEWER:** In speaking to a lot of people who worked in the plant and the furnaces and, um, they were saying that it didn't matter if it was Christmas or a holiday if it was your, your shift to work you worked it.

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was the, the administrative end of things run differently or the metallurgical lab when you first started that you got the holidays off?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. Somebody always worked a holiday because the plant worked. So, somebody had to be in the lab. Uh. But we, the salary people, admin, you know, and the supervisors pretty much were off on the holidays.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did somebody have to be working in the lab at night since the plant was running around the clock?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** I think back then people did work in the lab. I think it ran 24/7. And of course, if they worked, you know, they got double time and a half. They got extra time off. You know, it was, some people actually volunteered for that. If they didn't have family or, you know, the family wasn't coming in they volunteered for it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you got involved with Workers' Comp...

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Comp. Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** Cases about like when?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** 2001.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you describe a little bit more what, what that work involved?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Well initially I didn't know what I was doing so, uh, I had to rely a little bit on Sam Mullin, who was doing some of it for the Monaca plant. Uh. I had to learn the, the laws in, in different states. We had mines in New York. So, I had to learn what New York did for Work Comp. Pennsylvania. We had, uh, two sites back then. We still have two sites even though Monaca closed. We still have a site now in Palmerton, Pennsylvania and we have INMETCO. I do theirs. So, it, it was extremely difficult I have to say at first because I did not know. Uh. I had to rely a lot on the claim reps and I had to get to know the claim reps so that, um, they would help me. You know. So, I was very careful to be very nice to them because I needed their help. Uh. Sam was probably a little reluctant to let go of it, you know, cause he'd come in and say, "Oh, how about this guy? Did you get that claim closed yet?" "Well, you know, Sam, it's been open for six years. You want me to close it in three months." You know. So, uh, it was difficult. It was

1 difficult to learn it on my own. We did have someone from the New York office, who  
2 handled some of the cases. Uh. But never in depth. So, I really got into, I managed. When  
3 I took over we had well over 200 claims and right now we are down to and this is  
4 opening and closing of 'em. We have like 40 claims and some of those New York claims,  
5 which is about half of them, are never going to close simply because their, their laws pay  
6 them till they die. Uh. Whereas in Pennsylvania after 500 weeks, you're done. Uh. In a lot  
7 of the other states, when, when you return to work even if or your full duty and even not  
8 returned to work, you're still done collecting comp. But in New York, it's, it's very  
9 different. So, and if some of those people die from an occupational disease, you know,  
10 lung disease or something or, or even if, uh, they had a back injury and that's what ends  
11 up, uh, killing them in the end, their spouses can collect. So they don't settle. They just  
12 don't settle. So.

13

14 (0:24:13)

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what are some or what were some of the most typical claims  
17 coming out of the Monaca plant?

18

19 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Well, you know, the Monaca plant was an old plant when, when I  
20 got there. So, it was, uh, mostly sprains and strains, backs, shoulders, knees, uh,  
21 sometimes, you know, someone would get a foot caught somewhere. Uh. We did have a  
22 few fatalities, but those were, those were very untypical. And, you know, depending on  
23 the age of the worker, uh, the severity of the injury, you got some back to work quicker.  
24 Some you couldn't get back.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** At the Monaca plant, did you run into claims of questionable  
27 validity?

28

29 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was the process for resolving disputed claims?

32

33 **TERRI BELCZYK:** We would initially deny a claim while we were able to investigate  
34 it if we, if we questioned it. Now that, that didn't happen all that often. Um. You know,  
35 you have to rely on witnesses' statements, uh, the supervisor did the, the superintendent  
36 actually would do the investigation and in the end if we had a good reason to deny and,  
37 and presented that to our carrier then they would deny the claim. Some people fought it.  
38 Some of those we won. Some of them we didn't win, but that was pretty much the  
39 process for those. They went into litigation.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** So, um, could you clarify for me please? When your work at the  
42 company or the corporation shifted from you're doing work that was just for St. Joe and  
43 Monaca versus your work being on a corporate level for New York for plants elsewhere  
44 that were part of Horsehead?

45

46 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. How did it change?



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**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. How and when did, did your work go from working for things pertaining to...

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Only Monaca.

**INTERVIEWER:** Monaca to the broader corporate holdings?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Probably when we went to, when we became Zinc Corporation of America in '87, that's when my job changed from, you know, working in, as, uh, admin to being the, um, the assistant to either the, the head of the plant, the CFO or the CEO. That's when it changed because that's when I got involved with people from Palmerton. The New York office people would come down. That, that was the big change.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you just delineate please the difference between the lab and the research department?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Yeah. The research department was located down in what we called the Poor Farm, uh, the original, uh, nursing home for Beaver County and the metallurgical department did assays of material that came in. The research department did specific projects. Like they might be working on galvanized paint, uh, uses for it. Uh. How did it hold up in sunlight or whatever? So, they had specific projects and, and, uh, it was research and development really. So, they were looking at, uh, better ways maybe to, to run the product through the plant. Maybe we needed a piece of equipment. So, the lab did the assaying of material sample, uh, material coming out of the plant. The research and development was looking at better ways to run the plant. John Pusateri was in that department I believe. So, he could probably be better equipped to answer that question.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, then R&D took place in the former County Home building.

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where were the metallurgical labs that you had been working in earlier on in your career in the company?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** It was. It was a separate building. It was, that building, the metallurgical lab, I think, was built in like 1968 before I started. So, when I started at, at St. Joe it was already a separate entity and it was, uh, and we pretty much were our own little, uh, thing. We didn't deal much with the main office or, uh, R&D. Uh. We were pretty much our own because we had a specific job to do there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you locate the building on an, on a map for me?

1 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Oh. Sure. [Paper shuffling] Okay. Personnel. Here it is. Right here.  
2 Met Control Lab.

3  
4 (0:28:53)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you. When you and I had spoken on the phone initially I guess  
7 it was in the summer, you had made a comment that there were two companies on one  
8 site.

9  
10 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Yes.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** St. Joe and Horsehead Industries. Could you elaborate?

13  
14 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Well, St., St. Joe, I think it was Zinc Corporation and, uh,  
15 Horsehead Industries. We were under the same company out of New York, but the R&D  
16 end of it, I believe, was considered Horsehead Industries and the rest of us, the plant, the  
17 working plant was considered St. Joe even though we all worked together we, and, and  
18 it's, it's kind of interesting because even when I saw the, started doing Workers' Comp we  
19 had different deductibles. Uh. Horsehead Industries had one and why it was separated  
20 like that I don't know. But they were considered Horsehead and we were considered Zinc  
21 Corporation.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** So, in 1964, the County Home was renovated for various uses. Could  
24 you describe the various departments that were then located in the former County Home  
25 building?

26  
27 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Well, I think mainly at that point in time it was probably Research  
28 and Development. Uh. Then, when some of us moved into that building in the '90s  
29 because we just needed more space and they closed down the old main office. So, we  
30 moved into that building and we had, um, sales was located in there. Of course, the CEO  
31 and, and the CFO were in there, uh, credit, accounting was upstairs. So, those were the  
32 different departments. HR was moved over into that building. Uh. The research and  
33 development end of it was pretty much gone at that point in time.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Why was the research development gone?

36  
37 **TERRI BELCZYK:** They, um, I don't, I don't think we had much research and  
38 development. We had a couple of tech service people who did some, some research, but  
39 there wasn't that much left of it and I don't know why. John probably could answer that.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And why did the offices and some of those administrative  
42 functions move out of the old main building?

43  
44 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Well we were, they were closing down the old main office. It  
45 needed a lot of repair work and that was when we merged with New Jersey Zinc and we  
46 brought people from Palmerton, who did some head of sales and things so we needed to

1 expand. We needed more room. So, the, uh, we moved into those offices cause the  
2 building had already been renovated and then actually as part of the job I had was to  
3 renovate the upstairs to get accounting over there because they were still part of the old  
4 personnel building. So, we renovated. It was kind of interesting because the upstairs had,  
5 um, things on the walls from some of the patients who were there. The old, um, operating  
6 room. Then, there was the chapel and I used to laugh because you would go, here was the  
7 operating room and right there was the chapel and I says, "What'd they do take 'em right  
8 out of the OR and into the church because they were done?" Um. But it was gaslights on  
9 the walls. It was, it was kind of neat to do that. Uh. Dumb waiters where they brought  
10 food up. Uh. So, that was, that was really interesting.

11  
12 (0:32:20)

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you...

15  
16 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I enjoyed that.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever hear about ghost stories of the County Home?

19  
20 **TERRI BELCZYK:** A lot of ghost stories. Um. One of the ladies who worked there,  
21 Char Grabski, said that she saw a lady in the back file room, uh, just an outlined shadow  
22 with the hair pulled back, a long dress. Um. People used to come in from out in the street  
23 to visit and they say, "Geez. My father died there." "I was born in a drawer in this office."  
24 Uh. Just different stories. Uh. I had cleaning people. I was in charge of the cleaning  
25 people for the plant, the entire plant, and they ran out one night because they said their  
26 vacuum cleaner started and they did not have it plugged in and they did not come back.  
27 Um. One of the ladies in payroll was working late one night and she heard footsteps on  
28 the back staircase and she looked over and she said no one was there. After that, she  
29 didn't work alone. She would bring her sister or somebody with her. Yes. There, there  
30 were a lot of that. There was a morgue in that building, where they, you know, took the  
31 people down. There was a jail and you would have to wonder what did these people do?  
32 Because there were shackles and they were just a little, I mean, something you would see  
33 if you go down to, um, maybe Williamsburg in some of the old jail. It, it was like that.  
34 And I'm thinking, you know, they treated that illness a whole lot differently back then. It  
35 was, it was interesting though. People would come in and they says, "Oh, we hear there's  
36 a jail. Can we go see it?" You know, people were just interested in all that stuff, but it  
37 was a beautiful building at one time. We had, um, some pictures that, that an architect  
38 came in to try to recreate and the back part of the building we didn't renovate. We would  
39 use it for, uh, storage and things and the pillars were still there. The dining rooms were  
40 still there and the men sat in one and the women in another one. So, it was kind of neat to  
41 just go back there and just see what it was like back then.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** So, were the dining rooms left unused by Horsehead?

44  
45 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Um. Well, we did renovate part of that, uh, into a library for  
46 research. And, um, we put the HR. We moved some of the HR people back there. So, we

1 did renovate purchasing. We did renovate part of it. But the rest, most of it was never  
2 touched. In fact, we sealed it off in time because, uh, there was, you know, asbestos  
3 probably and things. So, it's a liability and people, too many people were just going back  
4 there nosing around. So, they sealed it off.

5  
6 (0:34:41)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you familiar with stories about women working at St. Joe Lead  
9 during World War II?

10  
11 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I've heard that there were a few women who worked there during  
12 the war, but I don't know much about that. Um. Uh. Merle Platz or George Hanne, Ken  
13 Hanne, I'm sorry, might know a little bit about that if you can, can get in touch with them.  
14 Uh. Betsy's dad may have known that. So, that's a question you could ask her. She may  
15 know more about that because my family, other than my brother being a summer  
16 engineer when he was home from school, uh, my family didn't really work there. And I  
17 had an uncle though that worked there, but he left not too long after I started. So, it  
18 wasn't like, you know, my dad and his family and a lot of them worked at Armco or  
19 B&W. I, I didn't have that affiliation with, with St. Joe.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Other than in the cafeteria and in administrative positions, where else  
22 in the plant did women find employment?

23  
24 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Mostly in the offices, um, the met lab, you know, we would hire  
25 women as analysts in there. Uh. But mostly it was, you know, the secretarial end. Uh. I  
26 don't believe there were other areas that they did, they did work.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Where there, um, any efforts made to recruit and train women for  
29 other positions in the plant?

30  
31 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Well, they did try. They, in fact, I know for a fact we had, we had  
32 a credit union onsite. So there were women in there, but again we're, we're still into the  
33 same admin, clerical type. But we did hire women to work in the plant, but there were a  
34 couple of things that had to be considered if they were childbearing age and exposed to  
35 any lead, they, they really shouldn't be in the plant. So, we couldn't hire them and most  
36 of the women didn't last. We put in, in our building we put in facilities for showers and  
37 lockers and actually in the old credit union we changed it. We converted it to a shower  
38 and locker room for women, but they didn't last. And I don't know why. I don't know if  
39 the work, you know, they thought they could do this heavy work and couldn't. Uh. I  
40 don't know if it was just, it was a dirty environment and I just don't know. I don't know  
41 why they didn't make it. But we did try.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Any idea how the men felt about having women coming in?

44  
45 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I think you probably had a divided opinion on that. Probably some  
46 of the men felt, you know, this is men's work and some of the men were, "Well, hey, give

1 it a try." Um. I didn't ever get any kind of a bad feeling about that. Uh. And again I  
2 wasn't directly involved with that. I do know we put the showers in and things for them  
3 and, um, and one lady lasted a little while, but I think she ended up straining her back or  
4 something and ended up leaving in time. Not too many women though. The cafeteria was  
5 great there. Those ladies were wonderful. We used to, when I was in the met lab,  
6 somebody would take the orders in the morning and go make the breakfast run, you  
7 know, so.

8  
9 (0:37:48)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Tell me more about the cafeteria and, and these women.

12  
13 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Oh. They were like moms because you'd go in there and, and, uh,  
14 you know, if you were really hungry, you know, they just threw on food. They didn't,  
15 you know, charge you for it. They just, and it was all home cooked. I mean, St. Joe back  
16 in the day had their own cows and things that they butchered up on the hills. Um. So, it  
17 was just, it was just like home. I mean, you went over. No matter what you wanted, they,  
18 they made for you. You know, it didn't matter. You want toast. You want rye. You want  
19 white. It, you know, kinda like going to a restaurant. But it was, and they, they always  
20 decorated the, the cafe. It was, they all seemed to get along. Uh. But like I said, they were  
21 kind of like moms. Very, very nice, very sweet ladies.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there ever any incidents or claims of gender discrimination or  
24 sexual harassment?

25  
26 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Um. There may have been one, two at the most. That was pretty  
27 uncommon. Uh. I, I don't know why we would've had that. But, uh, I, I can recall one for  
28 sure. But and I don't know what it was all about. So, it was very uncommon though.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Would you say that in general women felt comfortable?

31  
32 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Oh. I think so.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Working there?

35  
36 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I think so. I know I did and I still do. So, it's, uh, yes. Speaking for  
37 myself I, I don't see that happening.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Good. Was there a maternity leave policy?

40  
41 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. When I had my son, I think the policy was six weeks before  
42 and six weeks after unless your doctor had a reason. In fact, I had more time off because I  
43 had a section and the doctor just said I wasn't ready. No problem.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that same maternity benefit available for any women who were  
46 union workers?

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(0:40:03)

**TERRI BELCZYK:** I don't think we had women. Well, we did out in the plant, but those women couldn't be out there if they were childbearing age, I believe, or certain parts of the plant, let me clarify that, they couldn't work in. Uh. I would, I would think so. I don't think we ever had that. I don't recall that ever happening that, that someone was, was expecting.

**INTERVIEWER:** I know that the cafeteria women joined the union but maybe...

**TERRI BELCZYK:** But they were older.

**INTERVIEWER:** They, they were older.

**TERRI BELCZYK:** They were older when I started. I, and I mean that kindly. They were past that childbearing age I should say.

**INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make, make to recruit minorities and how successful were they?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** I think the company did make an effort because we, and I recall them filling out, um, reports, EEOC reports and different things for how many minorities do you have working and, and they did make an effort to do it even back then they did. Uh.

**INTERVIEWER:** What's the timeframe of back then?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** Back then?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**TERRI BELCZYK:** I want to say late '70s, mid-'70s. It was definitely in the '70s and later. Uh. One of the ladies who, who lost her job here when the plant shut down, uh, Michelle Norman worked there probably 30 years in the HR department and, uh, customer service. So, I can definitely say for sure the last 30 years, well 32 now because she's been gone for two. So, uh, for sure, for sure that. And even and the men too. They, they brought in, uh, different men, uh, some couldn't speak English, but they, they did try.

**INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make to hire and support veterans?

**TERRI BELCZYK:** You know, I can't answer that. I know we had a lot of veterans there. But I, I, since I wasn't actually in that HR group. They were in a different building. I, I can't really answer that.



1 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

2  
3 (0:42:07)

4  
5 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Sam Mullin, uh, he would've been more able to answer that  
6 question being the personnel guy.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** In addition to providing a lot of employment, how did St. Joe and  
9 later ZCA and Horsehead to contribute to the larger Beaver Valley community?

10  
11 **TERRI BELCZYK:** They would make, uh, contributions. We would, when they had  
12 things like the River Regatta, we had a booth down there and I, I know that because I was  
13 in charge of helping, uh, set that up, where we would, uh, we would want people to learn  
14 about the company, what we do, what we make, and we would have like a little putting  
15 green where if they got a hole in one they got a prize. We handed out zinc pennies and  
16 how much zinc is actually in a penny and, uh, just passed out a lot of little, little treats for  
17 people. Sunscreen because we had zinc oxide. So, we passed out, you know, the things  
18 that people put on their faces. Uh. We contributed to, oh, United Way was a big drive for  
19 us when I first started there. Most people that I can remember gave their fair share, which  
20 I think at the time was an hour a month or an hour a pay or something and most people  
21 pledged that and we had the, uh, the, like the little, uh, barometer thing that showed if we  
22 met our goal. United Way was very big. Um. Uh. I'm, they contributed a lot. I know  
23 when I was the officer manager I would go in. One of the ladies' mothers had, uh,  
24 multiple sclerosis. They were having a Christmas party. Oh, I had to go in and say, you  
25 know, I want to give them some gift certificates to pass out and, you know, how much  
26 you want? You know. So, they, they did. They did do. We had like festival trees. I know  
27 we used to do a tree. We contributed a tree, decorated it, and then they auctioned those  
28 off right after Thanksgiving. So, whoever bought them the proceeds went to some  
29 agency. Uh. No. They, uh, St. Joe did do a lot. We did a lot of, um, co-op programs too  
30 with students from different schools. Where they would go to school a semester, work a  
31 semester and some of these kids came from Missouri, different places, Penn State. So, we  
32 would house them and that was part of my job. Find them housing while they were there.  
33 Uh. Very reasonable. I think sometimes the company actually paid for part of that and  
34 they made money while they were working. So, they had to have completed two years of  
35 schooling before they could go into the co-op. They had to have some kind of knowledge.  
36 So, uh, but that was a big thing, co-op. We did, uh, the Penn State University added in  
37 Beaver, I think they helped contribute to that. There was a program there, technical  
38 assistance. Um. I'm just trying to think of who would know a lot of this information that I  
39 don't know. Uh. And I apologize. I just don't. But I do know we did some of those  
40 things.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the co-op program a path to being hired?

43  
44 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Yes. For a lot of those gentlemen it was. Uh. John, ask him about  
45 that. He, I'm not sure if he was a co-op because when I got into it I did it for a couple of  
46 years. Uh. We had a technical training, where we sent people to Penn State for two years

1 to get an Associate's degree. The company paid for it on company time and then they had  
2 their job so that they could do better. Uh. But the co-op program we had students from  
3 everywhere, University of Missouri at Rolla. We had students, uh, I know Penn State was  
4 big. There were certain schools that seemed to supply more of the students because they  
5 were in the right field, you know. Certainly, somebody from Robert Morris, which was a  
6 business college wasn't going to be giving us engineers. So, we, uh, my brother went to  
7 Columbia University in New York, and he was a summer engineer there. So, they had the  
8 summer engineering program and they had the co-op program. So, they really helped a  
9 lot of people. A lot of students.

10  
11 (0:46:09)

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13 **INTERVIEWER:** How long was the co-op program? When a student came in, how  
14 long did the student work in the plant?

15  
16 **TERRI BELCZYK:** The, the student worked for a semester and then they went to  
17 school for a semester and then they came back for a semester. Uh. Depending on the  
18 student or the field they were in or when they were graduating or if they didn't want to  
19 come back, some of them were coming back for a couple of years.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any one person, who coordinated the co-op program?

22  
23 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Um.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Marketed it, you know.

26  
27 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Yeah. That was when I was working for, uh, the superintendent in  
28 the met lab and he kind of, uh, spearheaded it. And I did, I did the work. I found the kids  
29 homes. You know. Made sure they had, you know, followed up with them and all that.  
30 But he spearheaded that.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** So were the, were the kids coming in on the co-op program coming  
33 in to work in the metallurgical lab or were they coming in to work in various?

34  
35 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Everywhere.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Departments.

38  
39 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Everywhere. Some of them worked in the sample preparation lab.  
40 Some of them worked in the met lab. Depending on their field. If they were in chemistry,  
41 they would work in the met lab. Um. If they were looking to, uh, a mechanical engineer  
42 for instance would be out in the plant. Uh. My brother was a summer engineer and he  
43 was, uh, his undergrad was chemical engineering. They put him in research and  
44 development when he was. So, it just depended on what your field of program or your  
45 program was.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** And how many co-op students would there be at any given time?

2  
3 **TERRI BELCZYK:** At a time, oh, we might have 15 at a time. Summer engineers  
4 probably more. They used to have a house for summer engineers. It was kind of neat. I  
5 never got into this house. They knocked it down. But they had a summer engineers' house  
6 where they had to cook and some of the people actually stayed there because they were  
7 out of state and cause I remember my brother going there to play cards at night with the  
8 guys. You know. So, it was, it was very, very homelike. It was nice.

9  
10 (0:48:11)

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. You started working at St. Joe Lead in the end of '71, which was  
13 roughly two years before the workers voted to join the union. How was your department,  
14 at the time the metallurgical testing lab, how was that involved in this transition? And in  
15 what ways did having a union change anything in the way that department would run?

16  
17 **TERRI BELCZYK:** It, it didn't because that department was all salary people. They  
18 were not part of the union. So, that department, but, but in general things did change  
19 because I can recall the first year I was there. Not the first year, the second year because  
20 the first Christmas their party was over, but they always had Christmas parties for the  
21 kids, all the family, uh, all the employees' kids, children came for a Christmas party and  
22 they had, uh, they had us dress up as elves and we had to, you know, get the kids up on  
23 stage. They had a program. The kids all got stockings. They all went downstairs and  
24 picked an age-appropriate gift and I mean nice things. They had two-wheeled bicycles.  
25 They had wristwatches. They had all kinds of stuff. Um. There was, there was a lot  
26 before the union. They had a bowling alley down there. They had a softball team. And it  
27 seemed like after that it was hard to get that going again. Um. It, it went for a while, but  
28 there was, you know, a little bit of a division. And everybody didn't want the union. But,  
29 you know, we went majority. So.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if it was a close call?

32  
33 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Um. I think it may have been, and I'm, and I'm confusing it with  
34 when they redid the, the vote when they were passing new contracts. Some of those were  
35 very close. Some of them we thought there was going to be a strike. In fact, I was, I was,  
36 uh, at one point, scheduled because I didn't have children to be locked in and, you know,  
37 they brought in frozen foods, cots, you know, what the women were going to do, etc. But  
38 most of the time I think the, the vote went pretty, pretty well. One or two times I can  
39 recall that. So, I hurried up and had a baby. No. I'm just kidding. [Laughter]

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm not sure if it was Sam Mullin or someone else that I interviewed,  
42 but he said, "Ask Terri about the elf."

43  
44 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Oh. The elf? I don't know if they're meaning us as elves that we  
45 had to be, because, you know, I'm 5'8". So, I'd be up on stage with these kids that were,  
46 you know, two and a half feet tall, but we had, um, a lot of fun. We made our own

1 costumes. In fact, I made some for the other girls and myself, it was always a Saturday.  
2 You know. They paid us. They fed us. They gave us time off and we had a ball with these  
3 kids. But that's probably what they meant is talk about the old Christmas parties, which I  
4 have already done. So.

5  
6 (0:51:11)  
7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you stay with the company as long as you have?  
9

10 **TERRI BELCZYK:** You know when I, when I went there, I, I was and my brother kind  
11 of talked me into it. He says, "Terri, why don't you just try it." And I says, "Well, I'm  
12 gonna give it six months and I'll probably leave." But it was too good to leave. It was just  
13 too good. So, why would I leave? Uh. I had a known here. I was comfortable. You know.  
14 Everybody was, got along. We had fun. Well, why leave? So, that's, that's probably why  
15 I stayed and I was, I was able to advance. So, no reason to. And, you know, back then  
16 companies had pensions and things. So, I was building that up. You got, got vested.  
17 Where now, you know, everybody takes their 401k and moves. But, uh, it was just  
18 different. It was just a different world back then. It wasn't far from home. I was fairly  
19 close. So, I stayed.  
20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the biggest challenges you faced during your time  
22 working in any of your positions at the plant?  
23

24 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Oh. I know I had challenges, but you're asking me to bring 'em to  
25 the forefront of my mind and I can't recall. Well, one big challenge was trying to learn the  
26 Workers' Comp when I first started. Uh. Obviously when you change a job that's a  
27 challenge because even though you might know the people, you might know, um, one  
28 challenge was I put in a new phone system. I didn't know anything about putting in a  
29 phone system for the company, and I worked that whole weekend with AT&T at the time  
30 and we got it done over. Monday morning people came in. The customer service lines  
31 were up. Everything. Uh. I can remember a holiday though where some contractor was  
32 working fixing a wall and cut the main line to the plant. I mean, literally cut us off. It was  
33 like everything. We had nothing. And I remember being home, coming out of the  
34 bathroom at home and I was, my son was very young at this point and I said, and my  
35 husband said somebody's on the phone. And I'm coming out and I didn't hear him and  
36 I'm singing, "Here I come to save the day." You know. He says, "Ter, your office is on  
37 the line." And it actually turned out to be the case, I had to get AT&T out there and  
38 commit to paying so much and I hadn't, you know, this is a holiday. This is, and it's a  
39 weekend to boot. I had no one to go to, but we got it done. We got them out there. We got  
40 that line going and we were back online come Monday morning. So, it was great. They  
41 did a great job.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** It sounds like you did too.  
44

45 **TERRI BELCZYK:** They cut a line this thick and I don't know how they did that, but it  
46 just totally, totally cut us off. So, things like that were challenges more for me. Um. Not

1 so much the work that I had to do. You know, it was always a challenge when it was the  
2 eleventh hour and you were still redoing the annual report for the meeting and I had to  
3 run to the airport with the books. You know. Some personalities were challenges, but you  
4 know that's everywhere.

5  
6 (0:54:21)  
7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Who are some of, uh, your most memorable work colleagues and  
9 why?

10  
11 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Some, we want to go back to St. Joe now, right? We're talking  
12 those. Probably Bob Sunderman was one of them. He was, uh, he was like a mentor. Uh.  
13 He was just a, a, a nice man and understood things. Some of these, uh, Dave Heiser  
14 probably. And he's, he's ill now. Uh. Some of the ladies I worked with were great. Betsy  
15 Griest, we're still friends. Uh. We got to be friends back when she was filling in for me  
16 when I had my son. And we've stayed friends. So certainly her. Uh. A lot of the people I  
17 don't stay in touch with, most of them I don't. But those, those people stick out in my  
18 mind really.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?  
21

22 **TERRI BELCZYK:** With St. Joe, I don't know that it could've been. I really don't  
23 know. Uh. It, it was a fair company. It was, it was a good company to work for, and like I  
24 said even, even after the union came in I think people got along better than expected. Uh.  
25 It was just a, just a great place. They had a gas pump. We were allowed to go buy gas at  
26 the company rate. You know, so, I mean what do you want? [Laughter]  
27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job at the Monaca site?  
29

30 **TERRI BELCZYK:** My last day there was bittersweet because for me I knew I was  
31 moving on to, to here, to come to Twin Towers. And the movers were in moving all our  
32 furniture and things were flying off the shelves and people were, you know, walking out  
33 with things, which happens. Uh. But by that time, it was a gradual decrease in, in  
34 employees. So, some people left in February. Some people left in March. So, by the time  
35 it was our last day, our building was still intact because most of us were moving up here.  
36 Uh. Except for a few of the people in accounting. So, it was, it was hard to leave to say,  
37 "Boy, I've been travelling here every day and it's gonna be gone." And then when I went  
38 down there not too long ago and saw the difference. Wow! But you know, it's, it was, it's  
39 a good memory. What can I say? It was very good.  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?  
42

43 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I think it's great. I think that, uh, it's going to be a big boost. I  
44 mean, already you look at what they've done down there. How many years we came off  
45 of 376 or Route 60 as it was called and we got to the end of that exit and I said, "We need  
46 a light." Trucks are coming up and down this hill. There's a light there now and long

1 overdue. But there's more hotels that have sprung up. I think Shell is a great company. I  
2 hope that they can employ some people from here or, you know, get people trained.  
3 Maybe the community college and Penn State can, can get on board or maybe they  
4 already have done that, but I think it's going to bring a lot to the business. Not just with  
5 Shell coming but with maybe some of the other businesses that'll spring up. I'm looking  
6 forward to it. I think it's great. I think it's great for an area that has been kind of depressed  
7 and lost a lot of its factories. I think it's, I think it's wonderful. Glad to see it happen.

8  
9 (0:58:08)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Well that's the end of my prepared questions.

12  
13 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Okay.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there something you'd like to add?

16  
17 **TERRI BELCZYK:** I don't, I don't think so because you and I have talked on the  
18 phone. Um. You know, I was at, I was at one end of it, one spectrum, and I think with the  
19 personalities you have that you've talked to, you're getting a good feel all the way around  
20 from the plant, you know, people, supervisors out there, you know, people like John who  
21 are in R&D. Um. There is another guy and I don't know if you had his name, Barry  
22 Dugan. He was tech service. He was there for a long time and he is so well respected out  
23 there in the metal industry. Uh. And he's local here. I should've given you his name right  
24 from the get go.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** I will follow up with you on, uh, for that as well.

27  
28 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Do you want me to just email you these people's...

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. That would be great.

31  
32 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Information. I should write down how many.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** I'll write them all down for you...

35  
36 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Oh.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Or you can write them down when we finish here. Um. Is there  
39 anybody who was a senior, senior person, uh, superintendent of the whole plant, a  
40 president, somebody real high up there that you think is still around and might be a good  
41 candidate to interview?

42  
43 **TERRI BELCZYK:** Uh. Gary Wickham is still around. Now, Gary, Gary came over,  
44 uh, from Palmerton with the merger in '87. So, I know he's still around. Uh. And you  
45 have Tom Janeck was, was around back then. Bob Sunderman, of course, passed away.

46 (END)



**John DeChellis**  
**Interview @ November 11, 2016**

## **JOHN DECHELLIS**

### **Summary**

The interview with John DeChellis took place on November 11, 2016, in the living room of his home in Rochester, Pennsylvania. John worked for St. Joe and its successor companies from July 1971 to the December 1979 shutdown, and again from 1981 to the 2014 shutdown. He held a range of positions in a number of departments, starting as a laborer and rising to a utility supervisor and superintendent of the smelting department.

From his more than 40 years at the plant, John brings the perspective of a laborer and management well versed in the various operations of the plant. His interview explains the workings and products of the sinter plant, the refinery, and, in great detail, the furnace plant. John outlines the maintenance of the furnace plant and the management structure for running it.

John describes the hazards of and training and safety protocol for power outages, as well as other safety initiatives. He discusses the climate leading to unionization, reasons for the 1979 shutdown, and changes in the operations, e.g., recycling, when the plant reopened in 1980. He also talks about the 2002 bankruptcy and the circumstances leading to the final closing in 2014.

Other topics covered in the interview include the plant railroad, benefits for continuing education, the company's management training program, the bidding process for job mobility, and employee perks like the gymnasium, cafeteria, and parties. John's interview conveys a strong sense of the camaraderie that existed within the St. Joe community.

1 **JOHN DECHELLIS**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/11/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 JOHN DECHELLIS  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** This is November 11, 2016. Interview with John DeChellis. John,  
8 could you please state and spell your full name, give us your date of birth, and address.  
9

10 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Okay. John DeChellis. It's DeChellis. My date of birth is  
11 [REDACTED]. My address is [REDACTED], Rochester, Pennsylvania.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** Is that a capital C in DeChellis?  
14

15 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes. It's DeC.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Are you currently working or retired?  
18

19 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I'm right now retired, but I am looking to do something else.  
20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area or did you come here because  
22 of employment opportunity at St. Joe's?  
23

24 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** No. I grew up in Monaca, Pennsylvania, across the river. And,  
25 um, lifelong resident of this area in Beaver County. I did for a short period of time when  
26 the plant closed in 1979, I did get a, a job, um, in Cleveland. So I was living in  
27 Strongsville, Ohio, at the time until the place reopened again and they recruited me back  
28 here to, Pennsylvania.  
29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And we're going to talk about that.  
31

32 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Okay.  
33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** As we move along here. Did any family members of yours work at  
35 St. Joe Lead?  
36

37 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** My father-in-law.  
38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** And, uh...  
40

41 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** His name was Bob Witherow. They called him Hap.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was his job there?  
44

1 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** He was a supervisor down there and, um, he was I believe in the  
2 furnace plant, but then he was moved out, um, into the railroad. The railroad operation at  
3 that time was rather large. So he was in charge of the railroad, in-plant railroad.

4  
5 (0:01:40)

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about that railroad operation? How it  
8 served the plant?

9  
10 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well, it's, it's right on a main spur line because that spur line fed  
11 all the other businesses along Route 18 there. And, it was very important for moving our  
12 product and also getting raw materials into the plant as well especially coke. And, we  
13 also had the river there and the road system and then the proximity to all the steel mills in  
14 the area. That's what made this site strategic for what we were into.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Tell me a little bit more about your father's experience, your father-  
17 in-law.

18  
19 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** My father-in-law.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

22  
23 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** His experience there?

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Anything you learned about from him.

26  
27 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well, he he always talked about, he always enjoyed the, uh, the  
28 family type atmosphere, and prior to me working there, I was working at another  
29 company in Monaca. And, and I went to the service and so forth, and he always talked  
30 about the family type atmosphere that was there. And I know a lot of his friends, they  
31 used to have, um, parties and I would attend too. And they were just a great bunch of  
32 guys. And, you could just see there was a lot of love between 'em. And then when I  
33 started working down there, it was, I felt the same thing. It was just like a family type  
34 atmosphere. But he really enjoyed working there and he really was very loyal to the  
35 company, very loyal.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** What education did you have before working at St. Joe?

38  
39 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I just had the high school education when I worked there. When  
40 the plant closed, there were a lot of doors that were closed to me when the plant closed  
41 because I didn't have a college education even though I was a supervisor coming out of  
42 St. Joe. So I decided to take advantage of the, the tuition reimbursement program that  
43 they had at St. Joe at the time. I went on to get my Bachelor's Degree and one of the  
44 engineers talked me into going to get my MBA because he was in the MBA program. So  
45 I went and got my MBA as well. In hindsight, I wish I would've went and got a law  
46 degree cause I really had a passion for law. But, I don't regret getting the MBA.

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(0:04:00)

**INTERVIEWER:** Did St. Joe help pay for your education?

**JOHN DECHELLIS:** A hundred percent. Even parking, pencils, books, ...

**INTERVIEWER:** When was this?

**JOHN DECHELLIS:** This was in the '90s. And I think I finished my MBA program in '98. So it was around, um, from about, the whole thing cause I was going to night school working there 11 hours a day or even sometimes 12 hours a day and then leaving right away and going to the college. It was like around '88 to, to '98. So it took about 10 years going to night school. But, I had an opportunity to go to Pitt, Duquesne, or Robert Morris. I chose Robert Morris because of its proximity. In 20 minutes I could be in class from the plant. So the way I was working, it was kind of more convenient for me to do that rather than hassle with the traffic going into Pittsburgh. So that's why I went to Robert Morris. And at the time also they were rated the number five small college in business in the country by *News World Report*. And it was a good business background. It since has evolved into a bigger program. But that's the reason why I chose Robert Morris.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was the undergraduate work you did there in business as well?

**JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes. It was in business with a minor in quantitative business analysis.

**INTERVIEWER:** What's that?

**JOHN DECHELLIS:** [Laughter] It delves into a lot of mathematics, with statistical programming for businesses. The funny thing about it, I had an opportunity to, to leave St. Joe after getting my degrees, but I didn't because I would've had to relocate and I didn't want to relocate to where I had to. Cause it was far away and I was very family oriented. And so I decided to stay here because the company treated me well, and I was compensated well. I really didn't have the urge to move. Maybe in hindsight I should've, but at that time, it was right for me and I don't regret it at all.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there any formal agreement between you and St. Joe that you would continue to work for them if they were paying for your education?

(0:06:23)

**JOHN DECHELLIS:** No. They said that it had to be something that related to the company. In other words, you couldn't go and become a teacher or something like that. Go into a teaching program. So, that's one of the reasons why I chose business. But I was always interested in business, but once I got into college and started to go through the

1 various courses, I really got attached to the law classes. And one professor I had. In fact, I  
2 will never forget, his name was Joe Walden from Pittsburgh, and he was a professor at  
3 Duquesne University. Taught law there. And he was on a reciprocity agreement with  
4 Robert Morris at the time and he taught a lot of law classes there, and I really got  
5 interested because of him. He even asked me about taking the LSAT when I was coming  
6 out of undergrad. And even after the graduate program, I said, "Listen, if I, after coming  
7 out of the MBA program take the LSAT and go into law school, she would, my wife  
8 would've killed me," because it was an arduous process. Even though I was going to  
9 night school and sometimes getting home at 11 o'clock at night and just going to bed  
10 right away to go to work the next day. On the weekends, I, I'd be in the library from 8  
11 o'clock in the morning until maybe about noon to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. So, it  
12 would've been a challenge.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** How prevalent was it for St. Joe to fund the education of its  
15 employees?

16  
17 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** It was, I thought it was a great opportunity, but you know the  
18 unfortunate thing is a lot of the guys didn't take advantage of it. I did talk to one other  
19 person into going into it and he did complete it. He's passed on right now. But he did  
20 complete his bachelor's degree there and also his MBA as well. But a lot of the men  
21 didn't take advantage of that and I, I just don't, I don't understand why. It was there, and  
22 then actually right after I completed, I think it was within a couple of years after I  
23 completed the program that they did away with it. Robert Morris is a private school. So I  
24 had free education to a private school.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** How did the company, um, communicate with the employees that  
27 there was this option to pursue continuing ed?

28  
29 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I don't think it was published enough and it was never mentioned  
30 to me when I was hired there and I just came across it by accident to tell you the truth. I  
31 was talking to a woman in HR and she had mentioned it. I said, "You have a tuition  
32 reimbursement program?" And she said, "Yes." And I, I was not aware of it. So, it wasn't  
33 really highly publicized. And perhaps that's the reason why a lot of people didn't take  
34 advantage of it, but I, once I got in I tried to encourage a lot of the men. But a lot of the  
35 guys were on shift work and it was, it would've been kind of hard to take day classes or  
36 night because you were working that evening class and you couldn't make classes. And  
37 now it would be much more adaptable because of online, you know they have a lot, as a  
38 matter of fact, the last courses I took in, in my MBA program they started to do online.  
39 You had to go online to get your your assignments for the next class and also, even to  
40 turn in some things. They just started that in the latter '90s. So it would be more  
41 conducive now. But at that time it would've been pretty tough for someone who was on  
42 shift work.

43  
44 (0:09:47)

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** And what year was it that you got your MBA?



1  
2 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** '98.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and when did you  
5 stop working for the company? And then we'll fill in what you did in those years.

6  
7 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Okay.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** After that.

10  
11 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I started in July of 1971 as a laborer. And, after a few years, it  
12 was like in mid-, I can't, I think it was somewhere in the mid-'70s where I took the  
13 apprentice program test. St. Joe had a very good apprentice program. Probably tops in the  
14 state. And, so I took the test for the apprentice program. But while I was taking the test  
15 they also told me that I was going to be taking a series of tests for foreman's training  
16 class. Sometimes they did that to a lot of people and basically what it was, was a  
17 psychological test and it was, I think it was a little more mechanical tests and spatial  
18 relations test. And, I passed both and then they called me in and they said, "Well you  
19 have an opportunity to go into the apprentice program or you can go into the management  
20 program." And at the time, the HR Director's name was Joe Nard. He sort of talked me  
21 into going for the, the supervisor's position. And I looked at it and there was a lot of great  
22 benefits at that time too, stock options, retirement from there and, so, a pension program  
23 rather. And, and so I went into the management program. And it was very thorough and  
24 once you came out of the management program, they put you right into the workforce.  
25 And you didn't feel uncomfortable by doing that because you knew how to get things  
26 done. You knew if you needed some maintenance done how to make out maintenance  
27 requests. If you needed something purchased, you knew how to make out purchase  
28 requisitions. You knew how, what to do and who you had to talk to get things done. So it  
29 was very thorough and you didn't feel intimidated at all because to tell you the truth I  
30 was one of the youngest supervisors in the whole corporation and here I am with some of  
31 these guys who have been there for 20 and 30 years. And at first it was kind of  
32 intimidating to me. But after a while, I didn't think anything of it because I knew what I  
33 was doing and I felt comfortable in my position. So I think in that respect, the, the class  
34 was very, very good for a young supervisor because a lot of people when they get into a  
35 supervisory position if they don't have that sort of background and, I didn't have a  
36 college degree. But I mean just dealing with people and dealing with various  
37 personalities, it's intimidating. At first, like I said, for a little bit it was. But then it just  
38 became very, very normal to me. So, it was a very good program.

39  
40 (0:12:42)

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So when you came out of this program and you step in as a  
43 supervisor as your first job at St. Joe, and you're a young guy and you have men who've  
44 been working there 30 or 40 years, how did they respond to you?

1 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Some of them were very cordial cause my father-in-law he was,  
2 he was pretty popular in that area. And a lot of people knew him. And they knew I was  
3 his son-in-law and they were really receptive. There was some people who were they  
4 tried to get away with what they can get away with. And at first you let it go by and then  
5 the next thing you know, you just have to pull them off to the side and say, "Look this  
6 isn't going to go. You know, I'm at this level. You're at that level. I have to get things  
7 done. You were hired to do a job here." And to tell you the truth, I really didn't have a  
8 whole lot of problems with those guys. I mean, there were the little problems. You  
9 always have problems. You even have problems with the younger guys. Probably the  
10 biggest problem with the men who I actually worked with, I don't know if they felt like I  
11 was deserting them or disloyal to them in some respect. But that was maybe the hardest  
12 thing to overcome. But it sort of subsided. It was there and then it subsided very quickly.  
13 And, that was the only thing. It really wasn't a big problem with transitioning to a  
14 supervisory position.

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you working there prior to being put into the management  
17 training program?

18

19 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yeah. I was hired in '71. I was there as a laborer.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Then, that's. Yeah, that's where I want to start.

22

23 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** And then in the mid-'70s when I went into the supervisor's  
24 training class.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

27

28 (0:14:19)

29

30 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** So, yeah, I was down there shoveling with everybody else.

31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** That's where, I lost the part where you started first.

33

34 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Oh, okay. Yeah. No.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** So let's, let's backtrack a little bit. What position were you initially  
37 hired for?

38

39 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I was a laborer. And I was assigned to the sinter plant in the  
40 section called coke and residue.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you describe what happened in the sinter plant?

43

44 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yeah. Well basically I didn't know what was going on when I  
45 first got there. I mean, the plant was kind of overwhelming. It was, it was big and there  
46 were pipes everywhere, power lines everywhere. So it was kind of intimidating. Where I

1 was working there was a lot of conveyors and basically in the coke and residue section  
2 and I didn't know it at the time, but basically they did a lot of the, the materials coming,  
3 the residue coming from the furnaces, the spent sinter and the coke. They would reclaim  
4 it over there. So basically what I was doing there was just shoveling up the piles that fell  
5 off of the conveyor. I did that every day. And it was kind of a, a harsh atmosphere. There  
6 was a lot of dust and you had to wear respirators. And, I'll never forget the day I was  
7 with this other younger guy and I'm telling him what to do. And I said, "Look we have to  
8 go get our respirators because we're going to go in this area. It's kind of dusty." So we go  
9 get our respirators and get our canisters and we put our canisters on and we put the  
10 respirators on and we go into this pit and we're shoveling material onto the conveyor and  
11 it was kind of getting dusty. I looked over and I saw him. He was struggling and all of a  
12 sudden I just saw him throw down his shovel and he takes off. And I was wondering,  
13 "What the heck happened?" So I go after him. I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "I  
14 can't breathe." I said, "What do you mean you can't breathe? You got the respirator on."  
15 He said, "I can't breathe. I'm telling you." So I looked at him and there was a foil that they  
16 put over the respirator. It was sanitary packaging is what it was. And he didn't take the  
17 foil off so basically he was just like smothering himself. So we had a big laugh about that  
18 and throughout our years there I always kid him about but that was kind of funny. But  
19 like I said, it was a rather harsh atmosphere there and then following that I got transferred  
20 over to the furnace plant. And I was working as what they called a condenser helper. I  
21 was on the casting, where they did the casting on the condenser floor. And, so I was  
22 doing a lot of the casting. What they called bench. We didn't have the automatic casters.  
23 Everything was done by hand. The operator would pour the metal into a mold. You  
24 would skim the, the dross off to make a nice smooth surface and then after it solidified  
25 you would dump it and stack it. And these slabs weighing about 55 pounds each. You  
26 would stack them, and I was working number nine furnace and number nine furnace was  
27 notorious for getting like about 40 taps a shift. So you were casting continually. You  
28 were hoping break time would come right away because it, it was rather a physical  
29 demanding job. But after a while, there was a technique to it and actually when you  
30 started watching some of the older guys do it they actually never even held the slab at all.  
31 You would flip the mold over and you would just more or less guide the slab onto the  
32 stack that you were, where you were piling it because the transport that was holding the  
33 rest of the metal was laying there and all you had to do was more or less position the first  
34 row. Other than that, everything just flipped it and just guided it, and you actually really  
35 never held the 55 pounds. So you just had to know those tricks. You picked them up.  
36 Sometimes the older people would pass on these little tricks to you and other times they  
37 would just sit there and want to laugh at you trying to lift up these 55-pound slabs. But  
38 there were older guys there who really wanted to show you the ropes. But that's basically  
39 what I was doing there and then I got, for a short period of time, I got transferred over to  
40 the bricklayers. And I was a bricklayer helper. So I got to go throughout the plant. We  
41 were doing various brickwork and basically what I did mixed the mortar for the  
42 bricklayers and I helped cut their bricks. They're certain shapes of brick as they were  
43 building, rebuilding furnaces and also relining acid tanks. So I did that for a while and  
44 after that I got shortly assigned down to where they called, where they were actually  
45 melting lead for Delco, for the maintenance free battery. And I got involved with that  
46 operation for a short period of time. And then I got back to the furnace plant, and I

1 worked on the utility crew for a while. And they did maintenance on the furnaces and  
2 that's when I got into the supervisor training program. Go ahead.

3  
4 (0:18:55)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you move from one of these jobs to the next across  
7 departments?

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9 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Some of them were bidding, a bidding process.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk about the bidding process?

12  
13 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yeah. What they would do is, if there was a position open, they  
14 would post it on the bulletin board and then you would submit a bid. And the person with  
15 the most seniority would get that position. Some jobs were very tough to get into like  
16 furnace operator. The higher paying jobs were obviously hard to get into. The older guys  
17 would want those jobs and also steady daylight jobs. The older people would want those  
18 jobs. So that's how you moved up. At that time, I would bid on those jobs and sometimes  
19 during that, when I got assigned where they were processing the, I can't think of the name  
20 of it right now. It escapes me right now. But where we were processing the lead for Delco  
21 for the maintenance-free batteries, there was a cutback in the plant. They, they were  
22 cutting back some positions and my position got cut back. So I had an opportunity to go  
23 over to the refinery or to this position where they were processing lead. So I decided to  
24 go over there. There were a few men I knew over there and so I went over there and that's  
25 how I got there. But then when, then I bid back into the furnace plant, probably shortly  
26 after that. I'm not sure the exact timeframe. But, I bid back to the furnace plant and then I  
27 went into the management training program and then coming out of the management  
28 training program I was assigned as condenser supervisor. And at that time, they had  
29 different supervisors for every level of the operation of the furnace plant. There was a top  
30 floor supervisor, who was in charge of the feed that entered the furnace, and then there  
31 was the condenser supervisor, who was in charge of the furnace operations, the tapping of  
32 the furnaces and also there was, on the same floor, a casting supervisor and he was in  
33 charge of all the casting and alloy. And then you went down to the basement where the  
34 residue exited the furnace. There was a residue supervisor. And then managing this whole  
35 operation was what they called the shift superintendent. So, there were all these guys  
36 involved. So I started out as a condenser foreman, or condenser supervisor, then a casting  
37 supervisor and then I was assigned to the top floor and then actually the basement. But, it  
38 got to the point where I went over to the refinery and I started looking, learning the  
39 refinery. I was over there for a while.

40  
41 (0:21:20)

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk, explain what happened in the refinery?

44  
45 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** The refinery is where we made zinc oxide. We processed in the  
46 furnace plant, we would smelt the sinter and get the zinc metal out and we would cast but

1 we would also send a portion of the zinc metal over to the refinery, and that's where we  
2 made our zinc oxide, high-purity zinc oxide and the zinc oxide was used in the  
3 pharmaceutical, agricultural, and rubber industry primarily. And we also had the  
4 capability of making special high-grade zinc there as well. But it was a costly process to  
5 make the special high-grade zinc because you had to run it through a column twice in  
6 order to make the special high grade and that became costly.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Excuse me. What was the, the purpose of the special high-grade  
9 zinc?

10  
11 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** The special high grade, it was a higher quality. Like in, in the  
12 furnace plant, what we were making in the furnace plant and at one time when, when I  
13 started there, 17 furnaces in the smelting department. And there was a high grade section  
14 and then there was also a PW or Prime Western grade. The high grade, special high  
15 grade, but it contained a lot lower lead. The, the Primary or Western zinc it had upwards  
16 to 1% lead in the product. And, the high grade was lower than that. The special high  
17 grade was almost 99.99% zinc. And that was highly coveted and we charged a premium  
18 for that. But, that's what we did over there. And that was actually, one of the reasons for  
19 the demise of the plant because the prime western grade zinc that we were producing the  
20 market kept on shrinking because of the various laws that were passed by the EPA on the  
21 percentage of lead that could be in a product. So, our market started to shrink and so we  
22 were looking to get into the special high grade or high grade business and that's where the  
23 plant in North Carolina came about. But that's later on.

24  
25 (0:23:33)

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the value of the high grade zinc, the 99.99%?

28  
29 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** What we were selling it for?

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

32  
33 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** To tell you the truth, I can't recall. There was a premium on it.  
34 And I'm not sure. I can't recall off the top of my head what the premium was at that time.  
35 Zinc is a commodity and price would fluctuate.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** I actually mean what was the market for it? What was it going to be  
38 used for compared to a lower grade zinc?

39  
40 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** It was the same thing. However, you could use it in a lot more  
41 areas. I think we had a customer in Connecticut, Valmont, I think they were out of  
42 Connecticut, where they wanted to go to special high grade because of the, their market,  
43 and where their product was going and they couldn't have the higher levels of lead in it.  
44 But they also took PW as well. But, a lot of companies were taking the special high grade  
45 because you could use it more and there was a bigger market for it. You could use it and  
46 it could go to a lot of markets. If you take the Prime Western grade, you make toys out of

1 it. You just couldn't sell those toys anywhere in the United States. But, the odd part about  
2 it, but a lot of the toys that were coming in from China recently had a lot of high  
3 cadmium heavy metals in, in their toys. They were coming in the country. But you  
4 couldn't make it in this country so it was kind of odd. But, that's the big reason why you  
5 wanted to go with a special high grade. There was a bigger market for it, but the process  
6 that we had was too costly to make.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** In general, did your coworkers move to this area because St. Joe  
9 offered employment or did St. Joe employ people who happened to live in the area?

10  
11 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** It was mostly people who lived in the area, in the tristate area. By  
12 that I mean, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. When I was there, a lot of the men  
13 were farmers and some of them still kept their farms running. And, we actually at one  
14 point had a farm at St. Joe, which supplied beef to our cafeteria. And, I don't know if  
15 anybody talked to you about our cafeteria, but if you put that cafeteria out in the  
16 marketplace, it'd still be running as a great restaurant in this area because the women  
17 there put on some feasts. I mean the food was excellent and everybody ate there. Nobody  
18 who came from far away. I mean there were people who relocated to this area, I think  
19 they lived a little further towards Pittsburgh, who, uh, you know relocated down in this  
20 area here. But a lot of the guys were farmers from the area who worked there. And I was  
21 surprised at the number of people who had a farming background.

22  
23 (0:26:28)

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** The management program that you were in at St. Joe's, how long was  
26 the program and could you please describe what that training involved?

27  
28 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yeah. Boy, I'm trying. It was I want to say three to four months,  
29 but it might've been longer. It might've been a little bit shorter than that. I can't recall off  
30 the top of my head right now. But basically you had a classroom where you went over  
31 how the operation ran. How to make out purchase requisitions, who was in charge, what  
32 you had to do if you wanted something, you had to go to your supervisor and what you  
33 had to supply him with. How to get maintenance requests, how, you had maintenance to  
34 do, how to fill out maintenance requisitions. And also, equipment identification numbers  
35 had to be listed for inventory. So if there was a piece of equipment you wanted them to  
36 work on you had to make sure you gave them the eight-digit number so they knew  
37 exactly what equipment they had to work on and priorities. How to set priorities to get  
38 things done. We also had a Dale Carnegie course we had to go through. If you're familiar  
39 with the Dale Carnegie.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm familiar with *Public Speaking*, but what are you referring to.

42  
43 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** It's *How to Win Friends and Influence*, uh...

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.



1 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** And you had to get up in front of the class and give presentations  
2 on various things, so we had to go through that. There was also a course you took at  
3 Penn State Behrand in Erie. The unfortunate thing I didn't get to go there. And the reason  
4 I didn't attend was due to an illness in the furnace plant and since I was familiar with the  
5 furnace plant, I was assigned in there and I didn't complete that part of the course. And  
6 that's how I got out of it. Well, I would've loved to have gone through it, because a lot of  
7 the guys told me it was very good. And basically what they did there was playing roles  
8 such as working with disgruntled employees or if you came across something what would  
9 you do and this situation. So that's what the course was all about. And I didn't get an  
10 opportunity to go through that because again I had to take care of this opening that they  
11 had that needed somebody there right away. They did say they were going to send me  
12 there some time later. But it never materialized.

13

14 (0:29:00)

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were in the management training program, were you full  
17 time in the training program or were you also working in the plant?

18

19 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I was working. Both. You had class and then, you worked.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you have time for both?

22

23 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well, in the morning you would go to class and then after that  
24 class you would go back out to where you were that day working.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** So if you were doing day shift.

27

28 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Uh-hmm.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Would you basically be excused from your day shift responsibilities  
31 to be in class for a few hours?

32

33 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Once you were a plant, a furnace plant supervisor, um, okay. Long  
36 time employees in the furnace plant must have had ideas from time to time about how to  
37 improve operations. What kind of encouragement or incentives existed for employees to  
38 come forward to you as their supervisor with suggestions?

39

40 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well they always had suggestions, but there was no incentive  
41 programs at that time. Later on, we did institute a, a program where the men were  
42 rewarded. But at that time it was kind of different. If there was something that you  
43 wanted changed or there was something like a special tool that, that came up with  
44 because a lot of the tools we used were actually produced in-house. These aren't tools that  
45 you go to a hardware store and buy. It just was appropriate for that operation. And, a lot  
46 of these guys came up with it on, on their own initiative and a lot of them would come to

1 you and tell you, "Hey, why are we doing this? Let's do it this way." And I would look at  
2 it and say, "Well okay. Well let's give it a try." As long as it wasn't anything against the  
3 safety rules and you were not going to put someone in harm's way or, produce an inferior  
4 product as a result of it, you would go ahead and give it a shot. But the guys were very  
5 forthcoming at that time. It wasn't, um, I don't know. They were just forthcoming. And,  
6 and they weren't really looking for anything. They were just looking to make a better  
7 product.

8  
9 (0:31:07)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** There was a time when there used to be, um, safety awards for  
12 people who came up with ideas that would make the workplace a safer place.

13  
14 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** We had various clubs, like the 10-year club, the 30-year club. It  
15 all depends on where you were in the process and a lot of it was safety oriented and we  
16 would get safety awards and we also got production awards as well. But it really wasn't  
17 as prevalent as it was in the '90s, and in the '90s that's when we went into our program  
18 with actually getting cash awards for suggestions that actually saved the company money  
19 and actually I was on that committee with an engineer and we reviewed these  
20 suggestions that would come in and once that was put out that there was a monetary  
21 award at that time, we were swamped with suggestions, some of them were kind of really  
22 crazy, but a lot of them were really doable. As a matter of fact, we were having trouble  
23 with the chemistry of our special high-grade metal in the refinery. And I remember one of  
24 the men on the floor found a thermocouple that we were using to measure the  
25 temperature of the metal. It had deteriorated and there was metal exposed. Well if any  
26 kind of metal touches the zinc, it gets contaminated. And, he found that on his own. So he  
27 come up with the idea of inserting the thermocouple into a ceramic tube and it worked  
28 out well and he got a cash award for that.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there production awards accompanied with bonuses?

31  
32 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** The union negotiated a bonus award for a certain level of  
33 production. But, it wasn't like, we were not on any kind of piece work during the day, like  
34 if you made so many loads of zinc during the course of the day that you received X  
35 amount of money. It wasn't like that. It was calculated on a quarterly basis. And the men  
36 would receive a bonus in that respect. But, there wasn't any cash bonuses right off the  
37 line for any kind of suggestions or anything like that. But, um, again like I said the men  
38 during the '70s they were pretty much forthcoming with ideas that they had and that's  
39 how things got done. A lot of it too was an old management practice of top down, "Hey,  
40 this is how we're going to do it." But, you get to learn later on that if you want to effect  
41 any kind of change you have to start from the bottom. You have to, you have to go to the  
42 bottom and get the people who are actually going to be affected to buy into what you're  
43 trying to do and that wasn't done and I think that led to some animosity and, which  
44 actually brought the union in, in the '70s as well. Because up until that time, it was a  
45 union free environment and if you have to imagine the era that was in. St. Joe was  
46 surrounded by all these big steel corporations, J&L, LTV, Crucible Steel, B&W, Armco,

1 Bethlehem Steel in this area. And this was like a sore point, a needle in or a thorn in the  
2 side of, of the union that this place was not unionized. And they attempted on many  
3 occasions to get the company unionized. But it wouldn't, it wouldn't unionize because it  
4 was so family oriented at the time. But, like I said, things sort of like started to deteriorate  
5 in the mid-70s and because of that top down management style, you know. And not  
6 getting people involved more and asking for their suggestions.

7  
8 (0:35:00)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Was it that the management style was changing in the '70s or was  
11 something else changing that the employees felt the need to vote in the union?

12  
13 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** It, it was a management thing. Because what had happened, the  
14 big thing that probably, the straw that broke the camel's back is when they brought in an  
15 outside consulting firm. Sort of like a time study firm that came in and they were  
16 proposing outrageous things. And, like I said, the atmosphere was rather harsh. It was  
17 very hot in the summertime. Very cold in the wintertime. A lot of dust. You had to wear a  
18 lot of personal protective equipment. And, they were making suggestions on how you  
19 don't need three men to do that job. You only need one man to do the job. And, there  
20 were a lot of safety aspects that were involved as well. So the attitudes started changing  
21 then. And you could see it coming. And like I said, it was a different type of man from  
22 when I started there. It was all family and it was a very hard job, but you kind of enjoyed  
23 going to work because there was a lot of kidding around. And I mean you could be in the  
24 hottest job and miserable and somebody would crack a joke or make some derogatory  
25 mention about somebody and the way he looked that day or whatever or something he  
26 did the day before and everybody would just start laughing. That was that kind of  
27 atmosphere. I really can't explain it to you. But, it was very enjoyable to go there even  
28 though it was a harsh environment. And like I said things started changing when you start  
29 getting that top down management style and bringing in this outfit. It seemed like there  
30 was a lack of trust. And I think the men looked at it, viewed it as a lack of trust in their  
31 abilities. You know, if you needed something, if you needed help and we were losing  
32 money and you want us to help out in controlling costs, ask us. How can we control  
33 costs? You know, and I think that's, that's how it, it went and that's how it kept on  
34 deteriorating until the union finally came in.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** You had mentioned being a utility foreman.

37  
38 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** How was that the same or different from what you had been doing  
41 before that?

42  
43 (0:37:18)

44  
45 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** The the utility supervisor he was in charge of maintenance on the  
46 furnaces. These were electric furnaces and there were eight top electrodes and eight

1 bottom electrodes. The eight top electrodes, there would be a certain burn usually  
2 anywhere from three to four inches every day. So you had to reset those electrodes every  
3 day according to what was prescribed the managers. And that was to protect the  
4 refractory walls. If you have an electrode too close to the refractory wall you could  
5 actually burn up the brick and, and you would have some problems there. And you would  
6 decrease the longevity of, of the furnace run. So you had to reset those to get the power  
7 into the furnaces every day and the bottom electrodes you would just change them as they  
8 just deteriorated. And, you had to replace them. So the utility crew was in charge of  
9 resetting electrodes, changing the bottom electrodes. Also every day there was a furnace  
10 that was shut down for maintenance. They would take it offline, take the vacuum off the  
11 furnace and take it offline and then you would have to go in there and open up all the  
12 openings where the zinc vapor flowed into the condenser. You had to make sure that  
13 those areas were open so the vapors had a free path into the condenser. Also any buildup  
14 that was in the condenser you would remove that buildup. And then in the gas scrubbing  
15 system of the furnace you would have to go in there and rake out what we called blue  
16 powder that would build up. Blue powder was zinc that should've been smelted, but  
17 wasn't and carried over into the gas scrubbing system. What we would do is rake that  
18 material out. We reprocessed that material and put it back through the furnaces. However,  
19 whenever you do things twice, you're losing productivity. So you really don't want that  
20 much blue powder. You had to watch that part of the operation as well. So basically you  
21 would just clean the furnace up, putting it back online. And cleanouts took anywhere  
22 from four hours sometimes to eight hours depending on how bad the condition the  
23 furnace was in or what we were doing in maintenance. This also gave our millwrights and  
24 electricians an opportunity to work on the furnace if there was something that was  
25 needed. Like changing a distributor top, which was a big job and it, you had to wait for  
26 the vacuum to come on the furnace before you changed this distributor top, the top of the  
27 furnace that distributed the charge into the furnace. Very critical. You had to have a  
28 certain contour in the furnace and, when that tube would crack or break, it resulted in a  
29 bad contour and it would affect the electrical operations of the furnace. So, that gave you  
30 an opportunity to do that. In the '70s, we had actually two cleanouts going on a day. One  
31 on the small end, which would've been the high-grade end, and the other one was on the  
32 larger furnaces where the PW metal was produced. They would shut one down in the  
33 morning and one down in the, the afternoon around noon.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did it take to cool down a furnace enough to be able to  
36 work on it and then how long did it take to heat it up enough to be operational again?

37  
38 (0:40:29)

39  
40 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well, we didn't cool 'em down to shut down. We actually heated  
41 'em up. [Laughs] Because...

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** That's seems counterintuitive.

44  
45 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** It is, but, zinc will freeze at 420 degrees centigrade. And it boils  
46 off at 902 degrees centigrade. We would take the temperature up to around 560° to 580°

1 centigrade and the reason we did that, because the furnace was going to be down for  
2 hours and you would start losing temperature because there's no more heat going into the  
3 condenser. You've taken the vacuum off the furnace. There's no vacuum. So all the heat  
4 is inside the furnace itself. So that heat is always there, but you had to have the vacuum  
5 off so you could work on the entire furnace. The gas scrubbing system, the condenser,  
6 and also the vaporizing section. To get in there and open up those opening where the zinc  
7 metal, the zinc vapor flowed through. So you had to heat it up to prevent the metal from  
8 freezing, depending on how long you were going to be down. So we were constantly  
9 checking the temperature of the metal. In some cases, the operator, if we knew we were  
10 going to be down for an extended period of time, would put natural gas burners on the  
11 cooling well where the molten metal was to keep it liquefied. But we would be constantly  
12 checking on it and making sure that the, the temperature wasn't getting dangerously low.  
13 And I didn't like to see it around 470 degrees at the end of the cleanout. A quick and dirty  
14 way to check, you would get a metal rod, stick it in the metal bath and pull it out. If zinc  
15 stuck to the bar, it was getting too cold. You want to wrap up whatever you're doing and  
16 get that furnace back online. So when we closed up the furnace, applied the vacuum, and  
17 put the power on, operations would resume. As soon as you put the vacuum on, all that  
18 hot vapors flowed from the furnace into the condenser and you're okay. There's not a  
19 specific timeframe. You get all those hot vapors flowing into the condenser you're good  
20 to go. We used to have a procedure on recovering the furnace. You wouldn't take the  
21 power up for a certain period of time. We usually ran around 8500 kW's or around 8.5  
22 megs. We would start the furnace out at 5500 kW and then two hours later take it up in  
23 increments. We found that to be detrimental. So basically when the furnace came on line,  
24 we went to full power. Sometimes it took a little bit longer based on how the furnace was  
25 prepped and how long the furnace was down. But, normally you could recover within the  
26 hour.

27

28 (0:42:59)

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever lose power there like basically the electricity goes out  
31 and did you have backup generators? What'd you do?

32

33 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** [Laughs] That was the most harrowing times there is when we  
34 had power outages. We had our own power station. It was rated for 120 megawatt power  
35 station that supplied power to the plant. But we also had the capability of interchanging  
36 with Duquesne Light if our power plant was down for any kind of maintenance or we had  
37 any kind of problems down there, we would tap into the public utility. And naturally if  
38 we overproduced we had an agreement with them where we would dump our electricity  
39 on their grid. Things would happen and, and storms you just kept your fingers crossed  
40 whenever a storm would come up, because we had power failures. They weren't all the  
41 time. Towards the end of the operations, they were getting way too prevalent, we actually  
42 shut down our power plant and we were totally dependent upon Duquesne Light for  
43 utilities and sometimes our transformer that we had linking us would go down and we  
44 would be sitting there with no power at all. One of the longest power outages I can recall  
45 was in the 20-hour range and we actually lost a furnace as a result, but we recovered it as  
46 well. Unheard of. It had never been done before in the history of the plant, but it was a

1 collaboration with me and my supervisors and a couple of the hourly employees on how  
2 we could recover everybody wrote it off because the condenser and cooling well  
3 solidified. We were actually heating a refinery column that produces oxide and they  
4 weren't at the critical stage yet so we brought that crew over to the furnace plant. It was  
5 an outside crew that would come in and would preheat the column before we started it  
6 up. We brought them over cause their equipment could really put some heat in there right  
7 away. So we came up with a, with a process so we could get this back online. We brought  
8 them over there and they hooked up their equipment according to what we told them and  
9 we got it back. We brought it back to life and it went the, the full range, normal range of  
10 existence. You had to really hustle when the power went off a lot of valves had to be  
11 closed on the furnaces and compressor house where the compressors were that supplied  
12 vacuum to the furnaces and the gas compressors that pumped gas, the carbon monoxide  
13 out of the plant. We used carbon monoxide as a fuel and we fueled our distillation  
14 columns and we also fueled our preheaters to the furnace. Preheating, where we preheat  
15 the charge entering the furnace that was done by CO gas. Our sinter plant was run on CO  
16 gas and it made the best sinter on CO gas rather than natural gas if you can believe that.  
17 So whenever you had a power failure, oxygen enters into the system. Oxygen and carbon  
18 monoxide are very explosive, very dangerous and the compressor house operator was  
19 alone. There was only one man over there when this occurred during the course of an  
20 evening or night shift. He had a lot of running around to do right away to start closing  
21 valves to stop oxygen from entering the system, because we could've had a catastrophe.  
22 The roof was designed in the compressor house to blow off rather than blow out the walls  
23 to diminish the severity of the explosion if that would've come to that point.

24  
25 (0:46:48)

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever see it come to that, to blowing the roof?

28  
29 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** No. But, it's a dangerous situation. Our operators in the furnace  
30 were trained, there were a lot of things that they had to hurry up and get their cooling  
31 coils out. There was no power to the furnace. We had these coils. You have to control the  
32 heat coming out of the furnace entering the condenser because if you didn't, then you  
33 would stop condensing. If I had a glass of ice water and I started pouring a pitcher of hot  
34 water into it, the ice cubes would melt and then eventually it would start boiling as well.  
35 The coils act as heat exchanger and were inserted into the metal. Metal coming out of the  
36 condenser into the cooling well where we tapped it out, the temperatures, you didn't want  
37 them to get, any higher than 600 degrees because after 600 degrees the generation of  
38 blue powder I was talking to you about was explosional and you didn't want that to  
39 happen. So you wanted the condenser operation to keep on going. In order to do that you  
40 had to supply cool metal back into the condenser and the way to do that was through  
41 these coils. These coils had water running through them and we inserted those into  
42 molten metal and that might sound a little dangerous and it is, but we checked these coils.  
43 The operators would check these coils daily, on each shift, and they would gauge them  
44 and make sure that they were a certain gauge or else they wouldn't use them. We would  
45 change them and always looking for holes. Because if you would insert that coil with  
46 water, coming out of it from somewhere you would have an explosion. So they would



1 have to hurry up and try to get those coils out of their well so they wouldn't freeze their  
2 cooling well. They would shut their water off, but then you had to get these coils out of  
3 there. And there was no electricity. So they used chain falls, but after a while we, we got  
4 to a point where that was getting too arduous to do. So we would use a generator to  
5 supply power to the cooling coil cables, so we can get the coils out. The guys who were  
6 on the casting end they had to hurry up and put natural gas burners in their holding pots  
7 so they wouldn't freeze the metal in the holding pot. And, the men in the basement they  
8 just had to exit because once all the power went off you had carbon monoxide gas  
9 forming in the basement area, which became dangerous to be in. So they left the area.  
10 Same thing with the guys who worked on the top floor. After they would put the furnaces  
11 on stack, the preheaters would be ventilated and that carried, carried away all the fumes.  
12 So everything would vent out through the stack into the atmosphere. Then, they, they left  
13 their area because CO would accumulate in their area as well. And the refinery was the  
14 same thing. They had a lot of things that they had to do. They had to put their columns all  
15 on stack. It was a very tight situation, and you could either lose assets. You could have a  
16 lot of problems with the men getting injured because in some places when the electricity  
17 went out you couldn't see your hand in front of your face and that is the truth. So  
18 everybody and I mean everybody carried a flashlight with them, all the time. We went  
19 through flashlights like crazy. Batteries like crazy. Because everybody knew. It all  
20 depends on where you were. If there was a power outage, make sure that you have a  
21 flashlight with you because you would not know where you were at. And even in our,  
22 um, bottom electrode section, we actually had a rope that was along the north end of the  
23 floor area and that rope would guide you. If you could make it to the wall and grab a rope  
24 you could follow the rope out to an exit. That was one of the sections where if the power  
25 went out you could not see your hand in front of your face. So, power outages were very,  
26 very bad. And as soon as I would be at meetings and as soon as the lights were gone  
27 everybody's running out the door because you're running to your position and making  
28 sure things were being done and assets were being protected and you always also did a  
29 head count right away because if somebody got trapped somewhere then we had to send a  
30 search party out.

31  
32 (0:51:27)

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any training drills?

35  
36 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes. We had training. We didn't actually have a full out blown  
37 drill. We would have meetings and discuss at our safety meetings what the furnace  
38 operators had to do, what the casting, uh, machine operators had to do, what the people  
39 on the top floor and the basement. At one point, we had a procedure where you actually  
40 had to sign when you went into the bottom electrode floor, like I said that was one of the  
41 area where you couldn't see your hand in front of your face or the sub-basement area  
42 was another hazardous area. You had to sign, sign up so we would know that you were  
43 there. And there were these signup sheets. But that got to the point where a lot of people  
44 weren't signing up, you know and if there was a power failure you want to make sure that  
45 you're not sending someone into harm's way looking for someone who isn't even there.  
46 And so we eliminated that and basically we put the onus on the supervisors. If I put a

1 workforce in the sub-basement for whatever reason, I know how many men I have down  
2 there and those are the first people that I would be looking for. The condenser foreman  
3 would actually take a count of his people and make sure that everybody was there and we  
4 had radios and they would broadcast over the radios, "All my men are accounted for,"  
5 and so forth. But if I knew there were a certain group of people working in an area I  
6 would personally go to that area to make sure that they were out, and that's how it worked  
7 a lot better. You just couldn't rely on everybody to sign. And then there were times too  
8 when it was the end of the day and guys would forget to sign off that they were out of the  
9 area. And that's where the problems came.

10  
11 (0:53:06)

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** In December 1979, St. Joe closed its Monaca smelter instead of  
14 converting it to an electrolytic process plant. What triggered the shutdown at this point in  
15 time?

16  
17 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Zinc is a commodity as all metals and it's a cyclical business.  
18 Zinc prices were low. We were having a lot of problems with high costs from our mining  
19 operations as well. And so we were looking into very different processes. Our process  
20 was a pyrometallurgical process with the electrothermic furnaces. The electrolytic was a  
21 hydro metallurgical process. So we were looking at it at the time in the '70s. It was a  
22 dinosaur. It's just like the steel mills. How they got rid of their open hearth furnaces with  
23 the pollution. And we would've had to put a lot more money into pollution control  
24 equipment. But, actually the mines brought us down and the price of zinc brought us  
25 down, and that's why they were looking for the conversion to the electrolytic. I remember  
26 a plant manager at the time having informational meetings.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?

29  
30 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** That was Bob Sunderman. He was having information meetings  
31 on the electrolytic process and I remember us going over to the gym and having these  
32 meetings and he was telling, "Look this is what we are looking into." But it, it didn't  
33 materialize. And we knew that in November and, and when they said that we were going  
34 to shut down. And that was kind of tough. I was a young supervisor and I had a family  
35 and I was worried about my future. But the really bad thing about it was the older men.  
36 They just could not believe that the plant was closing down. And a lot of them thought it  
37 was a ruse to tell you the truth. There were some things that were happening in the plant,  
38 some sabotage, that was occurring, that was really getting annoying. They thought maybe  
39 this was a way for the company to get rid of undesirables. But that wasn't it at all. They  
40 just had to shut the plant down to come up with a better way of running the plant. But  
41 these gentlemen would not, could not believe that we were actually shutting down. And  
42 some of them actually refused their severance pay because they said, "This plant is not  
43 shutting down." And I didn't hear about it until after I left, but I ran into a few people.  
44 They said a couple of the older men actually showed up to work the day after they were  
45 actually terminated and started doing their job until they were politely told to leave the  
46 premises. And that was kind of sad I thought, very sad. Those guys were there all their

1 lives and they went through a lot of hardships there. But again it was that family type  
2 atmosphere for them and they just could not believe that this was happening in their  
3 world.

4  
5 (0:56:26)  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** What help did the company give them for this transition?  
8

9 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Reeducation and there was a TRA at the time. The government  
10 was helping if you wanted to go to school, they paid for your schooling. So it was an  
11 opportunity for some of these men to actually go to school and I started thinking about it  
12 too. But actually right after the place closed down in December, I had a job in February  
13 and I was off to Cleveland as a supervisor. So I left and a couple of the guys thought I  
14 was crazy. They said, "Why didn't you stay and collect the unemployment and the  
15 government benefits?" And, I said, "I just wanted to get back to work." But a lot of the  
16 guys did that. There were some people who took advantage of the training. I'm not sure  
17 how many did because I was away from the area then. I was gone in two months. I was  
18 relocated in the Cleveland area and working out there. But, um, I think some of the men,  
19 who did take advantage. I did hear of a couple of guys who took the heating and air  
20 conditioning and ventilation and actually started their own businesses until they retired.  
21 And some people just flat out left the area. I know some people went to Florida to work  
22 down there and other people just were scouting all over the place. But some people just  
23 sat around until their unemployment ran out and then there was nothing going on because  
24 everything came to a head at that point. You started having all the big steel plants in the  
25 area start closing down as well and start laying off people. There were no jobs to be had  
26 in this area that you could make a good decent living. You could go and work somewhere  
27 flipping hamburgers I suppose or something or working at somebody's farm. But you're  
28 not, you weren't going to be making the money or getting the benefits that you had at St.  
29 Joe. And so it, it was kind of a tough thing. And these guys who didn't take their  
30 severance pay they actually made out because the plant reopened within a year and they  
31 were the first ones to get called back because they were still employed. They were still  
32 employees and they had all their seniority where everybody else who came back started  
33 out as day one in 1980. That was their first day back there. So they started out at year one  
34 again.

35  
36 (0:58:42)  
37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** So how did you end up coming back to the company and in what  
39 capacity?  
40

41 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yeah. I was working in Cleveland. Like I said, I was a supervisor  
42 and Don Warrens, I don't know what his official business was, but he was one of the big  
43 managers of, of the company. A very knowledgeable man. A very nice man. He called  
44 me up and asked me "What are you doing?" I'm not sure how he got my phone number,  
45 he might've, he probably got it from one of the people I was communicating with back  
46 there. But he did get my number. He called me up and he asked me what I was doing. I

1 told him and then I asked him "What's going on, why are you asking?" He said, "Well,  
2 we're at the initial steps of reopening the plant." And I was just taken back. "Are you  
3 kidding me?" "No," he says, "we're going to start the plant back up, but we're just getting  
4 things ready. And we're unsure yet about funding. We're still working through those, but  
5 we want to bring in a crew to start things up because we're going to get this funding and  
6 we're going to go ahead and reopen this plant." And I said, "Geez, you got me in a bad  
7 spot here. I just moved out here. I'm working for this company. They paid to relocate me  
8 out there and everything and we're unsure of what you're going to do, but you're telling  
9 me you are sure." He says, "I'll tell you what. Go ahead and keep working where you're  
10 at. I'll keep in touch when, when things get a little bit more solid." And I said, "Okay." So  
11 I continued to work. And it was maybe about, I don't know, seven or eight months later,  
12 maybe almost a year later, I get another call, I believe it was Dave Heiser at the time and  
13 he was the superintendent of the furnace plant, asking me if I would come back. And at  
14 that time I thought it was right because this company I was working for they were starting  
15 to have some problems and I already started looking for work out there as a matter of  
16 fact. And I liked the area, believe me, I loved the Cleveland area. I was living in a place  
17 called Strongsville, Ohio. It was a beautiful town, and it was a very progressive town.  
18 The schools were excellent. It was just a nice area to be in. And so I started looking for  
19 work out there. But they offered me a package to come back, and they moved me back.  
20 And they actually gave me back my seniority as well because I took my severance  
21 package. I said, "Okay". And I wasn't rationalizing anything like some of these older  
22 men were. They just thought it was a big lie, and I said, "I don't think it's a lie. They're  
23 closing up." They offered me a good package. So I moved back and that's when I came  
24 back in the latter part of '81.

25

26 (1:01:14)

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** It was my understanding that if someone took the severance package  
29 and then came back they lost their seniority.

30

31 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** That didn't happen with you.

34

35 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** No, because I was a manager.

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

38

39 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I wasn't brought back as an hourly employee.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** What changes were made in the technology, products, or processes  
42 such that it made economic sense to start up the plant again? What was, what was  
43 different? Why was it going to work now?

44

45 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well they said that their mines that they hit a new vein, a high-  
46 grade vein in, in New York where our mines were and they said it was going to be a high

1 percentage of zinc and it was going to be cost effective to do so. In addition to that, they  
2 were going to operate as a mini-mill. And we had, we had 17 furnaces that we were  
3 operating at the time. Well, when I came back they were down to six, and that's all they  
4 were going to operate. Now, we did restart a seventh furnace, which was number 16  
5 furnace. But it needed to be rebuilt because it was a little different than the other furnaces  
6 and it was one of those things that our engineers went to Japan because there was only  
7 two smelters like this one in Monaca. One of them was in Japan. And they went out to  
8 Japan to look at that smelter and they had a different type of gas scrubbing system and  
9 they came back and they implemented that on number 16 furnace. And it had its pros and  
10 cons. It was kind of dangerous. The washer in the gas scrubbing system was kind of  
11 dangerous because it kept plugging off and backing up water. And the water would get to  
12 the point, where it, it would go up so high and would overflow into the condenser on  
13 molten metal. You didn't want that to happen because inside the condenser the metal was  
14 constantly churning because of the vacuum that was on it. So metal on surface of molten  
15 metal, water on the surface of molten metal is still dangerous. You just stay away from it  
16 and let it boil off. However, water that gets in to molten metal will explode. And you had  
17 to be cautious and aware of that. So it just sat there when they started up. So we rebuilt it  
18 shortly after I came back and, and so that gave us seven furnaces. So we were operating  
19 as a mini-mill. We were using a lot more secondary materials. Secondary materials is  
20 zinc that we were buying off of our customers that was their byproduct. They would skim  
21 the surfaces of their metal and that's what is called dross and we would bring that back  
22 into our plant and, and we would reprocess it. Of course we would purchase it, but we  
23 would bring it back at a certain percentage of what the LME price was, the London  
24 Metals Exchange price was for zinc. The price may be 60 percent to 70 percent of the  
25 LME price. We had, in '79 when it closed down, I believe there was somewhere around  
26 1,100 employees that were laid off. When the plant started back up, it was somewhere  
27 when we got things rolling, it was somewhere in the 300 range. So it was a big drop off.  
28 We didn't need that many employees and we were a mini-mill.

29  
30 (1:04:16)

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you still, um, producing and selling sulfuric acid?

33  
34 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes. For a short period of time and then we ended that as well  
35 because we ended that whenever we closed the mines down. Whenever the mines went  
36 down and we weren't getting ore from them, there was no need to have it, uh, because we  
37 were getting our feedstocks from our recycle division. It didn't require the sulfur  
38 removed from the, from the ore.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** In hindsight, do you think that transition could've been made without  
41 the complete shutdown and laying off of employees in 1979?

42  
43 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Maybe in hindsight, I would say yes, but I wasn't involved in  
44 upper management at that time. I was a manager out on the floor. I was a section manager  
45 and so I wasn't involved in those talks. And maybe at the time they looked at it Bob  
46 Sunderman was forthright with us when he was bringing us in there and, and explaining

1 to us about the electrolytic process and how this was going to be our future. But it just,  
2 you know, it just wasn't feasible to do. Maybe the cost of building this facility at  
3 Monaca. Cause it would've probably taken a few dollars to build this and, and I don't  
4 know if it was economically feasible at the time because of the price of zinc and because  
5 they were running out of our, a good grade ore in, in our upstate New York mines. So it  
6 could've been a thing that they said, "Look, this isn't going to work." And all of a sudden  
7 now they, they find this new vein. Now, when I came back there was talk about, "Ah,  
8 they knew they had that all along. They were just pulling our leg." You know. I don't  
9 know if that's true or not because, again, I wasn't involved in those talks. But I could see  
10 if somebody puts it on my desk and said, "Look, John. The ore that's coming out of our  
11 mines now is inferior and the price of zinc is down, you know. We're, we're bleeding  
12 money. There's no other choice." I would've made the same decision. But I don't know if  
13 that was true. I didn't know what was going on at that time.

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** So you continued to rise in your career path and became  
16 superintendent...

17

18 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes.

19

20 (1:06:24)

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Of the furnace...

23

24 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Yes.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Department. How privy were you to what was going on with the  
27 Horsehead Corporation that was leading up to the final shutdown of the plant in 2014?

28

29 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I was involved. Towards the latter part its existence, I was in  
30 charge of the smelting department. I was in charge of pigments and chemicals. And I was  
31 also with shipping at the time as well. But that's because we had some people leave and I  
32 was asked, "Would you take on this position?" I said, " Okay." So I took on that. And it  
33 was extra work, but it wasn't overwhelming to me. I was always able to multitask and  
34 one of the reasons is because of the men who I had under me. They were good  
35 supervisors. I had some very good supervisors, who were very conscious about the  
36 process and very hard workers and they always kept me abreast on what was going if I  
37 was involved at a meeting somewhere or I was involved with something else. I also got  
38 involved with the grievance procedures and I was on the contract negotiation team. I did  
39 a lot of policymaking procedures. At one point, we did lose our HR Director and I was  
40 asked if I would take on that position for a short period of time until they found  
41 somebody. So I was actually handling all of the grievances throughout the whole plant at  
42 the time. So, I wore a lot of hats at the time. And I was very involved and that's why I  
43 also was involved in the initial shutdown of the plant. But we were looking, we were  
44 already looking at a process prior to thinking about building this plant down in North  
45 Carolina. We were looking at a process that was going to be in Monaca. It was going to  
46 involve the shutdown of some departments and it was going to involve the layoff of some



1 individuals, but the plant was going to still be operational in Monaca. And basically what  
2 it was doing was it was going to take secondary materials and we were going to melt it  
3 and feed it through our column to make zinc oxide and special high grade metal. And  
4 then a situation occurred in the refinery where a column exploded.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** In the 1990s, the plant was retrofitted to have the mini-mills, you  
7 were relying more and more on recyclables, and it seems like it was back on, back on a  
8 path to functioning profitably or at least it was functioning. What changed in say the first  
9 decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century or at one point leading up to the plant closing in 2014?

10  
11 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well in 2002, we declared bankruptcy. That was after, it was  
12 1987 when we were purchased by Horsehead Industries and they combined us with New  
13 Jersey Zinc to, to form Zinc Corporation of America, or ZCA. And it was still a privately  
14 owned company. I just think a lot of the money that we were making at the time wasn't  
15 put back into the company. It was a privately held company, a lot of the money was being  
16 siphoned off to tell you the truth, and because nothing was getting done. And that was  
17 another indication to me that there's something going on here and I don't think we're long  
18 for this world. And there were things in the paper about some of the owners. Things that  
19 they were doing and, and they were more or less living the high life. It was in the New  
20 York papers and we kept on getting bits and pieces of, of materials such as that. But, I  
21 just think a lot of the money was being taken out of the company at the time and not put  
22 back into the company, which resulted in the 2002 bankruptcy and also again the price of  
23 zinc was low at the time as well. It was like a perfect storm so to speak coming out of  
24 bankruptcy, if you want to call it a storm. But we came out of bankruptcy and the price of  
25 zinc went from like \$0.40 a pound to almost approaching \$2 a pound. I mean, all you had  
26 to do was sit there and watch the money come in and so the money was coming in like  
27 crazy following the, the bankruptcy, coming out of bankruptcy with the zinc price being  
28 up that high. I've been there all these years. I've never seen it approaching a dollar and  
29 here it was almost \$2 a pound. And we kept on prospering and we had a lot of money.  
30 We generated a lot of cash and our balance sheet had a lot of cash if this was the 1980s  
31 and men like Milken were out there. We would've primed for a takeover because we had  
32 a lot of cash. And so we decided to invest in a new technology. That's why I said this  
33 other thing came about. And we, we were, we were heading that way, and in 2007 that's  
34 when we issued an IPO. We went into an IPO and we became a publicly held  
35 corporation. And I always wanted that because I felt like once it was publicly held, then  
36 we were accountable to the shareholders and we were going to put money back into the  
37 company. And so I thought it was, the IPO was a good thing. And we continued to make  
38 money. We started purchasing other companies. We bought Inmetco, which I thought  
39 was a good deal and it was because it wasn't like some of these companies that go out  
40 and purchase things that isn't in their core business, such as like when Fluor bought our  
41 company. Here's a construction company. What do they want with a lead smelter and,  
42 and a zinc smelter? They wanted our overfunded pension plan is what they wanted and  
43 they still have it to this day. And they're waiting for people like me to die so they get it  
44 all. [Laughs] It's because I'm collecting on it. [Laughs] But, but that's the feeling I always  
45 had. I always make a joke about that. And every time they send me information about  
46 voting for their board of directors I vote everybody out. [Laughs] In case they're

1 watching, I'm the guy that's voting 'em out. But I haven't, I didn't have a whole lot of  
2 shares. But that's the feeling I had. So again, these compaies that we were buying were in  
3 our core and I said, "This is a great thing. You know. This company's really going to take  
4 off." And again, this accident that happened I think that put a stop to that in a hurry.  
5 Again, we were moving forward to having that done here at Monaca and we couldn't get  
6 any state funding, which I thought was kind of unusual because of the laws that were in  
7 the state. They were offering people all kind of incentives to come, to bring their plants to  
8 Pennsylvania. But here, an established plant in Pennsylvania and they don't want to keep  
9 it here. I just couldn't understand that. We were told that if you were a new company  
10 coming into the state, you would be given the world, but since you're already here you  
11 don't get those incentives.

12  
13 (1:13:49)

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** What did you specifically need the funding for at that point?

16  
17 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well they were probably looking for tax advantages and so  
18 things of that nature. And once Pennsylvania wasn't offering anything we started to shop  
19 this around, and Tennessee came in. They wanted the plant real bad and they were  
20 offering all kinds of tax incentives to come into Tennessee. And North Carolina was also  
21 in the mix. North Carolina had the bigger package and that's how it ended up in North  
22 Carolina. I think and now they had problems down there in operating that plant. Some of  
23 their problems we had here at Monaca, high fluorides and high chlorides in the feed that  
24 we were getting from our recycle division from the electric arc furnace dust. And it  
25 wasn't being processed out. So we would have to deal with it at Monaca. But the thing  
26 about the electrothermic furnaces at Monaca, as long as that material had an ounce of  
27 zinc in it, we'll get the zinc out. And you just have to deal with the rest of the stuff. But  
28 we would get the zinc out. And the other thing that was happening at the time is our  
29 production. We became a total recycler out of the bankruptcy after 2002. We went 100%  
30 recycle, which was unheard of in, in the industry. Everybody still had mines and  
31 everything. But mining was so expensive that we had to get out of that. So that's how we  
32 got out of the mining industry and that's why we says our recycle division was going to  
33 be our lifesaver and the only mistake we made there is we should've probably built more  
34 of those plants, those recycle plants. We should've built more of those plants. And to  
35 process more dust, EAF dust. And, but here you are getting your, your feed for free.  
36 What company gets their feed source for free? They were paying us to remove electric  
37 arc furnace from steel plants or these mini-mills, they were paying us to take it off their  
38 site. Otherwise, they would've had to send it to a, a landfill and monitor it at their  
39 expense. And so they didn't want to deal with that hassle. They were paying us to take  
40 their garbage off of their property. But, again, the chlorines and the fluorenes were  
41 having a lot of problems in our furnaces and we were, we started having problems getting  
42 our coke, because a lot of the steel mills were starting to use the same type of coke that  
43 we were using, the same sizing of coke that we were using in their blast furnaces. They're  
44 a bigger user than we were. And so they were being catered to. So we had to go out and  
45 scrounge around for various sources of coke and we were getting some inferior coke.  
46 And that had a big detriment on the furnace and its production. We were getting a lot of

1 fines and we were putting in the furnaces. And, being around the furnace, I never notice  
2 this. And being there since in, in the furnace plant for all these years, there would be days  
3 you couldn't even get near that furnace. You couldn't stand near it. The heat was so  
4 unbearable and in the refinery it was even worse because of that process and, and where  
5 you had to work in. Plus all the protective equipment that you had to wear. It was  
6 unbearable and the reason why it was unbearable was because that furnace couldn't  
7 breathe and, and we were putting all these fines in it and, um, we weren't adhering to our  
8 specs on, on the sizing of coke and the sizing of sinter. And so it was like one big solid  
9 piece of sand so to speak. The furnace couldn't breathe and the electrical properties  
10 changed. The furnaces must have resistance. The way I liken it to is you have your toaster  
11 oven. You put your bread in there and you push the handle down and as soon as you put  
12 it down the filaments turn red. Well why isn't the cord red? It's because there's a  
13 resistance in that cord. There's no resistance in the filaments. And that's the way this  
14 furnace was reacting. It was so hot that you were causing refractory damage. So the  
15 longevity of the furnaces that you once had weren't there anymore. We were losing  
16 furnaces far before their life expectancy. In addition to that, it was affecting power input,  
17 affecting production. You couldn't smelt properly. In addition to that, you couldn't vent  
18 the furnace properly. The furnace couldn't breathe. The way I liken it to is if you had a  
19 tube and you packed it with sand and you put a smoke source at the bottom, that smoke  
20 source isn't going to filter through that sand. But if I filled that up with a bunch of  
21 marbles, it's going to find its way out. That's what was happening in this furnace. I was  
22 big advocate of buying better coke, but you had to pay for it. And I know I lobbied for it  
23 all the time. I said this furnace has to breathe. The coke is inferior. Well finally they gave  
24 me the okay to go ahead. I said, "We're going to recoup the cost in extra production,"  
25 which we did. We finally started buying some decent coke. We started getting power in,  
26 and I believe it was in 2012, we made more zinc than we made in the last 10 years when  
27 they were an integrated smelter and that's what you had to do. But you had to spend that  
28 money, but we were making it up in production. And by producing more we were  
29 lowering the unit cost of our product in doing so. So that was a good thing that was  
30 happening at the time. But again, the zinc prices were deteriorating as well. With the EPA  
31 getting on you, "You're going to have to start doing some better things with your  
32 pollution control." And we were watching it rather closely. We were always watching for  
33 any sort of emissions and trying to take care of it and we were always trying to be a good  
34 neighbor. But sometimes the process was unforgiving because of what we were dealing  
35 with at the time with feed and so we would've had to invest a lot of money into pollution  
36 control equipment and you're looking and saying, "If we have to invest that kind of  
37 money in pollution control equipment, why not just build another smelter or, or build  
38 something that's different and that's where the, hydro, metallurgical process came into  
39 play, in, in, North Carolina rather than this process that we were looking at that was  
40 actually going to be built in Monaca. It was going to be in a smaller version, but again  
41 after that incident that happened in the refinery that was totally gone.

42

43 (1:20:14)

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part about working at the zinc plant?

46

1 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Again, when I first started there it was the family oriented thing.  
2 It was like working at a campus somewhere because we had a gymnasium there. That's  
3 probably one of the, I don't know if you talked to anybody else. It was one of the best  
4 gymnasiThat gymnasium was better than some of the college gymnasiums. It was better  
5 than the one they had at Pitt at the old Fitzgerald Fieldhouse. It was better than any  
6 facility in, in this area and below that were bowling alleys. I think there was a pistol  
7 range down there. There were all sorts of things that you did. There was a bowling  
8 league. There was a softball team. There was an archery league. There was a pistol  
9 league. And then you had various departments would challenge each other for volleyball.  
10 After you'd spend all this day working hard for eight hours in some harsh conditions and  
11 then you went out there and played volleyball till 10 o'clock at night. We had ball fields.  
12 And we went and played softball. Same thing. Various departments would challenge each  
13 other and you get a keg of beer and you go out there and make some sandwiches and you  
14 were there till 10 o'clock at night playing softball and just after it got too dark to play you  
15 sit around and shoot the breeze with the guys. It was that type of feeling, you know, that  
16 you had there. So in the cafeteria, I mean, I don't know if anybody told you about the  
17 Christmas parties that occurred down there. The toys that they would give away they  
18 weren't just little miniature cars or so forth. If it were today, you could equate it to them  
19 giving away computers and tablets and iPods and things of that nature. That, those were  
20 the toys that they were giving away. And one of the men in the plant would for a year  
21 would grow his beard out and, and he would play Santa Claus. And it was just, it was a  
22 fun thing not only for the kids. I liked to go to those. I enjoyed the program. And  
23 everybody looked forward to that. The cafeteria, it was a 24/7 operation. During the  
24 holidays, somebody had to work. Okay. And those women would be there and they  
25 would put white tablecloths on the tables along with you had candlelight dinners. And I  
26 think in some respect some of the guys probably preferred to eat their turkey there than at  
27 home. I don't know. But that's just the feeling I got. But it was that type of atmosphere  
28 and even at the end there I mean guys still joked around. A lot of people hung out with  
29 each other. It was just a family type thing. A lot of it was the camaraderie. You just  
30 enjoyed the people that you were working with. There were a lot of a great guys, and they  
31 still, and to tell you how, they still get together today. The people you were working with,  
32 they breakfast together every now and then and I think just a little while ago I saw on  
33 Facebook, the electrical gang, the electrical crew got together for a breakfast in one of the  
34 local restaurants and they still do that today. They still get together. So that's what I'm  
35 talking about the camaraderie. And it was just an enjoyable place to work with these  
36 guys. Even though you had to work in that atmosphere, everybody knew what they were  
37 doing and, and you enjoyed the company of each other. I mean, yeah, there's always  
38 some bad eggs there in every place, but the majority of the people were good people. And  
39 that's what was good about the plant.

40

41 (1:23:41)

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job when the plant had  
44 its final shutdown?

45

1 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Well I actually went out and told the last group of people that  
2 they were done for the day. We were, the only people left at the time were on my  
3 shipping crew. And I got a call and, it was actually like midday. I think it was before  
4 lunch and I got a call and they said, "John, who do you have working still?" And I said,  
5 "Well I have my shipping crew. They're loading trucks and they just got done loading the  
6 last truck." What we were doing was shipping inventory to our customers and also  
7 shipping zinc oxide to the plant that we bought in Canada that was going to take over the,  
8 uh, the zinc production of the company since we're shutting down Monaca. There's not  
9 going to be anymore zinc oxide. And that was a big product for them to sell. So they  
10 bought this plant in, um, Canada, Brampton, Ontario, who was going to produce the zinc  
11 oxide. It was a different process than what we had in Monaca, but they were going to  
12 make oxide. He said, "How many guys you have?" think it might've been 15 guys maybe.  
13 He said, "Okay. They're all done." And I said, "They're all done?" And he said, "Yeah."  
14 And I said, "Well, I'm paying them the rest of the day according the contract." He said,  
15 "Yeah, go ahead. But just go ahead and get them off the property." Now, I don't know  
16 what prompted that, but I went out there and told the guys, "Wrap it up." So it was just  
17 saying goodbye to the, that last group of guys. I'd worked with a lot of the guys  
18 throughout my whole career. Some of the guys there started when I started. And so it was  
19 tough saying goodbye to them and "Hey, this is it." And, unlike 1979, I know there  
20 wasn't no coming back. This was it. So it was kind of, you just start thinking back all the  
21 things that you've done and you turn. I remember after they were leaving and I was  
22 watching them leave and I just turned around and looked at the plant and you used to  
23 come into that plant and you had all this noise and you can't understand the deafening  
24 sound when nothing is running. I mean, even when we were still working and we had  
25 guys were still moving things around. I had some guys who were moving material and  
26 doing some finalizing some things that they had to do. You could hear, this place is 300  
27 acres, this property, and you could hear people in the other department talking. And that  
28 was just amazing I thought. You couldn't believe how much equipment was running and  
29 you never heard this before. But the silence was deafening it was, and that's why I just  
30 turned around. That was it's like, I know I let out a sigh and said, "Yeah, this is it." And it  
31 was just deafening, you know. It's just like when someone succumbs, their last breath.  
32 There's nothing and that's basically the way I thought about it.

33

34 (1:26:29)

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

37

38 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** I think it's great. I liken that to the turn of the last century. When  
39 you had Carnegie and Frick and all those guys getting the steel mills going in Pittsburgh.  
40 It was the, and then all of a sudden all this industry came into this area here. I look at that  
41 as the same thing that it's coming here. It's a different industry and I liken that to the turn  
42 of the last century, the steel boom in this area. This is going to be the, the next thing that  
43 happens in this area and I think there's going to be a lot of spinoff companies as a result.  
44 And they talk about other cracker plants being built in the area in Ohio and West Virginia  
45 and seeing how this is going to run. I don't know if that's going to come to fruition, but  
46 this is a big deal and the money that Shell is spending here and the way they are going

1 about trying to get the community on their side and everything and being a good  
2 corporate neighbor. I think they're handling this top notch and they got a lot of people on  
3 board. Yeah. There are some people out there who don't want them here and say, "Look  
4 down there in Louisiana what the cracker plants did down there." But they're far and few  
5 between. Other than that, you know, I just think it's just going to be, it's going to be  
6 amazing what's going to happen here and again it remains to be seen, but that's going to  
7 not take place I think until the, they start building here next year. But the plant won't  
8 come, become operational I think until what the latter part of 2020 maybe, somewhere in  
9 that neighborhood. Maybe a little bit, maybe 2018. But, it's going to be a big deal and,  
10 and the other thing, I always wish, I wish I were younger to be part of it. But I'm not  
11 going to be there. But it's going to be fun to watch it grow and watch this area grow and,  
12 because it is a depressed area right now and we've lost a lot of people because of all the  
13 steel plants that closed down when we started out. When we started to close down, all the  
14 other steel plants closed down, and people left. And some people stayed. And, I mean, it's  
15 a good area to grow up in. It's one of these areas where, well maybe now not, but I mean  
16 you could leave your door unlocked at night. Everybody in this neighborhood knows  
17 everybody. And if you're gone for any reason, I mean, I throw out an old water blaster  
18 that I had and there was something wrong with it. I know it probably would've taken  
19 some minor part. I would've had to buy and it would've been operational again. Well I  
20 put it out for the garbage man. Well, my neighbor tells me, "Hey, did you see that guy out  
21 there? He was looking at your garbage." I said, "No." And he says, "He took your, your  
22 water blaster." I said, "That's okay. It was going for junk anyway." But that's how the  
23 neighbors are in this area. Not only here, every town around here. Everybody looks out  
24 for everybody else. So if you go on vacation you just tell your neighbor, "I'm going on  
25 vacation." So they know that you're going on vacation. And they're watching your house  
26 for you. And that's the type of area this is, and it's a great place for your kids to grow up  
27 as well. Now, there's a lot of things happening in this world and in this country as well  
28 now with the drugs, and what's happening here is unfathomable. I don't know where this  
29 country's going. And now they're legalizing marijuana. I don't know. It's a different  
30 world than I grew up in, but I mean that's the type of area this is around here. The people  
31 in this area are good people. They're hardworking people and I think it's going to be a  
32 really big thing. And the other thing it's going to bring maybe more people, younger  
33 couples into the area and the only thing I think they have to do is eliminate all these  
34 school districts. There're too many school districts in this area. So you want to start  
35 consolidating school districts and, and that'll actually attract people to those areas because  
36 of the educational system that you're going to provide their children with and all the other  
37 amenities that are going to occur in this area because of that plant. So I'm really looking  
38 forward to them on a personal basis.

39

40 (1:30:39)

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Well that concludes my questions for you.

43

44 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** Okay.

45

46 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much for your time.

1  
2 **JOHN DECHELLIS:** You're welcome.  
3  
4 (END)



**Mike Deelo**  
**Interview @ October 13, 2016**

## MIKE DEELO Summary

The interview with Mike Deelo took place on October 13, 2016, in the living room of his home in Beaver, Pennsylvania. His association with the St. Joseph zinc plant began in 1966 in the Summer Engineering Program. Mike worked fulltime at the St. Joseph zinc plant in Monaca from 1967 until retiring in 1993. In his 27 years with the company he was involved in the metallurgical control department, technical services, sales and marketing, and government relations.

Mike talks about the summer intern program and the clubhouse, a former farmhouse, where he boarded. He explains the development of St. Joe's electrothermic furnaces and the process for making zinc oxide; why St. Joe Lead selected this site for the smelter; and the three major products produced in the 1930s. He talks about "Josephtown" and why plans for a company town never materialized.

Mike's interview highlights the technologies and processes in which St. Joe was an innovator. He provides context for the development of product quality control from each major department having its own metallurgical engineer, to a central metallurgical control department. He explains the geological nature of zinc, lead and other metals being found together in mines, the need to separate them, and various recovery projects—silver and mercury—that he worked on.

From St. Joseph Lead Company to St. Joe Minerals Corporation: Mike explains how the name change reflected the company's expanded activities. He also describes the regionalization of sales operations in the 1970s, and the metals commodity market and how it contributed to the 1979 shutdown. Mike discusses the streamlining of plant operations to reopen the smelter in 1980, customer relations challenges that went with that, and efforts to expand products and improve market share.

Mike shares anecdotes about basketball played with "Pistol" Pete Maravich and baseball against Stan Musial. His interview conveys St. Joe's paternalistic treatment toward employees, benefits like the subsidized cafeteria, and the sense of loyalty he felt toward the company.

Other topics include: monthly foremen's club meetings in the auditorium; the Potter Township School that had stood on the grounds; concern for African American representation in the workforce; and expectations for senior management to engage in civic organizations.

1 **MIKE DEELO**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 10/13/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 MIKE DEELO  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Mike Deelo. October 13, 2016, in Beaver,  
8 Pennsylvania. Um. Mike could you please state your full name, date of birth, and address.  
9

10 **MIKE DEELO:** My name is Michael Deelo. Um. Date of birth is [REDACTED],  
11 and the address is [REDACTED], Beaver, Pennsylvania.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?  
14

15 **MIKE DEELO:** I'm retired.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** And are you from the Beaver County area or did you come here  
18 because of employment opportunity at St. Joe's?  
19

20 **MIKE DEELO:** I came from outside the area. I grew up in the St. Louis area and, uh,  
21 the old name of St. Joseph Lead Company was well known out in that area especially the  
22 school I went to, which was the University of Missouri at Rolla and so, uh, I was a  
23 metallurgical engineer and, uh, all of our metallurgical engineering, uh, faculty were, uh,  
24 well, well versed on the operations of, uh, St. Joe Lead Company and, uh, included tours  
25 of their operations. So we knew quite a bit about, about St. Joe. It was a household,  
26 household name.  
27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** And, um, what was your first contact with St. Joe Lead?  
29

30 **MIKE DEELO:** Well I guess my first contact was through school, um, although, um,  
31 although our family, part of our family is from southeast Missouri and had, had worked,  
32 uh, associated with, in association with some of the lead mines and the lead smelter. But,  
33 uh, my first practical association was in college, uh, a mineral beneficiation class. We  
34 went and we visited the mills, uh, several of the St. Joe mines. At that time, they had, uh,  
35 a number of, uh, a number of lead mines and one iron ore mine, uh, not too far from  
36 Rolla. Rolla is the, uh, University of Missouri. Rolla is about 100 miles southwest of St.  
37 Louis.  
38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** How do you spell that?  
40

41 **MIKE DEELO:** Rolla. R-O-L-L-A.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
44

45 **MIKE DEELO:** There's a story behind that name too. Uh. Originally, uh, the town was  
46 supposed to be named Raleigh, as in Raleigh, North Carolina, but, uh, but the folks there

1 didn't pronounce it that way. They pronounced it Rolla and so it became, it became Rolla  
2 Missouri. And, uh, Rolla was a part of the University of Missouri system, still is. And is a  
3 land grant school. It started in the 18, 1870s. Uh. And, um, so it specialized in, um, in  
4 minerals. It was originally called the University of Missouri School of Mines and  
5 Metallurgy. And so it was a, a rather famous Midwestern, uh, engineering school. A  
6 matter of fact it had the, at the time I went there it had the largest number of  
7 undergraduate engineers in the west of the Mississippi. So it was a, uh, it was, it was well  
8 known as a technology, uh, school of technology. So, um, my first association was when,  
9 um, our mineral beneficiation class looking for, uh, looking for a, um, trip, you know, a  
10 fieldtrip, uh, visited their, uh, three of their, three of their mills, two lead mills, one iron  
11 ore. One iron ore mill. So, which was run by St. Joe.

12

13 (0:03:40)

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** And then did you do a summer program with St. Joe?

16

17 **MIKE DEELO:** That was, uh, that'll, that led to in 19, 1966. Uh. A recruiter from St.  
18 Joe, uh, came to Rolla. My professor, uh, encouraged me to, to interview with them and I  
19 got a summer job here. It was called the Summer Engineering Program. So we actually  
20 worked on engineering projects associated with, uh, in that case it was, uh, part of their  
21 product line. Uh. The, the, um, zinc, zinc metal technical services department is what,  
22 what I worked for.

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** When you came here for just that summer, where did you stay?

25

26 **MIKE DEELO:** I stayed in the clubhouse.

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** The clubhouse. What was that?

29

30 **MIKE DEELO:** The old, the old St. Joe, St. Joe clubhouse. Yeah. St. Joe had, it was an  
31 old farmhouse that was, uh, part of the, um, part of the original 320-acre farm that St. Joe  
32 bought in the late 1920s and, uh, they kept, they, they kept the farmhouse and, uh, rented  
33 out the rooms for, essentially for temporary, temporary housing and even staffed it with,  
34 uh, with some maintenance people to, to help out and make sure that, uh, things were  
35 kept, kept tidy. And, um, and so, uh, that, that was, uh, where I stayed that summer and  
36 then when I came back the following year as a fulltime employee I even stayed there for  
37 about a year until I, uh, until I moved to Beaver, Pennsylvania.

38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Can you describe the clubhouse? What, what it looked like and  
40 how it was laid out?

41

42 **MIKE DEELO:** It was an old farm building, two story, uh, uh, probably rather, rather  
43 elegant and historic. I have no idea when it was built, but it was part of the original, as I  
44 said, part of the original farm that, uh, St. Joe had purchased back in the late 1920s. So it  
45 goes back before that time. And so, it was, uh, it had four or five bedrooms on the second  
46 floor. The first floor was a large living room and then there was a kitchen and, uh, so it

1 was, uh, it was, it was adequate and, uh, and it was, uh, for a bunch of single guys kind of  
2 living together. Uh. Occasionally we'd, uh, we'd, uh, throw a party and so, uh, so there  
3 people that came from, from here, there, and everywhere to, uh, attend the parties at the,  
4 at the St. Joe clubhouse. Of which, uh, you know, young engineers are kind of famous for  
5 throwing parties, you know. So no shortage of that.

6  
7 (0:06:29)

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were there for the summer program, was it just summer  
10 interns who were there as well?

11  
12 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. No. There was one or two, one or two people who had lived there,  
13 who, who were, uh, lived outside, families lived outside the area, but they would, they  
14 would stay there during the week. So.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there somebody cooking for you there?

17  
18 **MIKE DEELO:** No. [Laughs] There was somebody who was helping with the  
19 housekeeping. Um. But, uh, no cooking. We were, we were on our own for cooking. So,  
20 uh...

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** How many meals a day at the cafeteria?

23  
24 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. Well that was one of the nice things. You obviously have picked  
25 up that, uh, the company did have a, did have a cafeteria and, um, it was one of the very,  
26 very nice, uh, you know, subsidized benefits of the, uh, the, the company was rather,  
27 rather paternalistic. They, uh, treated their employees, kind of, kind of reached out to  
28 make sure that there was a number of very nice things available to the employees. One  
29 was the subsidized cafeteria. It was open round the clock and so we could go there, you  
30 know, day and night. So they served meals during set periods of time, but the other time  
31 there were vending machines available and, uh, you know, so it was, it was open. So I  
32 didn't even have a car when I was up here in the summer of 1966. And, uh, able to get  
33 by, able to get by just fine cause may of the other, uh, summer engineers that were there  
34 did have, did have cars and we got around and there was no shortage of opportunities for  
35 socializing. So.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about the, the work or training you  
38 received as a summer intern?

39  
40 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. St. Joe was very big on, uh, technical training, and the reason they  
41 were was because the operations there were unique. There was none other like it in the  
42 world and so they invented virtually all of their own processes. Uh. The furnaces were a  
43 St. Joe invention. Uh. The, uh, another key invention was, uh, it was called a condenser.  
44 The, uh, the zinc condenser that would take, uh, allow metal to be, be produced and, um,  
45 to support all of these, uh, all of these unique processes they hired a large staff of  
46 engineers. Some who were in operations and some who were into, uh, research or

1 research support. And so engineers were a key part of the operations at, uh, at, at St. Joe.  
2 So they would, uh, there was a shortage of engineers in the mid-19, mid-1960s. So they  
3 would reach out and try to get, uh, people. Offer 'em summer employment with the idea  
4 that maybe there would be develop, uh, mutual interest. Uh. So it was an opportunity for  
5 mutual evaluation between the, um, you know, between the, uh, employee, between the  
6 summer employees and the, uh, and the company. So not everyone was invited to come  
7 back, but, uh, but many of us were, you know.

8  
9 (0:09:49)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** There used to be something called the, um, a suggestion program,  
12 where employees could come up with ideas on how to improve...

13  
14 **MIKE DEELO:** Right.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Technology, processes, operations. Were any of these run  
17 through you in the engineering department that you tried to work with their ideas to make  
18 those improvements?

19  
20 **MIKE DEELO:** I know there was a formal program and that was, those would go into  
21 the plant manager. The plant manager at that time was a fellow named, when I was there,  
22 Chuck Henderson. And, um, so I know they would take those suggestions seriously. I  
23 was never a part of that program directly. When I was working as an engineer in the  
24 operating department, zinc oxide department, uh, we had, uh, a number of, you know, a  
25 number of people would come up to me with suggestions, and I would encourage that  
26 and, uh, the operation, the operators, uh, typically had very good suggestions. Some of  
27 them could be implemented and some of them could not be. But, uh, certainly we paid,  
28 uh, paid attention to the operators because, uh, they were there. They were the ones on  
29 the front lines and, uh, a lot of it was kind of manual labor especially in the department I  
30 was working in and anything we could do to try to make their jobs a little bit more  
31 pleasant, uh, it was in all of our, it was for all of our best interests both the, the company  
32 and the employee. So I tried to let people know that we were keenly interested in their  
33 ideas and their suggestions, and I think that was the attitude, attitude of the company and  
34 there were even awards for some of these suggestions. And I can't give you the details on  
35 that.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. When you were a summer student there and in your, your  
38 early years working there, was the area referred to as Josephtown or Monaca?

39  
40 **MIKE DEELO:** Um. Well it was officially, when I started there, it was officially called  
41 the Zinc Smelting Division of St. Joseph Lead Company, and so, um, Josephtown was  
42 kind of a nickname. Originally, I think the company, uh, wanted to use that name a bit  
43 more because I know they were, they were also interested and had set aside a certain area  
44 for building, building homes and that town if they had named that town would've been  
45 called Josephtown.

1 (0:12:17)

2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** Where would that area have been?

4  
5 **MIKE DEELO:** I think I pointed it out on the map. It would've been along the north  
6 side of Route 18. As a matter of fact, there was still a few homes there when I lived there.  
7 The clubhouse was right here. There were a few homes in this area and, uh, then the idea  
8 was to expand and have more homes. At one time, that was the idea. Because back then,  
9 uh, St. Joe had an operation in Herculaneum, Missouri, the lead smelter, and the lead  
10 smelter was pretty much integrated with the town. And so people could walk to work.  
11 Some of the other steel mills close by did the same thing. As a matter fact, many of the  
12 steel mills. Uh. Midland, Pennsylvania had a steel mill there. A lot of housing very close  
13 by. People could walk to work. Uh. J&L had a, had a, uh, steel mill, uh, just a few miles  
14 upstream from St. Joe of which there was a town there, West Aliquippa. where people  
15 again could walk to work. The idea was, this was a very common thing. Even our  
16 competitor, who was New Jersey Zinc Company out in Palmerton, Pennsylvania, uh, did  
17 the same thing. They had a, a smelter that was older than, than the St. Joe smelter, but  
18 people lived close by and could walk, could walk to work. This was what you did then.  
19 Now you don't do that. Now you essentially want a perimeter around your plant. You  
20 want a, uh, you know, a fair amount of space between your operations and, uh, where  
21 people, where people live. So.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Why do you think the residential community never happened here?

24  
25 **MIKE DEELO:** I think people just found it more convenient to live other places. I, I  
26 guess I, I don't, don't know for sure why that never developed. I think what happened  
27 was the plant expanded and they found out that they needed this area down here for more  
28 and more raw materials and so the company expanded by zeroing in on, uh, recycled  
29 materials and, uh, at the time I was there. Because when I was there the place, the place  
30 produced, uh, somewhere around 300,000, uh, oh, 200,000 tons of metal of which  
31 300,000 tons were raw materials and those were raw materials were divided into what are  
32 called secondary materials, which needed a large storage area to recycle materials and  
33 then we had, uh, zinc concentrates, which are, uh, the mine product. So when you mined  
34 ore out of the ground it's concentrated and it's called concentrated ore also known as  
35 concentrates. So concentrates were available from our own mines. We had mines in  
36 upper New York State and out, out in Missouri, uh, when you mine lead, uh, zinc comes  
37 along with it too. So there was some zinc concentrates that came from Missouri. So that  
38 was about a third of our, uh, raw material input. The other third came from purchasing of  
39 other mine products. Other concentrates from all around the world. So.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. Let's just go back to when you graduated from college.

42  
43 **MIKE DEELO:** Okay.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** You'd had your summer experience...

46



1 **MIKE DEELO:** Right.

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** At St., at St. Joe Lead. Um. Did you consider any other options for  
4 employment other than coming back here?

5

6 (0:15:53)

7

8 **MIKE DEELO:** I did. I, uh, I considered. I was, uh, uh, accepted into the Air Force  
9 Officer Training School. And so, I'd considered that and then, um, with the assignments  
10 available at St. Joe, I declined the Officer Training School and, uh, continued on with  
11 full-time employment at St. Joe.

12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** So what year was it then that you started to work for St. Joe as a full-  
14 time employee?

15

16 **MIKE DEELO:** Full time, 1967 when I graduated from college.

17

18 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was the last year that you worked at St. Joe?

19

20 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. The last year was 1993.

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So we're looking at a period of 1967 to 1993.

23

24 **MIKE DEELO:** For full time.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** For full-time employment. Okay.

27

28 **MIKE DEELO:** Yeah and, and, uh, summer employment in the summer of 1966.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** What position were you initially hired for when you joined the  
31 company full time in 1967?

32

33 **MIKE DEELO:** I was hired as part of the metallurgical control department, which was  
34 headed by a fellow named Bob Redelfs. Bob was a, uh, chemical engineer from, uh,  
35 Carnegie Tech, which is what it was called at that time. And, uh, Bob established, uh, a  
36 program of, uh, and formalized, uh, controlling the process through, through sampling  
37 and analysis throughout the process. Kind of similar to what you get into right now with  
38 your quality control programs, where you try to make sure that you build quality into  
39 your product, but not just testing it at the end. So you build it in from the very beginning.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Prior to Bob starting that program, how were the products tested?

42

43 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, they were tested in a similar manner, but not with the  
44 sophistication that, uh, was associated with the metallurgical control department. Uh.  
45 Each department, uh, there were three major, major departments. Roaster/acid,  
46 sinter/leach, and furnace. So each one of those departments had their own responsibility

1 for testing and to making sure the next department had a quality product. So it was done  
2 on a department basis. But when, uh, Bob added to that an over, overview of it, uh, to  
3 make a, uh, quality control, uh, quality control or metallurgical control department. So I  
4 was hired into that department to work on these projects and my first project was trying  
5 to, uh, hunt down and see if we could identify and concentrate silver and so my, my first  
6 project was a silver recovery project. So...

7  
8 (0:18:58)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you find any?

11  
12 **MIKE DEELO:** We found silver and we eventually were able to identify where it was  
13 and what can and should be done with it. So from that standpoint the product was  
14 successful. We never at that plant ever went to the, went to the, uh, extreme of extracting  
15 silver and refining it. So we, what we did was concentrate it into a particular stream, sold  
16 it onto another company who would then, who would then, uh, you know, produce the  
17 silver. So yes we did. There was, uh, the, uh, the ore bodies that, that we typically, uh,  
18 used to bring zinc concentrate in, each ore body was different and had different  
19 characteristics. Uh. For instance, the ore body up in Balmat, New York, uh, was, uh,  
20 very, very, very pure from the standpoint of having a fair amount of, uh, amount of zinc  
21 in it. It had very little lead a byproduct. See anytime you find zinc, zinc and lead are  
22 always metallurgically geologically found together and many times you'll throw in  
23 copper with that. So lead, zinc, and copper are known to be found together and so, and as  
24 a matter of fact, virtually always. So, uh, and different mines do different things. Some  
25 are zinc mines where the primary product is zinc and you'll have a little bit of lead and a  
26 little bit of copper come along with it. The mines in Missouri were primarily lead mines,  
27 where you'll have, uh, a little bit of zinc and a little bit of copper coming along with it  
28 and, um, so, um, uh, but along with that, a lot of times, uh, silver is found with lead. And  
29 so, um, a lot of times whenever you process lead, you'll find that there's zinc. As a matter  
30 of fact that's a major source of silver is in lead, lead mining and lead production. So, uh,  
31 now Missouri was different. I'm getting too technical for you. Missouri was different in  
32 that, uh, the silver would go with the zinc fraction rather than with the lead fraction. So  
33 normally you would expect when you buy lead concentrate there is going to be some  
34 silver with it. Not with Missouri concentrates. With Missouri when you buy the zinc  
35 concentrate they'll be some, uh, silver along with it. I'm not sure if I'm being clear.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** How big was the engineering staff?

38  
39 **MIKE DEELO:** I, I couldn't. I don't. I, I hesitate to give you a number. I don't recall.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of, of shifts and hours for the engineers?

42  
43 **MIKE DEELO:** Well the engineering staff would've been both, uh, some engineers out  
44 in operations. Virtually every, every major department had an engineer running, running  
45 that, their, uh, their operations. So the furnace plant would've had a, um, typically an  
46 engineer, which he did. Bob Doelling was a metallurgical engineer from Missouri. The

1 same school I was from. Um. Their sinter leach plant had, uh, had, uh, Ralph Shepherd,  
2 who was a metallurgical engineer from South Dakota School, School of Mines. The  
3 roaster plant had John Winters, who was a metallurgical engineer from, uh, Missouri  
4 from the University of Missouri at Rolla. So you had people out in operations and then  
5 you also had people, uh, in, we actually had a mechanical engineering department and so  
6 there we would've obviously hired mechanical engineers. We had a maintenance  
7 engineering department and so people to maintain the operations. We had a number of  
8 engineers in those departments. Uh. I, I don't know how many. Probably somewhere, you  
9 know, probably in the 40-50 range would've been, uh, the right, the right number. And at  
10 that time, we had probably about 1,100 or 1,200 people. The high water mark at St. Joe  
11 was 1,700 people in 1978. But when I was there they had, uh, right after I got out of  
12 school, my impression was I think they had like 1,100, about 1,100 people.

13

14 (0:26:01)

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** And did the metal, metallurgical control department where you  
17 worked, was that a nine to five, day shift kind of job?

18

19 **MIKE DEELO:** No. None, none of the engineering jobs were. Typically the work hours  
20 at St. Joe were the, the hourly workforce was nonunion and worked six days a week. So  
21 they were paid 40 straight hours and eight hours of overtime. And, um, and the salary  
22 people worked five and a half days. So typically you would work a half of a day, half of a  
23 day on Saturday. And so, um, and then if you were on a project, as a professional on a  
24 project, there essentially were no hours. You just did what needed to be done. And so, uh,  
25 one of my other projects right, early, early in the game was, um, was, uh, working on  
26 mercury, mercury recovery. Right now, you think mercury is, uh, a very bad name. Back  
27 then it was considered a very, uh, uh, it was, it was considered a critical metal, uh, and  
28 stockpiled by the United States Government. And so, um, we had a lot of mercury  
29 coming in with that ore right there with, uh, the sphalerite. The zinc ore coming in from  
30 Balmat mines contained a fairly high amount of mercury, which was easily removed, uh,  
31 in the early stages of processing and could be concentrated and so, uh, I actually in my, in  
32 my career, uh, worked on the pilot plant for mercury and bottled many flasks of mercury  
33 in my life.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** And how long did you stay in this position within the metallurgical  
36 control department?

37

38 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. Three years.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** Three years.

41

42 **MIKE DEELO:** Until March of 1970. Uh. When I, uh, at which time I moved over to  
43 the, um, technical services, uh, department in a company representative position of, uh,  
44 technical service representative, technical service engineer.

45

46 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you explain what that was?

1  
2 **MIKE DEELO:** Yeah. Uh. It was zinc oxide. We had two major products. You're  
3 probably aware of that. But, uh, when the plant started in 1931, uh, we'd make, uh,  
4 products of, um, this is, we actually shut the plant down and restarted in 1980 and these  
5 are the first products from that. But originally when the plant started in January of 1931  
6 the, uh, the product was zinc oxide. And it's, uh, zinc oxide is a fine white powder used in  
7 a variety of, a variety of products. And, uh, one of the products is, uh, is, uh, rubber. So.  
8 Okay. Um. And the reason why the plant was located here in the first place. Our mines  
9 were up in upper New York State by the Thousand Island region and, uh, so you would  
10 think well why not locate the smelter there? But it was located here in the Pittsburgh area  
11 because in the Pittsburgh area, uh, I mean the plant was going to have three major  
12 products. There was going to be zinc metal. That's what this is. Zinc oxide and sulfuric  
13 acid. Well it's an ideal location for, for getting products to customers because the, uh,  
14 zinc metal is used, uh, primarily in the steel industry as a coating for steel, um,  
15 galvanized steel. And so you had the steel industry close by. Zinc oxide, the major use for  
16 that is in the rubber industry. It's used as a chemical going into the vulcanization process  
17 of rubber and at that time, uh, the rubber industry was based and, uh, headquartered in  
18 Akron, Ohio, which is only, which is less than 100 miles away, and then your sulfuric  
19 acid another major byproduct was, a lot of that was used in, in the, uh, in the steel  
20 industry. So it was used not only for pickling of steel, but it was also used as a byproduct  
21 to produce, uh, ammonium sulfate, which is used in the fertilizer, fertilizer industry. So,  
22 uh, there's, uh, it was a, it was a good location for a, uh, for a zinc smelter. And that's why  
23 this location was chosen. So...

24  
25 (0:30:48)

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** That makes sense. So the, um, we started talking about the, you  
28 switching over to the technical services department and the role that technical services  
29 played in the plant.

30  
31 **MIKE DEELO:** Right. Technical service. I was technical service representative for zinc  
32 oxide. So here's a book that I saw early in the game, uh, and actually gave out to some of  
33 our customers talking about, uh, which gave some product applications and let people  
34 know that, how zinc oxide was produced and, and, uh, there was always a bit of mystery  
35 to it. We welcomed the opportunity to bring customers into the plant, show 'em what we  
36 had and, um, trying to make it, trying to make it an interesting tour for people because it  
37 was, you know, the plant was, as was most smelters, relatively dirty. Um. But, uh, we  
38 found ways of giving 'em a tour and keeping it clean and trying to keep it fairly, fairly  
39 interesting for 'em. So, uh...

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you need any additional training to switch into this role at the  
42 plant?

43  
44 **MIKE DEELO:** Yeah. Zinc oxide is used a little, as a little bit more of a chemical than  
45 it is a metallurgical product. So I went back to, uh, I went back to college. Penn State  
46 Beaver was, uh, was, is a campus that's close by. And, uh, so I took a, uh, organic

1 chemistry course there and, uh, which seemed to be sufficient. It gave me a lot of, a lot of  
2 nice background. Then I took some, went to some other seminars, uh, for our various  
3 products. And a lot of it was, uh, through our own engineers, uh, people in the laboratory  
4 cause I was, my job was to interface with customers, where to take the technical concerns  
5 and work with customers on presentations. And, um, and we had people back in the lab. I  
6 mentioned before the name, uh, Ellis Walrond and, uh, and Ellis, uh, was our paint  
7 chemist and we had, uh, another, uh, another metallurgical engineer, uh, Doc Carlson,  
8 Lloyd Carlson, who was also from South Dakota School of Mines. Um. And he, uh, had a  
9 keen interest in, in, uh, zinc oxide microscopy and, uh, and the workings of zinc oxide  
10 and rubber, and he ran the, uh, helped to run the rubber lab that we had. So we had  
11 laboratories supporting some of our major products. Uh. Another application for zinc  
12 oxide was in the ceramics industry and so we actually ran a ceramics lab and had a  
13 ceramics engineer, um, Kelsey Harvey, who ran our ceramics lab and that was located,  
14 which you've identified as the Crane Building here. So, huh...

15

16 (0:33:31)

17

18 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. We talked somewhat about the customers that you were...

19

20 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes.

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Served in this capacity. Were you more in with, with paint  
23 versus rubber? Who were the, your main customers?

24

25 **MIKE DEELO:** Oh, well my job was, my job was zinc oxide and so zinc oxide, any  
26 customer application, uh, and any customer, you know, concern or questions could come  
27 through me and it was my job to try to find an answer for all of those. Yeah. So whether  
28 it be, uh, the rubber industry or whether it be the paint industry or the photoconductive  
29 zinc oxide industry, it was our job to, to, you know, put the resources, uh, to work to see  
30 if we could get an answer for, answer for customers. Some of 'em were, uh, you know,  
31 complaints about production, you know. Uh. All of a sudden you get a bag of zinc, zinc  
32 oxide typically was sold in 50-pound bags. So bags the, uh, the shipment wouldn't be  
33 right. The pallets may be broken. Uh. You know. There was some, some of your normal  
34 complaints in addition to your, to, uh, technical concerns about the product.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** So to some extent were you like a, a public relations, customer  
37 relations?

38

39 **MIKE DEELO:** My job was to work, work with customers. Yeah. And keep customers  
40 happy. I was not, uh, involved directly in sales at that time. But it was a good training  
41 ground for my later career in sales.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. So this was 1970 that you started.

44

45 **MIKE DEELO:** 1970 to '73 I stayed in the, uh, zinc oxide, uh, customer, uh, technical  
46 service.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So that's the, 1970 is also when the company changed its name  
3 from St. Joe Lead to St. Joe Minerals...

4  
5 **MIKE DEELO:** That's correct.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Corporation. What was the significance of that name change at that  
8 time?

9  
10 (0:35:29)

11  
12 **MIKE DEELO:** Well the name change, they brought a new, um, uh, prior to that the  
13 company was, uh, uh, rather mining oriented. So you had, uh, mining engineers, uh, that  
14 were, you know, did, uh, a lot. So the company was, uh, oriented toward lead mining,  
15 zinc mining and, uh, this and, and smelting of the products. But, but with emphasis on  
16 mining. Brought in a, um, executive vice president from W. R. Grace, a fellow named  
17 Jack Duncan. And, uh, Jack, uh, goal and his mission was to expand the company into  
18 other areas. So, which he did and he felt in order to do that, that changing the name from,  
19 um, St. Joe Lead Company, which didn't really reflect the, you know, a lot of the  
20 expanded opportunities for the company, changing it over to St. Joe Minerals Corporation  
21 was the right thing to do. And so, um, you know, I remember. I still have, still have data  
22 from, uh, and literature from the old St. Joe, St. Joseph. It was called St. Joseph Lead  
23 Company. I still have a lot of that literature and then, and then, uh, renamed, uh, St. Joe,  
24 St. Joe Minerals Corporation and then they had a, a lot of subsidiaries, St. Joe. Uh.  
25 Eventually it became St. Joe Lead, St. Joe Zinc, St. Joe Mineral, St. Joe Resources, St.  
26 Joe Gold. A number of St. Joe names were, uh, were evident. And, um, so, uh, Jack  
27 Duncan, uh, was keenly interested in energy. Bought some energy companies in, uh, the  
28 early 19, early 1970s and so, um, and exactly how those acquisitions went into place I  
29 was kind of distant from that cause I was working in, here in zinc oxide, but, uh, but, uh,  
30 those acquisitions I know included gas and oil and coal. And so, um, he was very, uh,  
31 instrumental in expanding the, expanding the company.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** How was the zinc oxide made?

34  
35 **MIKE DEELO:** Zinc oxide was made in our furnaces over at St. Joe. As a matter of  
36 fact, that was the first product. The company, uh, started construction at the Monaca site,  
37 uh, which was called the Josephtown site, um, and started construction in 1929 and then,  
38 um, they knew, and then put in these furnaces, these new type furnaces that had never  
39 been used before. They were called electrothermic furnaces. Electrothermic furnaces  
40 were very similar to steel blast furnaces, only for a heat source rather than using, um,  
41 rather than using coke, which is what's done in the steel blast furnace, uh, they used  
42 electricity. And, um, probably get a little bit technical here. But zinc, uh, zinc that was  
43 smelted from the furnaces was part of my college thesis. Huh. Um. Was, um, called a  
44 carbothermic reduction of, uh, of zinc and zinc the point of continuous smelting is above  
45 the boiling point. So in a, in a thermal operation, um, zinc comes off as a vapor. Well  
46 when it comes off as a vapor, you can do one of two things with it. You can allow it to

1 contact air where it'll immediately burn, burn into zinc oxide. That's the easiest thing to  
2 do with it. And the more difficult thing is to capture that zinc stream and then condense it  
3 into zinc metal. And, um, there wasn't the adequate technology when the plant first  
4 started to capture that zinc stream and make zinc metal. So, uh, they produced zinc oxide.  
5 So January 1931 was the first production of zinc oxide from that, from that smelter and it  
6 took until 1936. It took five years to develop that, uh, that condenser, and, uh, the  
7 condenser was developed by, it's called a Weaton Najarian Condenser. The first, uh, first  
8 plant manager we had was, was a guy named, uh, George Weaton, affectionately referred  
9 to as "the old man." And, um, and, uh, he's the kind of guy who would get out and make  
10 sure people were working very hard. But at the same time he worked very hard too. If  
11 there was people down in a ditch, he'd get down in the ditch with his suit on and help 'em,  
12 help 'em, uh, you know, shovel out, uh, shovel out what needed to be shoveled out. And,  
13 um, but his right hand man and a good friend of his was a guy named Herand Najarian  
14 and so they, Herand had the, um, it's the guy who primarily worked on, was the creative  
15 force behind developing this condenser. So by 1936, this product was a major product,  
16 uh, with zinc metal. But between '31 and '36, the product there was zinc oxide, and  
17 remember, you're right in the middle of a depression too back then. So, uh, and that  
18 smelter was built just about the time the Depression, uh, you know, was, uh, came into  
19 full force. So it was a great deal of show to, you know, a great deal of courage on the part  
20 of the, of the directors of St. Joe to move forward with construction on that smelter  
21 during the middle of a depression.

22

23 (0:41:20)

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** Why do you think they were able to survive the Depression with a  
26 new plant and have a successful run at it at that time?

27

28 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, their stock probably went way down, and, uh, my guess is they,  
29 uh, my guess is there was a great deal of pride. Uh. Back then you did things, um, for,  
30 you know, I'm not sure what their economic incentives were, but, uh, they just had, they  
31 were just, I know they were, felt just very committed to the process. It's probably  
32 explained a lot more in this one, one book by Clinton Crane. He was the president of St.  
33 Joe at that time. He was president from 19, 1912 to 1947. So this is his book called  
34 *Mining Memories*, where he talks a bit about what, uh, what his incentives and  
35 motivations were to encourage continuation of this, building the smelter at, uh, at  
36 Josephstown. So he was, uh, he was a force to be reckoned with and a very, very powerful,  
37 powerful guy that did a lot of good things for the, uh, did good things for the company.

38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** So back to your career path.

40

41 **MIKE DEELO:** Okay.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** You were in the technical services department, um, working with  
44 zinc oxide.

45

46 **MIKE DEELO:** Right.



1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** And that was from 1970 to 1973, is that correct?

3  
4 **MIKE DEELO:** That's correct. Right.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So then what did you do next in 1973?

7  
8 **MIKE DEELO:** '73 to, uh, '77, I was assigned as a technical superintendent of our zinc  
9 oxide department. I worked for another fellow in town, who still lives in town. A fellow  
10 named Don Warnes and Don, uh, Don needed to, Don's goal was to expand the zinc  
11 oxide department and to take some of the old equipment and to modernize it and to put  
12 in, uh, modern control, uh, uh, techniques, which is what I was able to help him do. So  
13 that was my job. I didn't, I had no direct operational responsibilities, although you asked  
14 before about, uh, suggestion systems. My job was to improve the operations, uh, and to,  
15 by improving the operations what we did was go around and, you know, get ideas from  
16 people and, uh, in addition to our own ideas we're looking for new, bigger, better, faster,  
17 stronger ways of doing things. But a lot of that had to do with, uh, with people and their,  
18 and their suggestions on how to, how to make things better. Operators were, operators  
19 were very good. And, uh, they, they wanted things to go well.

20  
21 (0:44:06)

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the process by which you moved from one position to the  
24 next, from like an HR or, you know, personnel perspective? How, how did one move  
25 from one department to another?

26  
27 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, you expected to do this. As, uh, kind of a young engineer you  
28 would expect that, uh, you'd, you'd spend two or three years on one assignment and then  
29 move onto something else. Uh. Most of us wanted to do that and the company typically  
30 wanted, wanted us to do that too. And so what you just do is kind of wait for  
31 opportunities to come along and, uh, an opportunity came along to go into, uh, into this  
32 position of technical service. Uh. And the plant manager, who was Chuck Henderson, uh,  
33 uh, recognized that Don Warnes, the superintendent of the zinc oxide department wanted  
34 somebody to come in who could dedicate himself to, not be part of operations, but  
35 dedicate himself to improving the operations of the, uh, of the department. So, uh, these  
36 things just kind of happen, happen almost naturally. They're not necessarily, you know,  
37 planned. Some companies do that. Some companies, particularly the large steel  
38 companies had, had plans for people to be in certain areas, you know, on maybe like a  
39 10-year, almost like a 10-year indoctrination program. And the real problem you got  
40 there after 10 years, people are probably going to move on to a different company, you  
41 know. So, they, um, and some of our, we had some attrition to, but we had a lot of people  
42 stay around. So it was, it was, it was very good.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And how long did you stay in this with the zinc oxide  
45 department?  
46

1 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. There I stayed four years from 1973 to '77. And then, uh, that's  
2 when the company kind of split up and said, "Okay. What we need to do were," there  
3 were headquarters in New York City, 250 Park Avenue, St. Joe Minerals. And all the, all  
4 the, uh, sales operations were concentrated there. But they said, "We're going to  
5 regionalize. We're going to have regional vice, regional presidents." And so Jim  
6 Broadhead was assigned regional president of St. Joe Zinc Company. The name zinc  
7 came into play. And, uh, opened an office in downtown Pittsburgh, 2, uh, 2 Oliver Plaza  
8 right on Liberty Avenue and then, uh, John Wright was assigned to be president of the  
9 lead end of the operations in St. Louis and others were assigned into other areas. But  
10 those were the two major areas as far as I was concerned, was lead and zinc. Uh. They  
11 needed sales people. I had always thought that I would probably go into the sales, uh,  
12 progressing into sales and since I had the background in both technical service and  
13 production I was a logical person since we're looking at zinc oxide being, uh, is a  
14 technical product. Um. I was, uh, asked to join the sales department down in Pittsburgh,  
15 which is what I did then. That was 1977 until 1980.

16

17 (0:47:28)

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. So this, the '70s were a difficult time at the plant.

20

21 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes, they were.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** With stricter environmental regulations, um, decreased domestic  
24 consumption of zinc in industries like the automobile manufacturing making lighter,  
25 smaller cars because of the oil crisis, um, competition from alternative materials, yet I'm  
26 curious that you had mentioned that there were 1,700 people at the peak of employment  
27 at St. Joe's.

28

29 **MIKE DEELO:** That was February 1978.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** In 1978. So if, if it's a tough period of time, how were, how are they  
32 employing so many people so close to when they shut down?

33

34 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, a big, a big part of that jump of employment from a, the 1,100-  
35 1,200 range up to the 1,700 range was an increase number one in our research  
36 department. So the research department became, rather than just a department to, um, for  
37 researching zinc products expanded into lead and into other corporate, corporate  
38 products. So they added, uh, some engineers for our research department.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** And where was this housed?

41

42 **MIKE DEELO:** On site. It was the old. Um. It was the old. It was property that was  
43 originally owned by the county.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, the County Home?

46

1 **MIKE DEELO:** The County Home. Yeah. And, uh, the County Home was an old  
2 building and back, maybe you've seen pictures of it. And in the front was a, more of a  
3 hospital environment and so the research department was in that, uh, had offices in the  
4 newer part of the County, County Home. The county abandoned that in the late 1950s  
5 when they built the, what's now up on, out in Brighton Township, a new facility out  
6 there. And, um, then abandoned both, uh, properties. Sold that property to, to then St. Joe  
7 for a, for, uh, a very modest amount, um, in order to encourage, you know, development  
8 hoping that St. Joe would expand that, um, which they did. So that's only part of the  
9 story. So a small portion was increasing the staff in the, in the research department. Um.  
10 A bigger part of it was that it was about that time that the company went from, um,  
11 nonunion. The employees had voted in a union. As you said, it was a difficult time in the  
12 1970s. Uh. Pay raises were not very much. The employees, some of them became  
13 disgruntled because of the lack of significant pay raises and, uh, thought they could do  
14 better with, uh, with steel worker representation. Well one thing they did was, um, with  
15 steel worker representation, and I'm not sure they really wanted this, but went from six-  
16 day workweek down to five-day workweek. So rather than working 48 hours a week,  
17 they were working 40 hours a week. So when you're doing that then you have to add a  
18 number of extra shifts. So a lot of extra people were, uh, needed to maintain that  
19 operation. So that's, that's a big, a big reason why in February of 1978 the employment  
20 there was 1,728 people I think. That's close. That's a close number. High water mark.  
21 You're probably not going to find that record anywhere. I know I had to look it up one  
22 time.

23  
24 (0:51:14)

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** That still seems awfully close to when they shut down the smelter in  
27 December of 1979.

28  
29 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, it was.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened in that time between that, you know, filling all those,  
32 um, those hours for working and then in December of '79 shutting down? Were, were  
33 there, was there any tapering down? Were there layoffs? Um. If you could talk about  
34 that, what led up to the shutdown, please?

35  
36 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, what, what happened at that time was, you know, um, was the  
37 price of precious metals increase. So gold went up to \$700 an ounce. Um. The Hunt  
38 Brothers put the squeeze on the silver market. Silver went from, uh, went from \$1.29 an  
39 ounce up to at one point in time the high water mark was close to, close to \$50 an ounce.  
40 Um. With that in mind, there was a demand and people were trying to go after precious  
41 metals. Uh. This is going to be a long explanation. You, you asked though. Uh. Precious  
42 metals, uh, there was a demand for precious metals and people thought they could make a  
43 killing at it, including St. Joe. Opened up gold mines in Chile and made a bundle of  
44 money on gold in 1978 and 1979. And, um, and then, but because of that, then you look  
45 at where are you going to get these metals from, particularly silver. If you remember  
46 before I said silver is a, uh, is largely a byproduct of lead, lead mining and so, um, people

1 were paying a lot for, a lot for lead and wanting to mine more lead. A lot had to do with  
2 silver production and the price of lead was fairly high at that time, and the byproduct was  
3 zinc. And zinc was just, they just flooded the market with zinc. So while lead price went  
4 up, gold price went up, silver price went up, the price of zinc went way down. And, uh,  
5 the plant over here is a, you know, it's, it's essentially a world commodity. It's commodity  
6 priced. And so with the price of zinc being very low, uh, the operations just couldn't  
7 sustain themselves.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you think anything could've been done differently to prevent that  
10 shutdown?

11  
12 (0:53:55)

13  
14 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, that's why we started back up again. Uh. I was part of a group of  
15 four people who was asked to stay on to take a look at what could be done, and we  
16 completely revised the operation. Um. And we essentially streamlined the operation and  
17 restarted again in, uh, the fall of, uh, 1980.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** How was it streamlined?

20  
21 **MIKE DEELO:** It was streamlined by converting from three smelter circuits down to  
22 one. We used to have Prime Western, high grade, intermediate, uh, smelting circuit and  
23 we eliminated two of those three and went down to one. Found a different, found that if  
24 we didn't produce high grade circuit, which was the way a lot of the zinc oxide was  
25 produced, um, in furnaces, if there was another way of producing zinc oxide that was by  
26 first, um, producing metal and then going into an operation or refining operation where  
27 you would produce zinc oxide that, that added step was actually more economical. So,  
28 uh, we restarted, uh, restarted the plant in fall of 19, 1980 on, uh, with a, um, you know,  
29 fewer employees. We went from, as I told you, 1,728 initially. We restarted with  
30 something just over 100 people. It was like 150 if I'm not mistaken. And, um, and then  
31 over the years the plant was expanded and I think when, when they shut down a few  
32 years ago they were up to about 600 people if I'm not mistaken. So, but it was  
33 considerably less than what, what we had years ago. So there was a number of  
34 streamlining. One was production streamlining. The other was craft groups. We used to  
35 have 17 craft groups when we had the 1,728 people and, um...

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please define a craft group?

38  
39 **MIKE DEELO:** A craft group would, would be your specialty, uh, like electric,  
40 electricians, instrument people, plumbers, uh, pipefitters, uh, structural, uh, painters, uh,  
41 carpenters. These are all, you know, different craft people. We, we then said we don't  
42 need all these craft groups to support a smaller operation. We would outsource those, and  
43 bring them in as needed. It is what we did. Went down to essentially three major crafts.  
44 We had a mechanical craftsman, a mechanical repairman. We had, uh, electrical  
45 repairmen, and, uh, there was, uh, there was a third. I forgot what, what that third was,  
46 but, uh, we, we streamlined the operation both from the standpoint of personnel and from

1 the standpoint of, um, you know, operations. Uh. Closing down, cutting off a large  
2 portion of the plant and, and I, I guess I put together the environmental and the, uh,  
3 production plan, uh, production and marketing plan. Um. I shouldn't say a production  
4 plan, but the production and associated with marketing. I had, my production experience I  
5 could help, uh, the division manager, who was Bob Sunderman. You know. I could assist  
6 him with what worked, what didn't work, what could be sold into the marketplace and  
7 how can we, you know, how can we streamline the operation to be responsive to the  
8 market. We had to put together a, uh, operation that was competitive on a world basis. So  
9 we were, uh, we, we had to be very, very concerned about cost of producing zinc all  
10 around the world knowing that we had to be as good or better than virtually anyone and  
11 we did, we were. We put together that plan and was quite successful. And after we  
12 started, you know, they got 35 years out of it. What, I think what eventually, uh,  
13 eventually caused, uh, the old Zinc Corporation of America to move was, uh,  
14 environmental considerations just became too strict for them.

15  
16 (0:58:10)

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** With that streamlining, when the plant reopened in the '80s, did you  
19 have obsolete buildings and facilities?

20  
21 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, sure. There was a lot of, a lot of buildings that needed to be,  
22 needed to be torn down. Some of which were, some of those were and some of 'em were  
23 not, you know. So. And, um, it's hard to be specific. I've forgot which ones were and  
24 which ones weren't.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** And your role in reopening of the smelter?

27  
28 **MIKE DEELO:** There was four of us who were asked to put together all these plans to,  
29 uh, to reopen the smelter. So I, uh, after the smelter was, uh, reopened I became  
30 commercial manager for all, commercial manager and then, uh, shortly promoted to vice  
31 president of sales.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** And on a day to day basis, what were your job responsibilities?

34  
35 **MIKE DEELO:** Whatever it takes. [Laughs] That's a quote. A famous Pittsburgh  
36 Steeler coach, um, Chuck Noll. Really that's what we did. We went in everyday and it  
37 wasn't only in the day. It was in the evenings. I remember, um, sometimes I'd be over  
38 there on Saturday evenings and, uh, we were just dedicated to trying to make good things,  
39 good things happen. And I think we did. I think we did a lot of good things. But, um, you  
40 know, some things, some things worked. Some things didn't. And, uh, but in general, it  
41 was a very successful, a very successful plan. So my job was to put together the  
42 marketing plan in, in conjunction with working with the, uh, production manager to make  
43 sure that, you know, marketing, production and marketing went hand, hand in hand.  
44 What, what could be produced was also, uh, doable and, uh, profitable to be able to move  
45 into the marketplace.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the Pittsburgh office close when the plant shut down in Monaca?

2  
3 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So then all these, um, um, marketing and sales activities then  
6 took place in Monaca when it reopened.

7  
8 **MIKE DEELO:** Most of 'em. Uh. So the zinc, uh, the chemical marketing group all  
9 came to, came to Monaca. But some of the metal sales people, particularly the vice  
10 president of, of zinc sales, uh, Bill Hoffman, um, went to St. Louis. He was offered a job  
11 with the lead company, and since Bill had that expertise, metal sales were under Bill  
12 Hoffman out in St. Louis and remained there, uh, and so, um, eventually zinc metal sales  
13 moved back to, moved back to Pittsburgh, but it, I mean moved back to Monaca. But that  
14 was in the late 1980s. It was like 1986 or '87.

15  
16 (1:01:15)

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** And where at the Monaca site were these functions happening, the  
19 sales and marketing departments?

20  
21 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, out of the, out in the County Home essentially. They, which, uh.  
22 So we established that. Initially we established metallurgical control department as our,  
23 as our offices, but then we outgrew that and needed that space for technical activities and  
24 then the, the commercial and administrative groups moved out the, uh, what we called the  
25 research department.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any particular image problems and other challenges you  
28 faced in reopening the smelter?

29  
30 **MIKE DEELO:** Significant. Yeah. Image problems were that, uh, uh, this product here,  
31 particularly zinc oxide, not so much on zinc metal because zinc metal is more of a  
32 commodity. But on zinc oxide, uh, it was a specialty, specialty product. So there were  
33 some applications that other people could not match the way St. Joe did it. So we kinda,  
34 these customers kind of felt we left them in the lurch. Um. The tire industry. Whenever  
35 you abandoned the tire industry and you then come back a year later and say, "Hey, we  
36 were just kidding. Uh. We, uh, you didn't think we were really out of business did you?"  
37 And they said, "Yeah. We did. Not only that, but we eliminated your product from our  
38 specifications." To get your product reapproved was a major deal, particularly in the tire  
39 industry. I mean any ingredient going into tires and zinc oxide was a major ingredient  
40 needed testing, retesting, thorough testing and you had to assure people that your product  
41 met the highest quality standards number one. Number two, uh, you had to provide some  
42 assurance that you were going to stay in business and so they were very interested in your  
43 business plan. And number three you had to sell it at, at a, at a competitive price. You  
44 couldn't get a premium price for it. So, um, you know, all those. So there was a major  
45 part of my job as head of sales to develop brochures, newsletters, customer  
46 communications, which we did on a regular basis and so fortunately we developed a mail

1 out program, which in the early 1980s was very effective. Now, before the days of email.  
2 Uh. Now people are inundated, but back then they weren't and they kind of looked  
3 forward to some of our newsletters.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have to sell below your, the previous price to get any of  
6 your customers back?

7  
8 (1:04:06)

9  
10 **MIKE DEELO:** Our competitors would say we did, and I would say we did not. I  
11 insisted that, uh, there was a, um, uh, there was essentially a law, and I forget what, what  
12 it is that, that, uh, you had to have a list price. If you were going to sell below your, your  
13 list price, you had to verify that there was a competitive price that you were trying to  
14 match. And that's what we did in virtually all of our cases, wherever we discounted our  
15 prices. And I can't remember what that law is right now. It's, it's part of Sherman  
16 Antitrust, you know. It's a spinoff of the Sherman Antitrust Act.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** And then you had a position as commercial manager. Is that  
19 something...

20  
21 **MIKE DEELO:** Commercial manager. Yeah. That was from 1980 to 1983. So my title  
22 was there was commercial manager and then 1983 I was given the title of vice president  
23 of sales.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

26  
27 **MIKE DEELO:** Same responsibility. It's just a different title.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What were your responsibilities for government relations?

30  
31 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, that was part of whatever it takes. Uh. I was interested in  
32 government activities and, uh, and so I worked with, uh, worked with government  
33 officials. Uh. Fortunately, we had some help there. My father-in-law was senator for this,  
34 for this area, who introduced, a state senator, who, uh, helped, helped me, uh, introduce  
35 me to the right people in, uh, in Harrisburg in order to be able to, uh, you know, wasn't  
36 very interesting was we were trying to wield power. Uh. We had a power plant and the  
37 idea was, that was right after Three Mile Island. Uh. Three Mile Island was March of, uh,  
38 1979. We started up then in later that year. Uh. Well the following. It was the following  
39 year. But we kept our power plant running and, um, during that whole period and sold  
40 power to Duquesne Light at a, at a very low rate. Well GPU, who was the parent of Three  
41 Mile Island, they were buying, buying power at fairly high rates. The question is how can  
42 we get the power from our power plant out to GPU and sell it at a high rate. That was,  
43 that took a lot of time and effort including me personally writing a letter for the meeting  
44 with and personally writing a letter for the, uh, for the governor of Pennsylvania, who  
45 was Dick Thornburgh. He, uh, he helped us, helped us be intro, introduced and ask for



1 assistance from Duquesne Light and the, uh, the head of Duquesne Light at that time was  
2 a chairman, who was a fellow named John Arthur.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. So when you became VP of sales were there any new  
5 products or new markets or product diversification that you were working towards?  
6

7 **MIKE DEELO:** We were just looking at expanding our product. We wanted to take  
8 zinc oxide, which we considered our premium product. We wanted to move that up and  
9 have a, a larger, much larger market share and, uh, which we did. And so, um, you know,  
10 we tried doing that through offering, uh, you know, superior quality and service and, uh,  
11 by service I'm talking about a lot of delivery. Cause our, our competitors had a similar  
12 quality, chemical quality. But what we were trying to do is make sure that we were there  
13 and could, uh, could offer them, you know, a very good, uh, very, very good generally  
14 under the category of, of service making sure their product was there on time for 'em. If  
15 they needed to, special packaging to work with that. One of our, one of our major  
16 customers was Exxon. Exxon was in the, uh, lubricating oil additive business. Maybe up  
17 near where you used to live in Linden, New Jersey. Uh. And, uh, so they had a large, uh,  
18 plant there, Bayway Plant. And part of that was, uh, lubricating oils and, uh, zinc was an  
19 important component of lubricating oil additives. Uh. Zinc is added as a, uh, corrosion  
20 resistant component of, uh, oils of, uh, lubricating oils. And, uh, we were, they wanted,  
21 they needed special, special packaging, special delivery. And, um, we were able to  
22 comply with that, whereas our competitors were not quite as, not quite as good. We  
23 became their primary supplier.  
24

25 (1:09:03)  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** If you had to, uh, conduct a review of yourself, how would you  
28 assess your, um, results as the VP of sales?  
29

30 **MIKE DEELO:** I, uh, I thought, I thought things went, uh, I thought things went very  
31 well. I was very proud of that, uh, that era of my career. I thought it went, uh, I thought  
32 we, we accomplished, we accomplished our goals. I thought we accomplished 'em, uh,  
33 very well and, uh, I tried putting in some innovative sales, sales techniques to motivate  
34 people. Uh. My, my motivation technique was, was feedback to make sure that we had  
35 some very straightforward goals for our salespeople and ways that you do it. Because  
36 sometimes in our business where it takes a long time to get a product in place, you can't  
37 evaluate people only on how much they sell. You have to evaluate 'em on their efforts. So  
38 we had a couple of, a couple of programs on, you know, what our, what efforts are you,  
39 are you putting forth to, to, to get this, um, you know, to, to, to improve this. And some  
40 of our people were so, were a bit discouraged. You know. "I've been working on this  
41 account for years and I don't have anything." I said, "Keep going and, uh, eventually  
42 we'll get there," which is true. And, uh, so I'm going to make sure that their evaluations  
43 reflected that and their, and their increases reflected their effort as much as it reflected  
44 the, uh, you know, how much they're actually selling. So...  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you give your salesforce so that they  
2 understood the products that they were supposed to go out and sell?

3  
4 **MIKE DEELO:** Well it was pretty much on the, on the job training. I mean we had  
5 sales, we had sales meetings where we would discuss the different products and, and  
6 when a new sales person came on, uh, he or she would have a, um, so we had a sales  
7 team too. Back in the 1980s, there weren't many women in, in metal and chemical sales.  
8 So, uh, she was, was very good and she was just, you know, it's, uh, it's amazing. She, uh,  
9 she did a wonderful job for us.

10  
11 (1:11:35)

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** What was, what was her name?

14  
15 **MIKE DEELO:** Her name was Cathy Linden. Is, you know, Cathy lives, moved back to  
16 New Jersey. She was from New Jersey and...

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** From Linden, from Linden, New Jersey?

19  
20 **MIKE DEELO:** Not from Linden, New Jersey, but not from far. She went to, let's see.  
21 A women's college associated with Rutgers, uh, not Douglass. Is it Douglass College?

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

24  
25 **MIKE DEELO:** Yeah. She was a, an art history major at Douglass College and started  
26 with our New York office in customer service and then we brought her and was, uh, so  
27 Cathy, Cathy just did an absolutely wonderful job as, uh, as, uh, and was assigned the  
28 major accounts. The biggest account that you could have would be Goodyear. Goodyear  
29 was the largest rubber company and naturally used more zinc oxide than anybody else in  
30 the world and Cathy had the Goodyear account and did a, and we were in a very good  
31 position with Goodyear. So, uh, our people were trained, uh, you know, by as essentially  
32 understanding, um, being right on the frontlines with our production department. So our  
33 people were based in Monaca at the same place of the production department. The  
34 production managers and our zinc oxide people were all a part of the, of a similar group.  
35 We'd have, we'd have meetings. We'd understand each other. So there was a great deal of,  
36 great deal of understanding between our sales group and our production group. I think it,  
37 I think it went, went very well. And a lot of the credit goes to the, uh, St. Joe management  
38 at that time, which was John Wright, Alvan Sage, Bob Sunderman, uh, most, most of  
39 these people are still around should you ever wish to talk to 'em. Huh. Bob Sunderman,  
40 unfortunately, passed away.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Who were the other two you mentioned?

43  
44 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. John Wright. He was, he was president of, of, uh, St. Joe Minerals  
45 Corporation.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know where he's located?  
2  
3 **MIKE DEELO:** Located in St. Louis.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** And the other one?  
6  
7 **MIKE DEELO:** The other one is Alvan Sage.  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Alvan, did you say?  
10  
11 (1:13:56)  
12  
13 **MIKE DEELO:** Alvan. A-L-V-A-N.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, A-N. Okay.  
16  
17 **MIKE DEELO:** Sage. S-A-G-E. Should you need Alvan's contact, I can give you that  
18 contact.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** And where's he located?  
21  
22 **MIKE DEELO:** He's in St. Louis also.  
23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** And was he, what was his position?  
25  
26 **MIKE DEELO:** Alvan, uh, had several positions. He was, um, for a while president of,  
27 this was, this group was called, when we reactivated it was called St. Joe Resources  
28 Company, and Alvan was, uh, president of St. Joe Resources for a few years and went on  
29 to head up the gold company and another person came in and eventually Bob Sunderman  
30 became president of St. Joe, St. Joe Resources.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And did you report directly to one of these men?  
33  
34 **MIKE DEELO:** I reported, uh, directly to Alvan Sage when, while he was president and  
35 then when Bob Sunderman became president I reported directly to Bob Sunderman.  
36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In 1987, the company was sold to Horsehead Industries...  
38  
39 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Becoming Zinc Corporation of America and am I correct you stayed  
42 on as director of marketing?  
43  
44 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes.  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Until 1993.

1  
2 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** How did your job change or your work experience change under this  
5 new ownership?  
6

7 **MIKE DEELO:** Well, it changed, it changed quite a bit because, um, the other  
8 company, the acquiring company, uh, which was Horsehead Industries, they had their  
9 own vice president of sales. So they kept him in place. And I think they recognized that,  
10 um, uh, a lot of things we did, but since our sales had gone up and their sales had gone  
11 down, you can imagine we were blamed for some of the demise of the, of the other  
12 company. So, um, so I, uh, I was, I thought maybe there was a place for me in the new  
13 company. As it turns out eventually there was not. You know...  
14

15 (1:16:05)  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** From your perspective of having advanced from a college summer  
18 intern to a VP of sales and director of marketing, um, and having seen a lot of the  
19 workings of the, the plant, how would you characterize the rapport between management  
20 and laborers at the plant?  
21

22 **MIKE DEELO:** Well when I, when I was there I felt it was generally very good. Um.  
23 And it goes back to the historical tradition mentioned before about, uh, about George  
24 Weaton and his approach to working with employees, to having a company subsidized  
25 cafeteria. We had something called the St. Joe Farm. So the St. Joe Farm had livestock  
26 and had, uh, had crops that were used to supply the, uh, supply the cafeteria and, uh, food  
27 was available in the cafeteria at a very, at a very modest, uh, modest price. Um. That was  
28 just one part of it because that only goes so far is, you know, you then have to have an  
29 attitude of, of letting the employees know that you, you know, you, you really do, you  
30 really do, you really do care. Now you would expect a good day's work out of people, but  
31 at the same time too that can be done in an atmosphere of, of showing people that there's  
32 a, that there's a care on the part of management. For the most part, that was there. It kind  
33 of went tilt in the 1970s with, uh, with price controls. It kinda went, went tilt with, uh,  
34 you know, when there were no, when there were no, uh, increases available, uh, to  
35 employees and so all of a sudden it went, uh, when, when it became a union operation  
36 and it didn't become a union, um, just on a whim. The employees felt that they were no  
37 longer being, you know, being looked, cared for and getting raises as they needed. They  
38 felt they needed, uh, you know, they needed someone to represent them. Um. Things  
39 became a bit more distant at that point. But after we restarted there was, uh, there was an  
40 opportunity to consider, you know, should we start it as a nonunion operation or as a  
41 union operation? The steel workers were still in place and we decided to, to not, not ask  
42 or not make any attempt to, uh, to, uh, have, I mean to allow the, to allow the workers  
43 which was their right to, uh, to have representation. So they did. Um.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm kind of confused.  
46

1 **MIKE DEELO:** To have representation by the steel workers. Go ahead.

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** So they, when it reopened it was union or it was not?

4

5 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes. Yes. The union stayed in place.

6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** The union stayed. Okay.

8

9 **MIKE DEELO:** Yeah. And there was probably an opportunity for the workers to, uh,  
10 vote out the, uh, vote out, you know, vote out representation at that time. Uh.  
11 Management made no, no, uh, encouragement to do that sort of thing. So, uh, so the  
12 union, uh, stayed in place and the rapport was very good for a long, a long period of time.  
13 And as far as I know, for the most part that, that rapport between, uh, between  
14 management and, uh, and workers was, was good while I was there. When I left, Bob  
15 Sunderman was, was, uh, was, uh, head of production and so Bob, um, and I think he, I  
16 think he even had the title of president at that time. But, uh, Bob was, uh, Bob had a very,  
17 very good rapport with the workers. He had originally, you know, part of his career was  
18 running the, running the furnace plant, which was a major part of the operation. So he  
19 knew, he knew virtually every piece of equipment out in the plant. Knew, uh, how it  
20 worked and had the rapport with the operators. So, he was very good at that.

21

22 (1:20:38)

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** From its beginning in Josephtown, St. Joe had a very active social  
25 and recreational component for employees. Uh. Things like athletic teams, picnics,  
26 holiday parties. What programs and events were in place during your years at the plant?

27

28 **MIKE DEELO:** Well when I first started, virtually all of those programs were in place.  
29 We had, uh, Christmas parties. We had, uh, company, company picnic each year. Uh.  
30 When I was there, they were either, they were at Idora Park, which is up in, um, it was up  
31 in, in the Youngstown area. And so it was an old amusement park. Uh. It was torn down  
32 and, um, no longer, no longer exists. But that was one part of it. Uh. Another part was the  
33 Christmas party. Another part was the, the athletic program. Even had an athletic  
34 director. Um.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that a full time position?

37

38 **MIKE DEELO:** It wasn't a full-time position, but it was at least a part-time position. He  
39 was, he was paid. They had a bowling alley over there. They had, uh, they had basketball  
40 courts. We played basketball on the, uh, on the weekends. Uh. So we'd work a half of a  
41 day on Saturday and then, uh, at 12 o'clock, uh, we'd get off. We'd, uh, we'd all get  
42 together and play basketball. So it was, uh, you know, it was, it was very good. There  
43 were a lot of, uh, a lot of, a lot of benefits. A lot of things in place then. We used to even  
44 invite people from the outside to come in. Um. One of the guys that used to play there on  
45 a pretty, pretty regular basis was, uh, a basketball player that maybe you've heard of, uh,  
46 Pistol Pete Maravich. Have you ever heard of Pistol Pete?

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** I've heard of Pete Maravich.

3  
4 **MIKE DEELO:** He's from Aliquippa and he used to come up on the weekends, uh, you  
5 know, with us. And everybody called him the pro. At that time, he wasn't a pro. But, uh,  
6 it was obvious that he was very good, you know. So Pistol Pete. And then they had a  
7 volleyball team. They had a softball team. So, so I guess they may have even had a  
8 baseball time. So other zinc companies had baseball teams too. We had, uh, a zinc  
9 company in the neighboring, uh, neighboring, uh, county, Washington County, Donora,  
10 Pennsylvania. There was a zinc plant down there and, um, they had a baseball team too.  
11 One of their stars of their baseball team was a, a young kid named Stan Musial. Uh. So  
12 Stan played on the Donora Zinc Baseball Team, and fully expected that his whole life he  
13 would, uh, be working in the zinc plant, which was run by US Steel Company. So,  
14 interesting. A lot of, uh, a lot of, so it was, it wasn't uncommon. It was common for  
15 different, uh, mill operations to have, uh, you know kind of reach out to employees and  
16 there were a number of, uh, a number of benefits for employees.

17  
18 (1:23:37)

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Did these activities continue in the '80s and '90s?

21  
22 **MIKE DEELO:** Some of 'em did. Bob Sunderman, uh, continued on with the, tried to  
23 continue on with the company picnic, uh, every year. It was transferred for Idora Park,  
24 which was about to shut down, to Kennywood. Had it down at Kennywood Park, which  
25 is, uh, you would know Kennywood. Uh. You probably don't. It's, uh, it's a, uh, local  
26 amusement, local amusement park. Very nice. It's probably on the order of a Six Flags  
27 type of amusement park. So, rather upscale. Um. So, uh, some of these activities, a lot of  
28 these activities continued on, but some, some fell by the wayside as, as done with, as has,  
29 as happened with many company programs. Companies may have had good intentions  
30 years ago and, and, uh, some of those things just didn't fit the, you know, the modern  
31 work, work style.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. The auditorium served several functions. Describe your  
34 recollections of the building and its use for business as well as recreational and social  
35 functions.

36  
37 **MIKE DEELO:** Business. The only business function I remember was we used to have,  
38 uh, a monthly foremen's club meeting there. And so there was, uh, an opportunity for the  
39 senior management to communicate with, uh, the salary staff on what was, what was  
40 happening. So, uh, Chuck Henderson and his, and the general superintendent who was,  
41 uh, named Bill McCullough, they would, they would provide information about what's  
42 going on with the, um, with the company. That was the only business application I  
43 remember. Uh. The auditorium was also a place where the Christmas party was held.  
44 Also doubled as a basketball court and so, uh, then downstairs was the, uh, bowling alley,  
45 uh, pool tables. Yeah. Summer engineers we kind of enjoyed going over there opening.  
46 Uh. We had, uh, we were, we were entitled to get, uh, a key for the place and go up and

1 go over and, uh, play pool and, uh, the athletic director was a fellow by the name of Hank  
2 Davenport. So we worked with Hank and made sure we stayed on his good side and  
3 didn't, uh, left the place, you know, left the place looking nice so he didn't have to clean  
4 it up, you know. So.

5  
6 (1:26:06)  
7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Outside of company-sponsored activities and the walls of the plant,  
9 to what extent was your family and social life connected to other St. Joe colleagues and  
10 their families?

11  
12 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. Well, a number of, uh, St. Joe, Joe people were, uh, were good  
13 friends and still are. So it was a, um, very nice, very nice opportunity to meet a lot of  
14 good people. St. Joe was very selective on, on, uh, on people they employed, which  
15 suited me very well. Actually I was part of that, part of that process for a while when I  
16 did some technical recruiting for Bob Redelfs. But they had, uh, they had very, very high  
17 standards and so the people who were, who were brought on both, uh, on both, you know,  
18 both as, as in the labor force and on the professional staff, um, were typically, uh,  
19 typically very, very good people. Hopefully people that you wanted to be around and, uh,  
20 we found, uh, found a lot of 'em, uh, to be very, uh, very, very good friends over the  
21 years. So...  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember there being a schoolhouse on the property?  
24

25 **MIKE DEELO:** Yes.  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** And what, what are your recollections of that schoolhouse?  
28

29 **MIKE DEELO:** The school was shut. I think the school was shut down by the time I  
30 started. Um. And it was Potter Township School and, uh, as I indicate, indicated before  
31 there were some structural problems with it and, uh, so the, uh, so the building was  
32 eventually demolished. But, uh, after it was abandoned by Potter Township School  
33 System, um, it was used by the Boy Scouts. So the Boy Scouts, uh, and I remember, uh,  
34 there was a couple of people in St. Joe who were very active in the Boy Scouts and the  
35 Explorers and, uh, used, used that building for, uh, training, building canoes, uh, for  
36 Explorer Scouts, canoe trails and, uh, for a while I thought I might, might be able to be,  
37 might want to be part of that and it just didn't work out. It's about the time I met my wife  
38 and it didn't, uh, I had to choose different, different activities and so, um, um, so yeah.  
39 There was the Potter Township School and that was eventually torn down.  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have any idea when?  
42

43 **MIKE DEELO:** I've forgot when it was, but I know by the early 1980s we had a new, it  
44 must've been in the late, late '70s, mid to late '70s. Then a new scale house was built and,  
45 uh, on the site of where that Potter Township School was.  
46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the schoolhouse used as a scale house before a new scale house  
2 was put there?

3  
4 **MIKE DEELO:** Not that I remember. No, I think it was, uh, the, the scales were at the  
5 main entrance of the plant, uh, near the, near the furnace plant and however that needed  
6 to be expanded and, um, so by 1980 when, when I took over as commercial manager,  
7 which included operation of the scale house. Um. It was, it was, uh, at the new, you  
8 know, the new scale house where the, after the school was. So I, I don't recall exactly  
9 when that construction took place.

10  
11 (1:29:51)

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Have you heard any stories about the role women played at the plant  
14 during World War II?

15  
16 **MIKE DEELO:** Very little. I do, I do not. I can't give you any information on that at all.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What jobs did women hold at St. Joe's while you working  
19 there and what efforts were made to recruit and train women?

20  
21 **MIKE DEELO:** Um. Women, uh, women were mostly in the, uh, you know, in the  
22 support, administrative support category. You know, in my case, uh, one, uh, one woman  
23 we brought out of our, out of our customer service department in Pittsburgh and, uh, I  
24 asked her to be on our sales staff and she eventually became, uh, became a senior person  
25 in our sales department. Um. As far as, uh, as far as other women, uh, in the operations  
26 obviously there were a lot of clerical secretarial, secretarial roles, um, uh, in the, uh,  
27 throughout the administrative staff and throughout the purchasing department and the  
28 engineering department. As far as professionals, um, we had a nurse on staff and so, um,  
29 as a matter of fact I had dinner with, uh, with her quite often.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What's her name?

32  
33 **MIKE DEELO:** Nancy Loxley. And Nancy was, uh, a part-time nurse in our, uh, and,  
34 uh, so we had dinner, my wife and, uh, her husband at the Elks Club every, every Friday  
35 night for the fish fry. So Nancy, uh, then went on to other things and eventually became  
36 county commissioner here in Beaver County and was, uh, responsible for, for our new,  
37 uh, county jail. So I thank her for, for that. They were at one time considered putting it  
38 right in the middle of downtown Beaver, which I didn't think was a good place for it.  
39 And it's now located across the, across the river, um, on the site of the old, uh, J&L Steel  
40 Plant. You know. So, go ahead.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the challenges and obstacles to employing women at the  
43 plant?

44  
45 **MIKE DEELO:** Uh. Some of the challenges were associated with, uh, eventually  
46 women, women did come into the workforce and then there was an environmental

1 concern. And by environmental, um, there was a concern and I think it was lead, uh,  
2 whether women of childbearing age should be involved in a, uh, in an area that could be  
3 considered exposed to lead and so there was the, the interest then when there was an  
4 encouragement to have women in the, in the laboring force. There was encouragement to  
5 do that, which wasn't a problem, but there was also a discouragement on don't, you  
6 know, women of childbearing age couldn't be involved in, uh, and so that, that presented,  
7 you know, significant challenges on how do you, how do you make, how you balance all  
8 that and make it fit together. So...

9  
10 (1:33:39)

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Looking through company publications from the 1960s, it seems  
13 there were very few if any African-Americans on the St. Joe workforce. How would you  
14 characterize the racial or ethnic mix during your years working at the plant?

15  
16 **MIKE DEELO:** Well there was discussions with, uh, certainly in the 1970s, uh, you  
17 know, with the, either, uh, whether it was called affirmative action programs back then,  
18 but, uh, community relations on concern on, uh, you know, percentage of African-  
19 Americans in the plant versus and, and a, and an effort to, um, to, uh, to correct that. So,  
20 um, just recently and I know Shell's going through this too because I was at a, at, uh, and  
21 the concern is, you know, how many, what's the percentage of African-Americans in the  
22 community and how should that percentage be, you know, represented in, in the, in the  
23 workforce. And those discussions took place also back at, uh, in, in the St. Joe, in the St.  
24 Joe area, era. Those were addressed and as far as I know there were never any, any  
25 significant concerns cause there were a number of African-Americans, uh, you know, that  
26 did work at St. Joe. Now what the numbers were I don't know and whether they met the,  
27 you know, community standards or not and what, what were the community standards,  
28 um, you know. My impression is right now it's around, around 10 percent in Beaver  
29 County but I don't know that, know that for sure. I know it's a reasonably low, low  
30 number and, you know, then in the workforce were you encouraged to come up to that  
31 number, go beyond it, you know, uh, I, I was not part of those discussions.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make to hire veterans?

34  
35 **MIKE DEELO:** I don't recall that there was any preferential treatment for veterans at  
36 that, at that time. Uh. That's, uh, I think relatively, relatively new. I mean the company,  
37 um, when I was there most of the senior, the senior management were virtually all World  
38 War II veterans. And, uh, and honored for their service. I know I had one customer out at  
39 Johns Manville in Denver. When I called him, he says, "You get back to Chuck  
40 Henderson and let him know that he saved my life in Europe in World War II." He says,  
41 "He probably doesn't remember me." But when I got back to Chuck. Chuck was our  
42 division manager. I went back to Chuck and said, "You know, this fellow at Johns  
43 Manville said you saved his life." And so, uh, all veterans were, were held in very high  
44 esteem and still are.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** In addition to providing employment, how did St. Joe's contribute to  
2 the larger Beaver Valley Community?

3  
4 **MIKE DEELO:** It was not only, it was not only St. Joe, but it was common back then  
5 that all the companies would be active in the community. As a matter of fact, there was  
6 competition to do that. So, uh, the company's encouraged, like my boss was Bob Redelfs.  
7 Uh. He was on the school board in Beaver, and he would take time and, uh, it was  
8 encouraged by the company to have his secretary to devote some of her time to support  
9 him on his school board efforts. He was also, uh, director of the Blind Association. And,  
10 um, and, um, so people, senior management was encouraged. I'm not so sure that they  
11 were and back then I was, I was junior. So I was not part of that. But I think they were,  
12 they, if they, if they were part of, um, you know, these various civic organizations it  
13 allowed, uh, it allowed the company to have some visibility and to have some say and we  
14 were encouraged to be elected officials. I lived out in Chippewa Township at that time.  
15 The head of Chippewa Township, uh, the commissioner was, uh, president of, uh,  
16 Babcock and Wilcox Steel Company, George Cross. And so this was very common, uh,  
17 that companies were much more involved with the community. Um. Virtually every  
18 company included, including J&L Steel, including Midland. I mean there was a much,  
19 much higher level of community involvement. Nowadays, what you, I think what you'll  
20 find is that just surviving in business is such an important task. Back then, you know, if  
21 you, you, uh, your companies, you just knew that the steel mills were going to survive.  
22 You know, all you have to do is look back at the history of, uh, history of the steel mills  
23 back in the 1950s and 1960s. There was no concern about, uh, you know, competition.  
24 Uh. They, they essentially could kind of set their own prices and pretty much sell their,  
25 all their products. So there was no problem, problem doing that. It wasn't until the '70s  
26 and late '70s and early '80s. Uh. So back in the '50s and '60s, you know, your, your  
27 executives, uh, spent a great deal of their time out, out in the community, uh, helping to  
28 make sure that, uh, the name of the company was out in front and too because a lot of 'em  
29 had keen interests in those areas. So, uh, it was, uh, it was a different era and, um,  
30 nowadays, I, it appears to me from my perspective that companies can't afford to do that  
31 anymore. And, uh, United Way is an example. Um. Uh. United Way donations, uh, every  
32 company would, would kind of, they'd be kind of tripping over themselves to promote  
33 United Way and making sure that they had a, uh, high level of participation and, and  
34 many companies would boast 100 percent participation. We had payroll deduction for  
35 United Way. Uh. And, um, you know, your, your, it's not like your evaluation was based  
36 on, you know, on making a donation to United Way, but you knew there was a strong  
37 encouragement and you knew it was genuine because, um, it was a, um, it was just a way  
38 of life. It was a different era. Huh.

39  
40 (1:40:31)

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Just a few wrap up questions here.

43  
44 **MIKE DEELO:** Sure.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

1  
2 **MIKE DEELO:** Well when I was recruited by Bob Redelfs, he indicated that, um, that  
3 he would expect people working at, working for him at St. Joe to consider this a lifetime  
4 employment. That, you know, you work hard, do your job diligently. Not everybody is  
5 going to be able to be, you know, president or vice president but that you would, you  
6 would have a nice way of, a nice way of life. A comfortable living, and that you would  
7 give to the company and the company would make sure that you were, you know, taken  
8 care of in a reasonable, reasonable fashion. I bought into that. [Laughs] That, um, that I  
9 had a great sense that, tremendous sense of loyalty to all my employ, employers. I was  
10 very grateful for a job. I grew up in a poor neighborhood in south St. Louis. I was  
11 grateful for that living much better than I ever had anticipated I would and a lot of that  
12 had to do with, uh, a lot of that had to do with St. Joe. So, um, so I had a great sense of,  
13 sense of loyalty. Um. My family liked the area, and I would, not everything went well,  
14 but, uh, you know, my job was to stick it out through, uh, as Bob Redelfs had told me a  
15 couple of times. He says, "Your job is similar to a marriage. You know. You're kind of  
16 married to this." He said, "Now, I will admit that it's a lot easier changing jobs than it is  
17 changing wives, but you want to." [Laughs] You know, this is, uh, almost like a marriage.  
18 I took that serious.

19  
20 (1:42:24)

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part about working at the zinc plant?

23  
24 **MIKE DEELO:** The best part I think was rebuilding it. My, uh, my opportunity to  
25 rebuild, expand, uh, do things, um, in a, uh, the way I wanted to have things done from a  
26 sales and marketing standpoint. And, uh, I really enjoyed that. Building up is a lot more  
27 fun than tearing down. [Laughs]

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

30  
31 **MIKE DEELO:** Oh, I think everything. Everything, you know, can, can be better. Um.  
32 And, uh, there's a lot of things we look back on and wish we had done different,  
33 differently. Um. I really, uh, I really have, really have no, no regrets. Um. I had some  
34 opportunities that maybe I should've, uh, I had opportunities with other companies and in  
35 looking back I probably should've left the company and maybe taken, I could've, you  
36 know, there would've been a different career path. Maybe, uh, maybe a lot, a lot of  
37 excitement, but, uh, I, I was driven by loyalty to my, uh, to my employer. So...

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

40  
41 **MIKE DEELO:** My last day on the, on the job was, uh, a time when things were not  
42 going so well. And when the company had to cut back and that was with Zinc  
43 Corporation and so I was director of marketing then and when you're in marketing you'll  
44 find that those are one of the expendable positions that if things, uh, things turn against  
45 you, uh, against the company financially, you know, there's a lot of, a lot of places that,

1 uh, a lot of jobs that can stay, that can stay. But marketing is one of those that's probably  
2 expendable on a short term basis. Not a long term, but certainly short term.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

5  
6 (1:44:36)

7  
8 **MIKE DEELO:** I'm all for it. I think, uh, I think it's an exciting opportunity for the area.  
9 I'm also on Council here in, uh, in, in Beaver and we get a lot of, uh, we see that there are  
10 people who are, uh, in general the community is very, very supportive. But we also have  
11 some people who question a lot of the, uh, a lot of the activities and would like to, would  
12 like to be part of it and, um, uh, questioning some of the environmental concerns, air,  
13 water, uh, solid waste management, uh, lighting, noise, uh, a lot of the environmental  
14 things and expect, um, expect Council, Beaver Borough Council to be able to do  
15 something about that. Well, we've been very fortunate I think to have, have Shell at least,  
16 uh, uh, listen to us, work with us and be responsive. It's like across the river there was a  
17 concern about that, about the, uh, retaining wall going in and Shell has put together a  
18 very nice program of, uh, reforestation. So I'm excited about Shell moving in. I think it's  
19 going to be a good thing for the area. Um. Not everyone shares my, my enthusiasm for it  
20 though. So. Most, I think most people do. You know.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

23  
24 **MIKE DEELO:** I don't think so. I think you've covered quite a few things. So thank  
25 you.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Well, thank you very much.

28  
29 **MIKE DEELO:** You're welcome.

30  
31 (END)

**Terry Frank**  
**Interview @ September 28, 2016**

## **TERRY FRANK**

### **Summary**

The interview with Terry Frank took place on September 28, 2016, in the conference room at INMETCO in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, where he works as the maintenance engineer manager. Terry had a large box of photographs of the St. Joe zinc plant, some of which appeared to have been taken for company publications; the box also contained an old training film (the photos and film have since been donated to the John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh). Terry comes from a family of St. Joe employees—step-great-grandfather, father, and uncle. He worked at the Monaca plant from 1974 to 2014: in the yard and sinter plant before going through the apprenticeship program, as a machinist in the maintenance department, in the engineering department, and as a supervisor of the machine shop.

Terry's interview strongly conveys the opportunities for education and advancement that St. Joe offered its employees. He describes in detail the four-year apprenticeship program, including testing to get in, training, job placement, and the program's national reputation. (In later years Terry administered the apprentice program.) He mentions St. Joe's reputation for offering steady employment.

Terry describes how the sinter plant worked, the role of machinists at the plant, and how their job responsibilities changed after the 1979 shutdown and 1980 reopening of the smelter. He contrasts the culture of the plant before and after the 1979 shutdown, and explains how the demolition of the small furnaces for the plant's restart led to abandonment of the old main office and the auditorium. Terry provides perspective on how zinc pricing affects plant operations and employment, and how economic issues influence changes of ownership. He talks about innovations in different oxides and repurposing or creating the machinery and parts they needed to operate the smelter.

As a St. Joe kid and an adult employee for four decades, Terry shares memories of employee/family perks, including Christmas parties, the auditorium, vacation benefits, the trap range, indoor shooting range in the basement of the former County Home, St. Joe Boat Club with boat launch on Raccoon Creek, and playing sports against teams from other nearby industries. He talks about the cafeteria, farm, and corn roast, and is one of many interviewees to reminisce about the cafeteria's "ham and egggers."

Terry provides insight into women working in the motor shop, weld shop, bag house etc., during and after World War II, as well as the influx of women into various areas of the plant in the early '70s. As a de facto tour guide of the County Home prior to its demolition, Terry shares ghost stories and describes St. Joe's reuse of the building.



1 **TERRY FRANK**  
2 **INTERVIEW – 9/28/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 TERRY FRANK  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Today is September 28th 2016. This is an interview with Terry  
8 Frank at INMETCO in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. Uh. Could you please, um, state  
9 and spell your name, your full name?  
10

11 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. Um. T-E-R-E-N-C-E. I go by, it's Terence. I go by Terry  
12 and Frank. F-R-A-N-K.  
13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** Your, um, date of birth and your current address, please?  
15

16 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. [REDACTED] and, uh, current address is [REDACTED]  
17 [REDACTED], Beaver Falls, PA, 15010.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Are you from the Beaver County area or did you . . .?  
20

21 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah, I grew up in Monaca.  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Monaca?  
24

25 **TERRY FRANK:** In Beaver County. Yes.  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Was any of your family involved with St. Joe's?  
28

29 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. My, my great-grandfather was, uh, was a millwright. My  
30 uncle was the controller at one time before he passed away and my father worked there at  
31 one time as well. So, quite a bit of family.  
32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** How early on was your grandfather there?  
34

35 **TERRY FRANK:** Great-grandfather was there in the, uh, '50s and into the '60s before  
36 he retired and, uh, my uncle, I can't remember when my uncle started. But again, he was  
37 the controller and he, uh, he passed away in '76 and then my father passed away in '63.  
38 He had been there about six years.  
39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** And, uh, what education did you have before starting at St. Joe?  
41

42 **TERRY FRANK:** About a year of college.  
43

44 0:01:49  
45

46 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-huh. What were you studying?

1  
2 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh. Biology.  
3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And, um, are you currently working or retired?  
5  
6 **TERRY FRANK:** No. I'm working.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** And where are you working?  
9  
10 **TERRY FRANK:** INMETCO.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In what capacity?  
13  
14 **TERRY FRANK:** I'm the maintenance engineer/manager.  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In what year did you start working at St. Joe Lead?  
17  
18 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh, 1974. March.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** And when did you stop?  
21  
22 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. Uh. You, you mean at the Monaca Plant?  
23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.  
25  
26 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. At the Monaca Plant, it was about, I think, two years ago.  
27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
29  
30 **TERRY FRANK:** Three years ago.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** 2013?  
33  
34 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh. '14, 2014. So it was a couple of years ago. I transferred here.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
37  
38 **TERRY FRANK:** Caught me by surprise there.  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you find out or apply for a job at St. Joe?  
41  
42 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. Well my uncle worked there. My father worked there. I was  
43 going to quit college at the time and, uh, didn't know where else to go. So, I went down  
44 there and my uncle got me a job.  
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**INTERVIEWER:** Um. What was that first job?

**TERRY FRANK:** It was, uh, clean, uh, yard crew and the second day I was there they sent me to, uh, they sent me to the sinter plant. And they sent a whole bunch of us to shovel the incline. The incline was a belt that went from the sinter plant to the furnace plant and it went like on an angle. And, uh, they were moving briquettes at the time. We made a briquette that looked like a giant charcoal briquette. And it was steamy and hot and you couldn't see and there was a whole line of us shoveling briquettes off the walkway up onto the belt and, uh, I couldn't see the guy in front of me and the briquettes were heavy and I went to the change house to have my lunch and I cried for my mother. What did I do? What did I do? So, that was my first week's experience at, uh, St. Joe.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you explain please what the sinter plant does?

**TERRY FRANK:** The sinter plant, um, at the time, we were mining ore for zinc. And, they had a roaster plant and very briefly the roaster plant made a calcine and the sinter plant took that calcine, mixed it with volatiles like breeze and sand and other things and made a sinter out of it. A sinter is, it, it looks like for those that won't know it looks like a piece of slag. Okay. But it's, it's made to a certain size and that's what went into the furnaces along with coke to get roasted to, uh, take the vapors off for zinc. So, that's a pretty simple explanation, but there's a lot more to it than that.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how long were you in the sinter plant?

**TERRY FRANK:** Oh. I was in there for several months. Uh. I, I had passed, uh, I had taken the apprenticeship test and I passed it. So I, uh, I was in there until the apprenticeship started maybe about three months. So I worked in cleanup and shift work and things like that. And then, uh, then I went into the apprenticeship program, which was for maintenance.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Could you please describe the process of getting into the apprenticeship program and what the training was like?

**TERRY FRANK:** Well, it, uh, you had to take a, a pretty difficult test if you, if you weren't up in, uh, college level math or not college level but, but, uh, high school level math, but not simple math, uh, you know algebra and calculus at high school level stuff you weren't going to pass. And, um, so I took the test and they took 30 of us that year because they needed a lot of people trained. They used to figure out what their manpower needs were going to be for the future, and you had a four-year apprenticeship. And, uh. So they used to judge it by how many, that by how many people they took. And the way you worked when, when we were in there, you worked one year and you worked throughout all the crafts. You worked in electricians. You worked in the millwrights. You worked in the machine shop. You worked in the sheet metal shop. You worked through all the crafts and, uh, at the end of that year you were given a class ranking. You got a, uh, you got a shop grade and you got a school grade. And, uh,

1 depending on where you were there, where you were, uh, in that ranking, they would  
2 come to you at the end of the year and say well we got three electrician openings and two  
3 millwright openings and this many openings for here and you got to pick. If you were  
4 high enough up in your class, you pretty much got what you wanted and where you  
5 wanted to go and if you weren't you got the luck of the draw. You know. I happened to  
6 be third in my class. We had like 34. So at that time, I picked machine shop. And, uh,  
7 so you spent, uh, you spent three years working in your craft, working in a machine shop  
8 and you had to go to school. We learned calculus. We learned geometry. We learned  
9 trigonometry. Uh. We took, uh, drawing classes, drafting classes. Uh, some, uh,  
10 engineering technology and that, it was pretty intense. And, um, you had to keep a  
11 certain grade level up or and you had to have a good, uh, you couldn't be tardy or, uh,  
12 miss work or you didn't make it. And it was pretty, pretty strict. And, uh, we had at, at  
13 St. Joe at that time this, this apprenticeship was affiliated with the Pennsylvania Training  
14 Council, which was affiliated with the Federal Government, and, uh, so you had a  
15 Journeyman's Card that was recognized all over the country. And St. Joe's Training  
16 Program at the time was, um, for lack of a better word, kind of famous throughout the  
17 country for putting out good people. You know. If you passed at St. Joe, you were pretty  
18 good. You know. You, you were a pretty good, uh, worker and a pretty good, pretty  
19 smart guy according to, uh, the, uh, feelings at the time, you know, through industry.  
20 And we had, uh, two full-time instructors and they would bring instructors in, uh, for  
21 different other classes. So it was pretty, pretty intense, and, um. So you went through  
22 four years of that and, and you, you passed or failed, you know.

23  
24 0:08:54

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Where were these classes held?

27  
28 **TERRY FRANK:** On site. We had class, regular classrooms.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** In what building?

31  
32 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. At, when I first started they were in the personnel building and  
33 then, uh, towards later they were held in the auditorium. You know, we had an  
34 auditorium and, uh, later on they were held there in the basement. They turned that into  
35 a, uh, it used to be bowling alleys in there and they, they turned that into a, like an  
36 apprentice training center. So. It was on site though.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** How much of your time was spent in the classrooms versus learning  
39 in the, in the plant?

40  
41 0:09:35

42  
43 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh. You went to school a half-day a week.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** One, one-half day a week?

46

1 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. Four hours a week you went to school, but you had  
2 homework. You were, you were expected to do at least four to six hours of homework  
3 and you worked the rest of the time. Your, your shop grade was two-thirds of your  
4 monthly grade and your school grade was one-third. So your foreman would grade you  
5 every month and he would grade you by, you know, how good, how hard you worked,  
6 what kinda, what you showed, you know, how, how quickly you learned. [Phone  
7 Ringing] Sorry about that. And, uh, so you got two-thirds in, of a shop grade and one-  
8 third of your school grade and you had to maintain a standard. And I don't remember  
9 what that standard was, but, uh, you had to maintain a standard grade every month. And  
10 if you didn't you were given one chance to bring it back and if you didn't you were out.  
11 So.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were going through the apprentice program and taking  
14 classes half a day a week, were you on dayshift work throughout the apprentice training?  
15

16 **TERRY FRANK:** Yes. Yeah. We worked days, daylight. Most of maintenance  
17 worked daylight, uh, there at that time. And if you were an apprentice, at the time they  
18 really didn't want you to be on night turn because, you know, there wasn't that many  
19 people and kind of had enough people that didn't know and were unskilled would be  
20 unsafe. So you remained mostly on daylight.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So from there you started as in the maintenance department,  
23 is that right?  
24

25 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. I had become a machinist.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
28

29 **TERRY FRANK:** So I worked in a machine shop. And, uh, up until 1979 I trained to  
30 be a machinist. I made it through the apprentice program and, uh, I was on my way. You  
31 know.  
32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please describe more of what it means to be a machinist at  
34 a plant like this?  
35

36 **TERRY FRANK:** Well I was a maintenance machinist. You know. A lot of, uh, like  
37 now they have, uh, machinists who are, uh, they call, they're CNC machinists. All  
38 computer controlled machines. They're more machine operators and they do work, you  
39 know. If they need a 1,000 of this or 2,000 of that or, um, everything is pretty much  
40 computer controlled now, but what we were was the maintenance shop. So, you know, if  
41 you needed a shaft made for a motor you made it. And, you, you worked it all the way  
42 through. You didn't run one machine. You ran a lathe, a milling machine, a drill press,  
43 uh, a shaper, a planer, whatever you needed to do to get your job done to make your  
44 particular piece that they needed to run the plant at the time you followed it all the way  
45 through. So you got a pretty good education on that, uh, what it was like. There's not  
46 really in today's world many machinists anymore. There are machine operators, but not

1 too many machinists around anymore. So it was pretty much just in, it was a maintenance  
2 machinist and, and you know, to keep the plant running. So.

3  
4 0:12:50

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** How many, how many of you would be on at any given shift?

7  
8 **TERRY FRANK:** Machinists?

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

11  
12 **TERRY FRANK:** At the time, at the time, uh, down there we had, I think there was, uh,  
13 there was 20 of us on daylight and six of us on evening shift. We didn't work nighttime.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-huh.

16  
17 **TERRY FRANK:** So in that shop there was, uh, I think it was about 20, 20 on daylight  
18 and about 16 or six I mean on evening shift. So...

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of opportunities for promotion were there within the  
21 machine shop?

22  
23 **TERRY FRANK:** Where there was, there was opportunities to, uh, you know, to  
24 become a foreman at that time. Uh, just become a supervisor in the machine shop. And,  
25 uh, there were other opportunities at the time, uh, St. Joe paid for you to go to school if  
26 you went to night school, which I took advantage of.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what schooling did you do?

29  
30 **TERRY FRANK:** Well I took a lot of metallurgic classes and, and, and a lot of other  
31 things that would, would further my education in like being a machinist or being a  
32 mechanic, you know, or things like that. I just took a lot of courses to, uh, to further that.  
33 I took some engineering courses and things like that. So, then we shut down in '79. So,  
34 that was the end of that for a few months. But, uh, at that time after we shut down I went  
35 to American Bridge and worked on Sewickley Bridge. So I did some machining on parts  
36 for the Sewickley Bridge. And, uh, that's cause that's what they were working on at that  
37 time and I was out for a few months. And in September of '80, um, they called me back.  
38 They were going to start the plant back up, which I believe they knew all along. But, uh,  
39 they were going to start the plant back up, so they called me back and, uh, I went back to  
40 work as at that time they, uh, eliminated all different crafts. You were a mechanical  
41 repairman or an electrical repairman, and you were supposed to be able to do everything  
42 and if you could do machine work too you were a super mechanic or whatever they  
43 wanted to call it then. So, uh, I came back at that time as a mechanical repairman and,  
44 um, we got the plant ready to start back up. And, uh, so we, that's what we did in 1980.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Was that a change in title or a change in job responsibilities?

**TERRY FRANK:** Just a change in job responsibilities. You, uh, you know, you had to, you had to know and learn a lot more things. You know, you had to do, you had to do millwright work then. You had to do a lot of different things.

**INTERVIEWER:** How did you get the training to do these different things when you came back?

**TERRY FRANK:** On the job. They'd tell you go, go here or go there, do this and you pretty much had the basics of mechanical work, you know, and, um, then you just went out and worked with guys who were millwrights before the plant closed.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh-huh.

**TERRY FRANK:** So, you know, guys that were machinists, there was a couple of us that came back and we went out and worked with them and, you know, the mechanics were easy, but, you know, the rigging and everything else was what we had to learn. So we just learned on the job. You know. That was it. You had to. So, but we, we basically mostly were in the machine shop again, but we did have to go out quite a bit, you know, but we were based in there.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you say go out, going out throughout the plant?

**TERRY FRANK:** Going to the plant. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. I had read about a, a technical training program that started in 1937 to recruit and train engineers for plant work.

**TERRY FRANK:** Yeah, they would, they would, uh. They didn't have that when I was, uh, when I started there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**TERRY FRANK:** That, that tech program. They had a lot of technicians that were engineer helpers and things like that. I don't. If they had that, it was for a short time after I started. They didn't have that much when I was there.

0:17:06

**INTERVIEWER:** When did the apprentice training program that you were in end?

**TERRY FRANK:** In '79. 1979. So when they started back up they, uh, they had so many people to choose from to call back they didn't start an apprentice program at that time. And I'll be honest with you it escapes me when we started the apprentice program



1 again. Towards the end, I administrated the apprentice program towards the end of, uh,  
2 Monaca's life. You know. I, I administrated the apprentice program, but I can't  
3 remember. I didn't do it at first. I don't remember when we started it back up.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** So, just to clarify, so sometime after the reopening in 1980 the  
6 apprentice program was resumed?

7  
8 **TERRY FRANK:** It was resumed at a different, uh, on a different level. It was still  
9 affiliated with the, uh, the federal government how, however, the classroom was self-  
10 taught courses and, um, you know, the shop training was basically the same, but the, uh,  
11 the classroom was self-taught courses. The classroom work was, I would say, quite a bit  
12 easier. You know, but they were self-taught.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Was this online teaching?

15  
16 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh. They bought books and home study. You could take the, they  
17 took the tests, some of the tests online. But no it was, uh, they bought, we bought the  
18 books and it was home study. So...

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Your very first day on the job in 1974. What do you  
21 remember about that?

22  
23 **TERRY FRANK:** I, uh, my first day I got sent to the yard after I got all my safety  
24 things and one of the guys sent me out to the yard to, uh, to clean up, sewer cleaning  
25 cables, and, uh, so I had to clean off sewer cleaning cables. It was pretty uneventful. The  
26 second day was when I cried for my mother. [Laughter] That was the second day.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** I think the fact that you remember the second day from the first day  
29 must have been monumental.

30  
31 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh, that, I, I'll never forget looking up that incline and saying, "Why  
32 have I done this? What am I doing here? Why'd you quit school?" Yep.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** At what point, were you convinced that you made the right decision?

35  
36 0:19:39

37  
38 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. I've never been fully convinced I made the right decision. I  
39 mean it's been, it's, it, you know. I'm, you know, I have a pretty good job right now and I  
40 got there the hard way. You know, I had to come up from the bottom. I had to learn  
41 everything and, you know, I had to work my way up the ladder to get, to get to where I'm  
42 at now. You know, and, uh, if you, so that, that comes along with, you know, your  
43 paycheck too. So, you know, I don't know, I talked to a bunch of engineering students  
44 here not too long ago and I said I'm the perfect example of how you don't want to get  
45 there, you know. I, I feel that it's given me an advantage in, you know, I have a lot of  
46 practical experience and, uh, you know the same things that I work on now is project

1 work and putting in new conveyors that I used to lay under to help fix. So, you know, I  
2 can come at it from a couple different sides, you know. So, but that's a hard way to do it,  
3 you know. It was a real hard way to do it. Go to school at night and, and, uh, you know,  
4 and I, I told them. I said I'm the example of how not to do it. So, but, uh, you know, I'm  
5 not sure. I'm not sure I ever made the right decision, but it turned out okay. So been a  
6 long haul. I'm ready, I'm ready to be done. You know.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** What, when you were the supervisor of the machine shop?

9  
10 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. That happened in '87.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** '87?

13  
14 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** What were your responsibilities?

17  
18 **TERRY FRANK:** I had the, uh, uh, even though we were all mechanical repairmen, I  
19 had basically, you still kind of were separated, but it wasn't, it wasn't according to the  
20 contract or, or, you know it was just yeah this guy does structural shop work, this guy  
21 welds. So basically what I was in charge with was the machine shop, the, uh, the central  
22 repair shop, which was, uh, we worked on pumps and gear reducers and things like that  
23 mechanically and then the structural shop, which you did fabrication work, metal  
24 fabrication work. And we had a sheet metal guy, and there was, uh, a weld, weld shop,  
25 uh, where we did nothing but welding. And, uh, I had the paint shop as well. So we  
26 sandblasted and painted cause you had to have coatings in an environment like that. So  
27 we did all the sandblasting and painting of things in the paint shop. So, pretty much that's  
28 what I was in charge of at that time in '87.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** How about your responsibilities supervising the staff? What, what  
31 did that entail on a day-to-day basis?

32  
33 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. I supervised the men directly at that time. That entailed, uh, I  
34 had a group leader and it entailed, um, giving out work and making sure the work got  
35 done, making sure it got scheduled. Um. Making sure everything got done right and  
36 making sure all the parts got ordered for the work we were doing. Making sure steel got  
37 ordered. Uh. Making sure the men behaved and making sure, you know, if things were  
38 done on time. Making sure things were fixed in a timely manner, you know. We kinda,  
39 we kinda did it all at that time. So, I did have a, I had a group leader. A couple pretty  
40 good ones that helped me out in the day, but pretty much we were on our own, you know.  
41 That went on from '87 to, to 2002. I took care of the shops, you know, that way. So,  
42 uh...

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46 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you responsible for training people in your department as well?

1  
2 **TERRY FRANK:** Well you're always responsible for training if you're a supervisor to  
3 make sure people get trained and make sure things get done, but, um, when they started  
4 the apprentice program up when they would rotate through my area I was responsible for  
5 making sure that they, uh, worked on this particular project or that particular project so  
6 that they would get trained on, uh, a variety of things and they would learn a variety of  
7 things. They'd work so much on the bench and so much with the structural fitters and,  
8 you know, uh, although we didn't let 'em work on the machines in the machine shop.  
9 They would drill or do things like that. Simpler things, you know, and, uh, so yeah. You  
10 were responsible for training the young guys and your guys too, you know, things that,  
11 uh, things that come up that, uh, were unknowns you were responsible for making sure,  
12 uh, they got trained or you got somebody in here to train somebody, you know. So, yeah,  
13 you were responsible for that as well. So...

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. How would you assess your performance as a supervisor?  
16

17 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, they promoted me to engineering. [Laughter] So I guess it was  
18 okay. You know. So, I, uh, I, I won't self-assess that, but they promoted me to  
19 engineering so I guess I did all right, you know.  
20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Before we move on to engineering, what new technologies in  
22 your department or elsewhere in the plant changed how you did your job?  
23

24 **TERRY FRANK:** Not much. We, uh, I, I don't think, you know, after 1980 I don't  
25 think we kept up with the times as far as equipment's concerned. Um. Computers. I  
26 would say that was the biggest single technology, uh, you didn't get much new machine  
27 shop equipment. I guess, uh, you know, everything we had is I always liked to refer to  
28 stone knives and bearskins, you know. Um. We had a couple of lathes that was from off  
29 a World War II Navy ships, but that's what we used. You know. They worked. But, uh,  
30 the only technology I'd say, uh, in, in that time as a supervisor was computers. You  
31 know.  
32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** When did the company start incorporating computers?  
34

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37 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh. Geez. Reluctantly late '80s, early '90s, we started to use some  
38 computers to, uh, to keep track of things. Do simple things, you know. Keep track of  
39 purchase orders and keep track of things we did. Which made things a lot easier coming  
40 from paper, you know. So I would say late '80s, somewhere around in there.  
41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever do any kind of design on the computers?  
43

44 **TERRY FRANK:** I did not. Well, I did not at that time. No. Uh. Um. We didn't.  
45 The drafting department didn't have CAD then they did everything on, you know, Mylar,  
46 you know, paper or plastic. So, uh, uh. No. At that time, no.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Did that change at some point?

3  
4 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh. Yeah. I can't remember exactly, but when we were starting to  
5 use the Internet and then, uh, with things like that, you know, we got a, uh, the, the  
6 drafting department went to CAD and, uh, CAD drawing. Now, we in the field never did  
7 CAD drawing. And even when I went into engineering I didn't do CAD drawing. I  
8 didn't have time for that. We had a drafting department. I would sketch things up. So I  
9 basically stuck with mechanical drawing and just to sketch things up and the drafting  
10 department, like Chuck, they would, uh, they would do all the drawing. As far as design,  
11 it was pretty much, uh, from my part hand sketches. You know, we would make up  
12 sketches. We used our protractor and compass and stone knives and bearskins. You  
13 know. We said, "Hey, I need you to build me this or draw me this." You know, so, that's  
14 pretty much the way it was. Even, even to the end I didn't, I didn't use CAD. And again  
15 I don't have, I did not have time to sit down and do a CAD drawing. You know. Uh.  
16 Not when we have others to do it. So...

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Um. Let's talk about your transition into the engineering  
19 department. What did you start doing in engineering?

20  
21 **TERRY FRANK:** What had happened is we, we had a fella, uh, name was Mike. I  
22 liked him. And, uh, he was an engineer, a young guy. A lot of potential, and I was kinda  
23 trying to show him the practical side of things. He was working with me out in the shop,  
24 and they were having a lot of problems at the time with, uh, we, at the time, we made a  
25 lot of carbon monoxide gases, an offshoot of the, of the process okay. And we would  
26 gather that and compress it with these, uh, fuller rotary compressors and we were having  
27 a lot of problems with them and he was trying to solve that problem and I had worked on  
28 'em for many years and they discovered that what they, at the time, they needed  
29 somebody in that position as the maintenance engineer they needed somebody with, you  
30 know, the practical experience, you know. And I had had a lot of that. So, he had moved  
31 on. Uh. They, they, I mean they didn't get rid of him. He moved on of his own accord to  
32 a, to a different position elsewhere and, uh, so they said, "Hey we need you to straighten  
33 out this problem we're having with the, uh, compressors, get in there and do that." So that  
34 became my job. I would go out into the field and solve problems, you know. Mechanical  
35 issues. Things with the equipment and, and all that. So, that was the transition, but it  
36 was a transition under fire because I had to take care of the issues in the, you know, with,  
37 with these gas compressors that we used. We used to run 'em, so we wouldn't have to  
38 burn natural gas, you know. So, uh, that's how it started. And, uh...

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41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** What year was that?

43  
44 **TERRY FRANK:** 2002.

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And how did your career continue through the department?  
46

1 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, I, uh, you know, they gave me the apprentice program. I, I  
2 don't remember exactly the year. But they, they had me. They had me, uh, administer the  
3 apprentice program. So, you know, I got involved with all that training and, and, all that.  
4 And then, as the years went on, uh, you know, I got other different responsibilities given  
5 to me. You know, I just, things just came along. "Hey, you're going to take care of this.  
6 You're going to take care of that." You know. It's pretty hard to catalogue everything.  
7 And then towards the end, uh, um, we had people leave when they heard that we were  
8 gonna shut down the site. So at that point, I took the storeroom over and the garage over  
9 and, and, uh, security over. And, uh, so I had the storeroom, the garage, and security, and  
10 the shops. But there was foremen in each of those areas. So I had about half of  
11 maintenance and, uh, and I had security. And then I kinda naturally just kinda fell in  
12 cause I had security I was kinda liaison with Shell and helping, uh, kinda helping them.  
13 They had, uh, archeological outfit in URS looking for grave, uh, sites, and, and, we were  
14 doing tours. I did all the tours of the, uh, County Home and, and things like that. And  
15 just the fact there was a couple of us who had been there a long time. You know. Kinda  
16 grew up there. You know and, and, you know, and, uh, so. I kinda liaisoned with them  
17 and I kinda enjoyed that and then, um, it was about, it was about 2014 my boss Tom  
18 Kakascik, he was running Monaca Plant. Well they transferred him to here and, uh, I  
19 wanted to retire and, my wife said that I had to get up in the morning and go somewhere.  
20 So, but we get along very well. So she knew I wasn't kinda ready at that time to retire.  
21 So my boss asked me to come here and do some projects and this place needed some  
22 fixing up. So, uh, he said, "Why don't you come here and help me fix the place up before  
23 you retire?" So I came here as a maintenance engineer and that's what we were doing.  
24 We were doing projects and I kinda liked it. It's close to home. Closer to home than the  
25 other place was. It's half the distance and, uh, it's small, you know. You had 600 guys at  
26 the other place and 60 here. So it's kinda small. So you concentrate on things and, and  
27 the bankruptcy came and, and they added maintenance manager along with maintenance  
28 engineer. So now it's getting a little bit, uh, I'm getting a little tired, you know.

29

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31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you just explain what you meant by they added maintenance  
33 engineers and maintenance?

34

35 **TERRY FRANK:** Well I was the maintenance engineer here as well.

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** Right.

38

39 **TERRY FRANK:** But then we had a guy that was maintenance manager and he retired  
40 and we had the bankruptcy and, you know, he retired and instead of replacing him they  
41 sorta, uh, not really forced, but they, I sort of inherited maintenance manager. So I have  
42 both jobs now. So it's just, I'm wearing out a little. So that's where we're at now.

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have a timeline to retirement?

45

1 **TERRY FRANK:** You know what I, I was going to retire because I, I'm getting, I'm  
2 getting tired, but the night that we had that fire. We had the big fire in November, so  
3 we're going to build those buildings back up and we're going to start soon and that'll be  
4 fun. You know. I put a new compressor house in here and that came out okay. And, you  
5 know, that kinda stuff's fun. I've done a lot of other projects. I'd like to build those  
6 buildings and when I get done with those I think I've seen my day then. I think that'll be  
7 it. I'm not sure yet. But I'd like to see that through. So that'll be a year or so. Cause  
8 that's kinda fun. You know. So, that's about where I am right now.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. At least until the 1960s, management adjusted the workweek  
11 between 40 and 48 hours a week depending upon the financial situation of the plant.

12  
13 **TERRY FRANK:** Right.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Typically driven by economic forces.

16  
17 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh-huh.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** During your years working here, were hours ever cut back and if so  
20 what was going on to make that necessary?

21  
22 **TERRY FRANK:** I got laid off once and to be honest with you I don't remember when  
23 for a couple of weeks. And that was because of zinc prices. Totally because of zinc  
24 prices and I got laid off like two weeks.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you explain how zinc prices affect the running and . . . ?

27  
28 **TERRY FRANK:** Well the zinc prices are controlled by the, uh, the London Metal  
29 Exchange. And I've never delved into what controls the London Metal Exchange. Like  
30 zinc prices. So, you know, the zinc prices have always been real fluid. You know. Big  
31 ups and downs. And when they go down, you gotta cut production. And, uh, because  
32 you can't keep producing and storing things that, you know, that, uh, cost, you know, cost  
33 you x amount of dollars to make a pound of zinc or a ton of zinc and you can't keep  
34 making it at that high a cost and keep stockpiling it.

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36 0:36:18

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm a little confused. If zinc prices are down, are you talking about  
39 the price of purchasing the zinc?

40  
41 **TERRY FRANK:** No. We, we made the zinc. Okay.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

44  
45 **TERRY FRANK:** So if the zinc prices are down, it costs you x amount of dollars to  
46 make a ton of zinc and you're making a lot of zinc, you know, it's costing you this much

1 money and with the zinc prices down you're losing money. So you gotta quit making  
2 zinc. So you gotta cut production and then you gotta cut people.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

5  
6 **TERRY FRANK:** But that only happened once. St. Joe was famous for not laying off.  
7 Like the steel industry. Everybody said, "Well go to St. Joe, you won't make as much  
8 money, but you'll never get laid off." And pretty much that's the truth. You know, like I  
9 said I got laid off a couple weeks. I don't ever remember another layoff, you know, the  
10 whole time that they had even if it didn't affect me. You know. But they always worked.  
11 They always made money there. And, uh, they would work. Before I started they worked  
12 six days one week and five days the next. That's how they worked. When I started, they  
13 did not do that. I started right after the union came in. They voted in the union and I  
14 started right then. So in fact my starting was delayed because they were voting on the  
15 union kinda. So... I was going to start in February and I started, I think, in March. So.  
16 After that vote.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the pros and cons of the union coming in?

19  
20 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, I think, boy, that's a hard question. You know, I've been on  
21 both sides of it. You know. I've been on one side and then the other. You know. I  
22 think, uh, I don't know. I don't know if I want to go into that to be honest with you.

23  
24 0:38:18

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** That's fine.

27  
28 **TERRY FRANK:** Cause I see, I see, I see for both sides. Okay. I've been on both  
29 sides. I see for both sides. I see why people bring unions in and I see why unions go  
30 overboard on what they do. So, I'm, I see both sides and, and, and I don't know. What  
31 was happening at that time, the politics of what was going on, I didn't get into and I  
32 wasn't part of that decision. Um. So, I don't really have a venture of an opinion of, I  
33 don't want to venture an opinion of what happened that particular time, you know. So. I  
34 think I'll just let that one go.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Fair enough. Um. During your years here, how was working on  
37 holidays handled?

38  
39 **TERRY FRANK:** Um. Well, you know, hourly you got scheduled or you didn't. And,  
40 um, salaried, you had holiday coverages. Everybody took turns and at the time you  
41 didn't get paid for it, but you took turns and that was just part of your job. So everybody  
42 kinda took turns on holiday coverage. If you had to have your men on, if you had to work  
43 and your men came out on holiday, you came out. You didn't get paid, but you came out.  
44 That's the way it was.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, when you say you didn't get paid, if you were salaried?



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**TERRY FRANK:** You got, when you were salaried, you didn't get paid extra for working an extra day or holiday pay or anything like that at the time. Now, after I became a non-supervisor, I think they started getting paid for holidays and a little tiny bit for overtime, but I never, I never got that. Just the frontline supervisors did. But that was after me.

**INTERVIEWER:** How about the vacation benefits, um, other benefits that you got as an employee here? How much time off?

**TERRY FRANK:** Uh. Five weeks max. I get five weeks now. I've got over forty years, but I get five weeks off. I pretty much take it whenever I want. Um. I had a, uh, pretty fair opportunity to go with Jacobs who was doing work for Shell and I didn't do because, uh, I like my time off. I didn't want to start over again. I like my vacation and I like to be able to go and come and go as I please. That's the one good thing we've always had on salary is you pretty much come and go as you please as far as your vacation. Take a long weekend or take five days. It's always been a pretty good benefit there. But, you know, we've always had five weeks max. So, it works. You know.

0:41:40

**INTERVIEWER:** Were there any merit systems or incentive systems for receiving bonuses?

**TERRY FRANK:** At the end, uh, there was some bonus systems that never seemed to work, so they never really amounted to much.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you describe what those bonus systems were?

**TERRY FRANK:** Uh. I don't remember in detail. I really don't. That was based on a lot of things. You know. Based on safety records, based on production, based on the price of zinc, based on this and based on that. And, uh, uh, it never went over. It never went very well. So, there was never no good impact or a positive impact. Let's put it that way.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So, you started in '74 and then in '79 the cafeteria closed.

**TERRY FRANK:** They did. Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about the cafeteria in those five years that it was open?

**TERRY FRANK:** Oh. Um. The, the first place I, you know, I don't know if you're going to go back and ask this question. But, uh, I don't know whether you want me to get into it, but I, I grew up there. And, you know, when my father was alive, I remember going. They had a Christmas party every year. The union and the company went at it

1 together. Or at the time there was no union, but the men and the company went out  
2 together and, um, you'd go down and they'd put on a play. And the auditorium, the  
3 auditorium had a full basketball court, a stage that looked like a professional stage and  
4 with curtains and lights and sound equipment and there was a kitchen in there, bowling  
5 alleys in the basement, and you went there and they put on a Christmas play and probably  
6 the most expensive presents available at the time. You got to pick one depending on your  
7 age group, and you got candy and things and even after my father died I, I got to go. Um.  
8 You know, my uncle was still there and because my father had worked there you still got  
9 to come. My mother used to bring us, and, uh, I'd go down there as a youngster and play  
10 basketball and lift weights and play handball and do things. You were allowed to do that.  
11 We had a baseball field, a softball field right on site. We used to play softball. They had  
12 a softball team.

13

14 0:44:08

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was the field on the site?

17

18 **TERRY FRANK:** It was, uh, over here. Where's the entrance? Right in here where the  
19 Mitsui plant was over in here. That's where the softball field was. Up on the hill, uh,  
20 beside the mall was the, uh, we had a trap range and, so they had a trap team,  
21 trapshooting team. In the, uh, in the, uh, old poorhouse in the women's side there was  
22 administrative women's side, men's side. The old women's side in the basement was an  
23 indoor shooting range. And then St. Joe had a pistol team and you could go down there  
24 and reload your shells. They supplied everything. And, uh, they supplied the bullets and  
25 powder and everything and, and if you shot on the pistol team you could go down there  
26 and shoot.

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** As a teenager you were doing that?

29

30 **TERRY FRANK:** No, that was as an adult. But I'm just going over everything that they  
31 had there. But as a teenager we used to go down and work, uh, play, uh, basketball and  
32 play ball on the field. You were allowed to do all that. It was a family thing. We had a  
33 boat launch down on Raccoon Creek. The St. Joe Boat Club. And, uh, there, there was  
34 always activities, always things going on. I think at one time St. Joe had an athletic  
35 director, uh, I think so. I think that was the case, you know. And, uh, um. It, it just, it  
36 was a big family deal, you know. Now the cafeteria...

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** Can I just interrupt you one second?

39

40 **TERRY FRANK:** Sure.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Going back. With all these sports teams, whom were they playing?

43

44 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, there was, uh, there was other industries that had teams at that  
45 time. Um. They would, uh, they would play them. There was other, you know, J&L  
46 always had a team. Arco had a team and B&W had a team. All the industries around

1 always had some kind of team cause most of the places were family, kinda family  
2 oriented. You know. At that time, that was a big deal. So it was always like in the  
3 industrial league or industries everybody had some kind of a team for different things.

4  
5 [Coughs]

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, let's, let's say you were supposed to work a shift, but you were  
8 the clutch hitter on the team, and there was going to be a game.

9  
10 0:46:35

11  
12 **TERRY FRANK:** Well you always, you always got, uh, a little dispensation for that.  
13 You know. Yeah. You could, you could, you work extra here or change this there or  
14 come in early or whatever. But most everything was scheduled around work. You know  
15 what I mean? So, but if you were the clutch guy, I don't know, if you were on evening  
16 shift, somebody usually would trade with you, you know. I was never that guy. So I  
17 never had to worry about that. But you asked about the cafeteria. It was great. You  
18 know we had a farm. And we used to raise pigs and at one time cattle and, uh, corn for  
19 the big, they had the corn roast. They always had a yearly corn roast and, uh, they'd raise  
20 the corn on the farm. But when I started mostly they raised pigs. Uh. And, uh, but you'd  
21 go in and, uh, you'd go in the cafeteria and, and you could get sandwiches. You could get  
22 breakfast sandwiches and when you went there at dinner time you had to work over or  
23 you wanted to eat dinner there you could go in there and you could get a hot roast beef or  
24 pork and, uh, mashed potatoes, vegetable, piece of pie, cup of coffee. Homemade pie. A  
25 buck and a quarter. You know, when I first started. Um. And it was good. I mean it  
26 would, uh, uh, I was trying to look for a word here, but, uh, it would rival any of the  
27 restaurants that were around. You know. The pies were great. The ladies. There were  
28 ladies there that made great pies and they cooked all the food. It was all homemade.  
29 They had a, they had a guy that used to do butchering. In fact, the, uh, the butcher house  
30 still stands. It's, uh, right now we have a landfill still there and the old butcher house is  
31 right there on that site. You can go down there and they got the old big wooden cooler  
32 and chain where they did and they butchered right there and all the food came to the  
33 cafeteria.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** So on the site itself?

36  
37 **TERRY FRANK:** Not on this site, uh, here. If you go, uh, down towards, uh, yeah,  
38 you're going to be going, you're going to be going on 18.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you talking about the site where the farm was?

41  
42 **TERRY FRANK:** The, the, if you went down, if you go down 18 and you went down  
43 and you go across the bridge that goes across Raccoon Creek and turn up Mowry Road,  
44 the farm was up there on the right. The boat club was up there, down there on the left,  
45 right on the crick, but then across the crick up here was where the slaughterhouse was.  
46 And this, and it's still there.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Now, was that farm still operating by the time you were working  
3 there?  
4  
5 **TERRY FRANK:** When I started it was still operating. They still had pigs. They  
6 didn't have cows and, uh, they still had pigs though.  
7  
8 0:49:29  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And at what age did you start your life as a St. Joe kid?  
11  
12 **TERRY FRANK:** Nineteen.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** You were 19 years old?  
15  
16 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** I don't mean as an employee. I mean...  
19  
20 **TERRY FRANK:** As a kid.  
21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** As a kid.  
23  
24 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh.  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Like at one point was your family involved?  
27  
28 **TERRY FRANK:** When I started going down there and getting involved, uh, six.  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** So you said...  
31  
32 **TERRY FRANK:** When I was, in fact before that because, uh, my father died in '63 and  
33 I think I was eight, round numbers, and you know he was there six years and I don't have  
34 any memory of when I was younger than six, seven, or eight years old. But I'm sure they  
35 were taking us at Christmastime down there when we were, when I was four or five, you  
36 know, because he was working there at the time. So I'm sure he was taking us down  
37 there, you know, to, uh, to the Christmas stuff, you know. I started coming down and  
38 playing hoops and stuff when I was a teenager, you know. But, uh, so, yeah when I was  
39 real young.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Did, did people who were not St. Joe employees or St. Joe family  
42 members come and use the facilities as well?  
43  
44 **TERRY FRANK:** If you were with a St. Joe family member or St. Joe person, you  
45 could come down with them. Yeah. They did. You know, you weren't allowed in the  
46 plant, but you could, you could come down and play some hoops or whatever. You

1 couldn't just come down and play hoops. You had to be with somebody that belonged  
2 there, you know.

3  
4 0:51:02

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** And how did somebody know if you belonged?

7  
8 **TERRY FRANK:** That was about like everything back then. Honor systems. You  
9 know. So it didn't seem to be a problem back then with that.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember any of the cafeteria women in particular, who  
12 worked, the women who worked there?

13  
14 **TERRY FRANK:** I can see their faces, but not their names. Um. No. None in  
15 particular. I mean I can see some of their faces and I can't remember none of the names  
16 now.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there a favorite meal that stands out in your mind from there?

19  
20 **TERRY FRANK:** Ham and egggers in the morning. Ham and egggers. When you were  
21 an apprentice, you had to go get all the food for morning break for all the regular guys.  
22 So you took the orders. You went over and got the food. And if you were working in the  
23 sinter plant, you always got enough money to get yourself a ham and egger. They were  
24 70 cents, 75 cents. And they were delicious. You know. Sort of like the McDonald's  
25 Egg McMuffins. Okay. But they were, we called them ham and egggers. And they were  
26 great. And if, but if you went for the structural shop, they were cheap and you never got  
27 any extra money. The other guys always said, "Ah, keep the change or get yourself  
28 something." Not the structural shop. I remember them as being cheap. You could never  
29 get nothing. They never left you nothing extra. So, but yeah that was the apprentice job.  
30 It was apprentice job you, uh, you went to the caf. Ham and egggers. They were great.  
31 Yeah. If they were selling them ham and egggers, they'd put McDonald's out of business.  
32 You know. They were good. So.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Did management and workers sit together, mingle when they ate?

35  
36 **TERRY FRANK:** At that time, yeah.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

39  
40 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. It was a pretty good relationship. Even after the union came  
41 in, but then it, you know, it went south soon after that. You know. But, uh, when I first  
42 started it was still okay. Everything was still okay, you know. So for a couple, a couple  
43 of years it was good. And then it went south. I mean, I think everybody still got along  
44 okay. But it was different. There was more of a coldness to it. You know. Um. You  
45 know, and then when I went over to salaried side it was, you know, you feel the same  
46 thing. You know, there's a divide there. People that you were good friends with, now

1 you're divided, you know, and over the years it got worse. Not necessarily nasty or  
2 negative, but just got colder, you know.

3  
4 0:53:56

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Describe the auditorium please.

7  
8 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh. Old stone building. Um. Shiny floors. It had really, uh, in the  
9 kitchen area there was this, uh, they didn't have no tile. No, no place in there had tile.  
10 They had, uh, terrazzo, you know, with the chips in it that they came in here and they had  
11 to grind them, expensive polished floors. Beautiful wooden basketball court. It had big  
12 tall floor-to-ceiling windows in it. Big high basketball court. Um. Kitchen was, uh,  
13 kitchen was on the west of basketball court. The stage on the east. Then if you went up  
14 behind the stage there were some rooms up there. Uh. You could lift weights and do that  
15 and then down in the basement was the bowling alleys, duckpins. And, uh, they had the  
16 bowling league and, uh, uh...

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Was this an all-guys sphere...

19  
20 **TERRY FRANK:** No.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Or where there women?

23  
24 **TERRY FRANK:** In fact, uh, that book, the big one down below. I'll show you real  
25 quick here. Uh. Here. There are some pictures in here, uh, of the cafeteria, women from  
26 the war years. I don't know if you saw those. If you look at the champion women's  
27 bowling team '54, uh, the lady in the middle or the third from the left is my aunt. My  
28 uncle that was a controller this is his wife. My aunt, my mother's sister, right there.  
29 Right here.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** That one?

32  
33 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. And so they had a women's 1954 bowling team. They had  
34 women's league too. Yeah. It wasn't just guys. Everybody was, uh, welcome to, to do  
35 that.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** So that was Mrs. Lee...

38  
39 **TERRY FRANK:** Radcliffe.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Les...

42  
43 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** June Radcliffe.

46

1 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. June Radcliffe. Yeah. So that was my mom's sister and that  
2 was my uncle that was the controller. He actually, uh, in 1976 our main offices were in  
3 New York City and he was in New York City and he died of a heart attack in his hotel  
4 room. You know. He was up there with somebody else from accounting and he died, he  
5 died in his sleep in the hotel room from a heart attack. He was in New York on business.  
6 So at the time, we were St. Joe Minerals. You know. We were a public company, but we  
7 had headquarters in New York City. So. Yeah. That, uh, so yeah they had the women.  
8 Eh. Everybody took part, you know. That was pretty good.

9  
10 0:56:47

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Out, outside of company-sponsored activities and the walls of  
13 the plant, to what extent was your family and social life when you were a child, um,  
14 connected to other St. Joe families?

15  
16 **TERRY FRANK:** When I was a child?

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

19  
20 **TERRY FRANK:** Uh. Other than my uncle and, uh, great-grandfather, like I said, uh,  
21 not too much. Not too much. Now my aunt, they were different. They had a lot of  
22 friends. He was pretty high up in the company. You know. They ran in those circles,  
23 you know. We didn't, but, uh. So not too much. No.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Anything else about the auditorium?

26  
27 **TERRY FRANK:** No, I just, like I say, it just, uh, it was just great to have an  
28 auditorium. It's just hard to believe in this day in age, you know, but a place to go. We  
29 used to go after work and, uh, play hoops. Something to do and, you know, that the  
30 company gave you that, you know.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** When, when did the auditorium stop, stop functioning?

33  
34 **TERRY FRANK:** Well...

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Recreation and socializing?

37  
38 **TERRY FRANK:** The main office. The old main office and the auditorium stopped  
39 functioning when we started back up in 1980. We used to have 17 furnaces. Okay. We  
40 had, uh, on the little end we called it cause they were smaller furnaces and, uh, then we  
41 had the big end. So we had nine little furnaces. All the heat for those two buildings  
42 came from the furnaces. They would use the off gases in that for all the heat for those  
43 buildings. Well when we started back up, we didn't, we tore the little furnaces down. So  
44 to come back in and to put heat in those buildings would've been too much money. So  
45 they abandoned those two buildings. That would be the old main office and the



1 auditorium got abandoned cause there was no way, uh, reasonably to heat it. So that's  
2 how they got abandoned to begin with. That happened in 1980.

3  
4 0:59:11

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** In the 1970s, we start to see more stringent environmental standards  
7 and regulations, also fluctuations in the automobile and construction industries, how did  
8 these factors impact employment at St. Joe's, plant operations, and any of the work you  
9 specifically did?

10  
11 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, you know, we always had, uh, pollution control. Uh. We  
12 always had pollution control. Up till, you know, for me personally I, I don't recall an  
13 impact for me personally. I mean, uh, you know, the company had to make some  
14 substantial investments to keep up with the pollution controls and, you know, we had, uh,  
15 we had a lot of archaic design pollution controls that we had in, you know, to control the  
16 dust and the emissions. A lot of stuff was archaic and we had to keep up with that and,  
17 uh, make a lot of substantial, uh, financial investments. How that affected the company  
18 in the '70s I wasn't privy to any of that so, or deeply involved in that. So, um, I can't  
19 really say how that affected them. As far as I'm concerned, me, you know, um, I was  
20 involved heavily in maintaining what we had whether it was new style bag houses or, or,  
21 uh, cyclones or, or whatever, or precipitators, you know. Um. I was heavily involved in  
22 maintenance of those and keeping them running, but the financial hit on those, uh, I never  
23 was privy to at that time. So I can't give you much more, you know, on that. I was in a  
24 different area at the time.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. How did the, the culture of the plant and employer/employee  
27 relations change after the 1979 shutdown and then the 1980 reopening?

28  
29 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, the 1980 reopening I, I thought, you know, in '79 I thought  
30 things were getting pretty, pretty strained between. You mean between the company and  
31 the union and the guys, right? Things were pretty, getting pretty strained. And, and we  
32 shut down. In 1980, we started up pretty small. And, uh, there wasn't that many people  
33 working there. And everybody to come back, I mean, there was pretty much, uh, pretty  
34 good raise in there for everybody because you had to be a super mechanic and or  
35 whatever. You had to do a lot of different things. There wasn't, uh, at the time, there  
36 wasn't an overabundance of management or overabundance of, uh, union people. I think  
37 at the time and, and then you got the best of the best got picked to come back. So it, so  
38 for many, many years it went pretty well. I mean there was, I thought the relationship  
39 was pretty good. For many years, it went well. Everybody was been through a  
40 shutdown. They're happy to have a job back cause they went out in the world and found  
41 out how bad it was to work for others. You know, I went to American Bridge. It was  
42 horrible. You know, and, um, so everybody kinda got a taste of what it was like either in  
43 the unemployment lines or working for somebody else. When they come back, they was  
44 happy to have a job. And that carried on for many years as far as I'm concerned, but then  
45 as you get along and you hire people that never worked there before then it started to go  
46 back downhill again. You know, resentment and your wrong and I'm wrong, you know.

1 But up until, up until close to the time from '80 until about close to the time I went on  
2 salary and even a little after it was, it wasn't bad. I thought it was better than '79. At  
3 least that's what I thought, you know.

4  
5 1:03:37

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** And what year did you go on salary?

8  
9 **TERRY FRANK:** '87.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** '87?

12  
13 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. So, I, I thought it was better than '79. Like I say, I, uh, you  
14 know cause everybody knew what it was like to be elsewhere or be without. So I think  
15 that, uh, that had an impact on that. But again, as you hired new people, as you got  
16 people that never been in the unemployment lines and never had been, lost their job  
17 before, a big job, a good job like that. Then you got people that, then it started going the  
18 other way. You know, so.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Are you familiar with the flame reactor?

21  
22 **TERRY FRANK:** Very little.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** But it was begun at the Monaca plant in 1983.

25  
26 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. They put that in. It was, uh, a big experiment. You know, we  
27 did some work for it, but my familiarity was, with it stops there. I mean, um, we did  
28 some, we did some things for it. We did some maintenance on it. We did, you know, but  
29 familiar with the process and everything I'm not familiar with that one.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** How, how about, are you familiar with how successful it, it was?

32  
33 **TERRY FRANK:** It wasn't very successful. No. And, uh, we shut it down. I don't  
34 even remember when and then it just sat idle.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Did it, was it run for more than a year, two years?

37  
38 **TERRY FRANK:** More than a year, but I don't know how much longer after that.  
39 Now, you know, that was a prelude I think to some other things that they wanted to  
40 develop. But, um, that in itself didn't work out too well to my knowledge.

41  
42 1:05:27

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any other technological innovations that you do think  
45 stand out?  
46

1 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, I mean, you know, the processes of making the zinc itself. I  
2 mean. That was pretty good, and, um, there was a lot of innovations in different oxides  
3 and different powders. The zinc powders and things like that. Um. We had the invisible  
4 oxide that they invented there for sunscreen and it's white that turned invisible so then  
5 when you put it on it turned invisible. It didn't stay white, you know. And, uh, so that  
6 was there. But most of the innovations were in the powders industry. Zinc powders and  
7 things like that. You know, the technical part of that I, you know, I'm a, I'm a wrench  
8 guy. So, I can tell you about the equipment, but the technical part I didn't get involved  
9 in.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Any innovations in the equipment?

12  
13 **TERRY FRANK:** You know, it was a zinc smelter. Nothing was made to be a zinc  
14 smelter. We would take, uh, you know, the oxide packers were made from, uh, Hershey's  
15 cocoa packers. Most everything in there was adapted from something else. You know.  
16 They came up with the electrothermic furnace process, but most, a lot of the other  
17 equipment was, was either invented by people that worked there or repurposed from other  
18 things and an example would be oxide packers. There was a picture of that. This one  
19 right here. That machine there was designed to pack Hershey's cocoa. And how I found  
20 that out was by accident. You know. We, we were responsible for maintenance on that  
21 and we used to always have to, you know, there was always stainless steel parts and all  
22 this, and what, what are we doing here. So doing a lot of research we found out they  
23 were designed to pack food like Hershey's cocoa, and food grade powders and so it just  
24 kept up that it was everything would've, you know, needed to be stainless over the years.  
25 So, that's how we discovered that. It was designed to pack cocoa. So things were  
26 repurposed. So there was a lot of innovation there because, you know, nobody, uh, or we  
27 couldn't go to the store and get something for a zinc smelter. So everything was pretty  
28 much thought up there or invented there or repurposed from something else from some  
29 other industry. So that's a good example.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you. Okay. There were a lot of changes in ownership.

32  
33 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh, yeah.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Can you comment on that? Like why, why such, so many changes in  
36 a short period of time?

37  
38 1:08:39

39  
40 **TERRY FRANK:** I just think the economic, uh, it was economic, uh, economy issues,  
41 you know. I mean in '79 we shut down. I think the price of zinc had tanked. You know,  
42 it wasn't profitable to be in the zinc business. We couldn't make it cheap enough to  
43 make any money. The price of zinc tanked. They shut the place down. Started up, they  
44 were going to make nothing but zinc oxide because they could make money on zinc  
45 oxide. So we started up to make zinc oxide. Well then things changed there and, uh,  
46 price of zinc went back down again and you were, you know, the price of oxide went

1 down, so this person who had put the capital up now they got to sell the company, you  
2 know, so somebody else buys the company. The price of zinc goes back up. Everything  
3 is good. They make their money. The price of zinc goes back down, you know, and you  
4 go bankrupt. Somebody else buys it. Price of zinc goes back up. You make money.  
5 The company gets big. The price of zinc goes back down. Seriously. That's a simple  
6 explanation. I'm sure there's much more to it than that, but from my point of view that is  
7 the simplest explanation. The price is cyclic, and if you can't survive the downtime you  
8 sell, you go bankrupt or whatever and that's how I see it. Somebody will buy it. Oh,  
9 that's a good investment cause zinc is going to go back up. So, uh, but my opinion.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** What, in your opinion, um, do you think precipitated the final shut  
12 down of the smelter in 2014?

13  
14 **TERRY FRANK:** I don't think I want to give that opinion because it might affect my  
15 employment now.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

18  
19 **TERRY FRANK:** I'm not ready to go just yet.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. Then we'll jump back to the distant past.

22  
23 **TERRY FRANK:** Okay.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** The historical section in this. The building known as the clubhouse  
26 was an old farmhouse that had belonged to Raymond Jeffries from whom St. Joe  
27 purchased the land in 1930.

28  
29 **TERRY FRANK:** Right.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** And it was used for a boardinghouse. What, if anything, do you  
32 recall any stories about the clubhouse and having boarders there?

33  
34 **TERRY FRANK:** The only story I know, okay, was that my great-grandfather had  
35 bunked there a few times cause he liked to drink. Okay. I, I don't know anything else  
36 about it except that it was there and a lot of guys bunked there. Okay. And I know my  
37 great-grandfather spent some time there cause he liked to drink. And that was my step-  
38 great-grandfather. When I say great-grandfather, this was my step-great-grandfather.

39  
40 1:11:36

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Was he also a St. Joe employee?

43  
44 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. That's the one that was, uh, maintenance. Uh...

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Starting in the '50s?

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**TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. He started, yeah, he was there in the '50s. Yeah. I can't remember when he retired. He was a pistol. He was my step-great-grandfather, and he bunked there here and there. Whenever, I guess, whenever my great-grandmother threw him out a couple few times and he bunked there, but that's the only thing I know about the clubhouse and it was there. It existed.

**INTERVIEWER:** But where on the map was it?

**TERRY FRANK:** You know what, all I know is it was right on 18 they told me. I don't know exactly where. I don't remember. I was told where, but I don't remember, you know.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**TERRY FRANK:** Little details.

**INTERVIEWER:** Before there was St. Joe's to employ a lot of people in the area, what were people doing for employment?

**TERRY FRANK:** J&L was there from way back.

**INTERVIEWER:** What company is that?

**TERRY FRANK:** J&L.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of...

**TERRY FRANK:** Jones and Laughlin. That was a big steel company.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh, steel. Yeah.

**TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. They, that steel company at one time stretched for miles up the Ohio River starting at Aliquippa. Miles and miles. Then Armco was there. B&W was there. Farming, but yeah it, uh, there was a lot of steel mills that were, were there. But, uh, B&W was there. Like I say, Armco was there. J&L was there. Um. There was a couple of other ones, big ones at the time. American Bridge was there. So, there was a lot of places for people to work.

1:13:23

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if people left jobs to come work for St. Joe?

**TERRY FRANK:** I think some people did. Um. Mainly because the steel mills laid off a lot and St. Joe never laid off. Again, you never made the same money, but you always worked. I think some people did. Yeah. Just because the simple fact that you always

1 worked. You always worked overtime. They always had that six days and five days, you  
2 know, that you said they did, and they did do that. So I think some people did. Yeah.  
3 Absolutely. Plus once you got in there, you were treated well back when it was St. Joe.  
4 You were treated well. You were family, you know. They did everything for the man. I  
5 mean look cafeteria, boat club, auditorium they built, ball field, this team, that team, get  
6 involved, corn roast everybody did together, bowling teams. It was a family. You felt  
7 okay working there. You know. You felt welcome, good and you were treated well. So  
8 a lot of people came there just because it was a good place to go. So, that's my  
9 recollection.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. During World War II, there were women, additional women  
12 who were hired to fill some of the spots here for men who went in the service. Have you  
13 heard any stories about the role of women here during the war?

14  
15 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah. Uh. Most of 'em were welders and, uh, there's a picture of  
16 some of them right there.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever know any of these women when you were a kid?

19  
20 **TERRY FRANK:** No, no. None of 'em. I never knew any of 'em. I heard a lot of  
21 stories. The ones that welded in the structural shop. Stella. They always talked about  
22 Stella. Stella Sperry. Yeah. Said she was a rip snorter.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What does that mean?

25  
26 **TERRY FRANK:** You could interpret that however you want. Uh. The guys, the guys  
27 that had went away to the war, and there was a couple of guys they kept, but, uh, the  
28 women were all good workers. One of 'em worked in the, uh, motor shop I remember. I  
29 can't remember which one, but that's most of 'em right there and they, uh, no, but none of  
30 'em worked out in the plant itself. Worked in like the motor shop, weld shop, things like  
31 that. So, yeah, there they are.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Anything more about Stella?

34  
35 **TERRY FRANK:** There, there was just. I cannot recall, but, you know, there was  
36 another one, Marie, that welded. I think, uh, you guys you, you're getting me to really  
37 think now. Marie Short. I think Marie. I think Marie's grandson eventually was a  
38 pipefitter there. Just, just funny stories about guys teasing 'em and you know what I  
39 mean, and the typical things when back in the 1940s when men and women were in  
40 industry together. You know. The men teasing 'em and things like that. Different stories  
41 like that. Messing around with their welders and Stella used to do this and Marie would  
42 do that. And somebody would throw this at somebody else and Marie dumped a bucket  
43 of water on somebody and for doing this that they would retaliate. You know what I  
44 mean. Just horseplay. You know. So, nothing ever bad. You know. Nothing bad, negative  
45 or anything like that. No. They said they were good workers. Very good. There was  
46 always a comment they were good workers. I forget which one worked in the motor

1 shop. They said there's nobody, nobody could wind a motor like her, uh, before or since  
2 in the motor shop at that time. I can't remember which one was in the motor shop, but a  
3 lot of good stories. So...

4  
5 1:17:50  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** There's a, um, there's a photo album of the company, of company  
8 employees from about 1944 to '45 or '43 to '45, and it's at the Heinz History Center right  
9 now.

10  
11 **TERRY FRANK:** Okay.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** And I went through it and there are a lot of photographs of women in  
14 there, and they were also in the, the bag house.

15  
16 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah, the bag house.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** The roaster plant.

19  
20 **TERRY FRANK:** Roaster, yeah.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** The furnace plant.

23  
24 **TERRY FRANK:** Really.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Mechanical and electrical departments.

27  
28 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah, that was some of these guys. Okay.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Um, the store room.

31  
32 **TERRY FRANK:** I forgot about the bag house.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. The only place I didn't find them in just based upon the  
35 photographs and how the photographs were categorized, I didn't see any in the sinter and  
36 leach plants, the acid plant, and the yard.

37  
38 1:18:40  
39

40 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, the sinter and leach plants, it was pretty bad in there, you  
41 know. Um. The bag house, I forgot about the bag house. I don't remember women  
42 being in the furnace plant. The bag house I remember that they were in, but I forgot  
43 about that.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
46



1 **TERRY FRANK:** But, uh, yeah the sinter and the leach plants and that, there was a lot  
2 of lead and stuff in there and, um, when I first started there, there was a lot of women that  
3 came there and worked. And, uh, you know, when I first started there, there was no  
4 women working in the plant, and then there was a, it was like equal rights. So there was a  
5 lot of women that were hired and they worked in the plant. But then, there was some  
6 discovery that they couldn't work in this plant or this part or that part because there was  
7 things in the air or things they were breathing and it actually made them sterile. So, uh,  
8 you know, they weren't allowed to work in the sinter plant. They weren't allowed to  
9 work, there were several place and because of that. So they could go to the bag house  
10 and, uh, if that's the reason back then I don't know that they knew enough back then for  
11 that to be the reason. But, uh, I forgot about the bag house.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make to recruit minorities and how  
14 successful were they?

15  
16 **TERRY FRANK:** Well, I think the, uh, I know when I started, uh, there were some  
17 minorities, and, ... I thought they made an okay effort. I was never aware of, you know,  
18 like I told you we started hiring, uh, women until we found at that they really health-wise  
19 couldn't work there especially if they could still bear children because of certain places  
20 they work, worked, uh, was not good for that. But I never, never saw any discrimination.  
21 I interviewed people. I never saw any discrimination. In my opinion, I never saw it. I  
22 thought they always made an attempt to make it fair. From when I was in there. So...

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** It's just looking back at the publications earlier, you know, through  
25 the '60s it is very hard to see anybody who is African-American. . .

26  
27 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh, I agree.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** In there, so I am just wondering was there some kind of, you know,  
30 attempt, attempt to expand.

31  
32 **TERRY FRANK:** Well I think there was, but it started, like I said, when my time there.  
33 Okay. Um. I mean, you know, the first guy that, uh, was out there with me with a sewer  
34 cable was an African-American fellow and, um, when I went to the cleanup gang there  
35 were several guys in there. In fact, it was like half and half. So, you know, I didn't  
36 encounter any of that in my time there. And the whole time up after that, I didn't  
37 encounter it about, you know, if somebody in personnel did something, I don't know, I  
38 know when I was involved in interviewing different people for different things that didn't  
39 happen. But, uh, I didn't encounter in my time. If it was going on behind the scenes I  
40 wasn't aware of it, you know. So, I can't say that was an issue.

41  
42 1:22:08

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. I'm not trying to suggest that there was...

45  
46 **TERRY FRANK:** No. I know you're not.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** An issue. I'm just trying to ask were there attempts to recruit.

3  
4 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** You know, African-Americans.

7  
8 **TERRY FRANK:** You know, we had, we had. Especially I remember the influx of, of  
9 women in the early '70s. I mean it was huge. We already had some, we had some  
10 African-American people in the early '70s in there. But we didn't have many women in  
11 the plant and then it just, then all of a sudden we had lots of women in the plant. And, a  
12 lot of 'em, you know, it was a rough place to work. A lot of 'em didn't last. And the ones  
13 that did then we had to move around after we found out the other thing. And, so, um, I  
14 think it ebbed after that. Cause, you know, I think they warned everybody. You know. I  
15 had two women in my apprentice class. So, I, I think there was an attempt made to right  
16 any wrongs if any was done. I think there was an attempt made to do that of course. I  
17 didn't, I didn't see anything wrong in my time there. You know, negative to that.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

20  
21 **TERRY FRANK:** So...

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** The County Home.

24  
25 **TERRY FRANK:** Yeah.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** What are some of your memories of it when you were a kid and that  
28 being here, stories, poltergeists, anything?

29  
30 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh, I have, I have a copy of the drawings for the County Home.  
31 What a beautiful building it was. It was gorgeous in its day. I'd like to have seen in its  
32 heyday. You know. The County Home was, uh, an old neoclassical big beautiful  
33 building. I'm a big history buff. I told you I have collections of Civil War artifacts. So  
34 I'm a huge history buff, and, uh, I did probably all the tours at the end through the  
35 building and, um, I have a lot of pictures of some of the old, they called 'em inmates of  
36 the building. And, uh, poltergeists, a lot of stories. Um. When I first started there I was  
37 in the yard department. We were doing something in the men's building. The men's  
38 building is, uh, you know, looking in here, this one right here. And we were doing  
39 something in the men's building and we had walled all the entrances off and, uh, we were  
40 up on the third floor and we heard talking. So we went and did a search and we found no  
41 one. And there was no place to hide. Talking stopped. So then we came back. There  
42 was three or four of us up there doing some work and, uh, we were boarding some things  
43 up. That's what we were doing and we come back. We heard more talking. We searched  
44 the whole building. We put guards out to make sure nobody was messing with us.  
45 Couldn't make out the words, but, uh, somebody was talking. Now somebody might  
46 have had a pipe coming from somewhere, but I'll be darned if we could find it. So, we

1 thought ghosts. Okay. So there was rumored to be a ghost named George in the men's  
2 side. Okay. And, uh, I never encountered any of, anything in all the tours I gave. We  
3 never, I never saw anything bad. Only that talking that one time. Now, there was a lot of,  
4 a lot of complaints about noises and things like that and one time when we went into the  
5 center section here we went up there and we found where somebody had been living up  
6 there. Uh. Some hobo. He had. They left the front door open. They didn't have the locks  
7 on the front door. The place was starting to crumble and he had a room up there and he  
8 had a bed made. He had a table. He had a calendar on the wall. He had an electric light  
9 hooked up. He had all the comforts of home. We caught him up there and we had to have  
10 him hauled out. He was a hobo who was living up there. So that may have been where  
11 some of the noises were coming from the people heard. Because what they did, uh, this  
12 was the original home right here and then in the front where the offices were. This was  
13 offices. That was an addition in the '40s. And, um, the county added that on in the '40s.  
14 That was like, uh, to add room to there. And so when they, when they moved out of there  
15 and, and St. Joe bought this, they moved. St. Joe put all labs in there. But only in that  
16 section. The old section they actually blocked off because it was old. A lot of asbestos,  
17 you know. Of course, they didn't know about the asbestos at the time, but there was, it  
18 was old and they didn't want to keep it up. So they stored stuff back in there and blocked  
19 it off. So they only used this '40, '41 addition. So, who knows. I mean. All the noises  
20 and stuff could've been from transients. I don't know. But, uh, that's the only thing I can  
21 tell you. I didn't encounter ghosts in there, but I told a lot of lies to people to scare 'em  
22 when I was taking 'em through. So...

23

24 1:27:58

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. There's, uh, a colleague of mine is doing oral history interviews  
27 about the County Home. Part of this same project, but as where I am focusing on the St.  
28 Joe side of the story, she is focusing on the County Home side of the story. Would you  
29 consider sitting down for another interview just to talk to her about the County Home?

30

31 **TERRY FRANK:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. Absolutely.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

34

35 1:28:16

36

37 **TERRY FRANK:** I, uh, I would. Yeah. And I'm sure she has, they got copies of  
38 drawings and somebody made a big thing about that. You know, but, yeah. Absolutely. I  
39 mean if there's something I can answer. You know.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** I'll pass along your name to her.

42

43 **TERRY FRANK:** I mean, I, the only, the only thing I had to do with it was, you know,  
44 mostly tours. I mean we worked in there, but mostly at the end I gave the tours, you  
45 know, and, uh, and things like that when they, you know, because nobody cared about it  
46 until we were going to tear it down. Then all of a sudden everybody cared about it. So

1 everybody wanted to go in there and see it, the county officials, the state officials, and  
2 this agency and that agency. So I just took everybody through, you know, and kind of  
3 gave a tour, and it was interesting. You know, this was this and this was this and this was  
4 this. So, uh, but we didn't encounter any, any ghosts, but I said there was one, so... I  
5 told a lot of stories.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Just some wrap up questions.

8  
9 **TERRY FRANK:** Sure.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

12  
13 **TERRY FRANK:** I made it, uh, I got, I mean, um, there was a lot of opportunity for  
14 me. You know, uh, I did everything the wrong way and they kept giving me chances to  
15 just keep furthering education and keep moving up and, uh, I had a lot of opportunities  
16 and I felt okay there. You know. I should have got my education when I got out of high  
17 school and I didn't, but they kept giving me opportunities to move up, kept giving me  
18 opportunities to further education. Kept giving me opportunities, uh, more  
19 responsibilities, and things just kinda fell into place. And then after you get comfortable  
20 and you get a lot of vacation and you know the place really well especially when you're a  
21 mechanic type guy, you know. You know the place well and you know exactly what to  
22 do and, uh, it gets easy, you know, and you know the people and you get some years  
23 under your belt and people, you know, you get some respect and, um, it provided me with  
24 an okay living over the years. A lot of opportunities that, uh, I didn't give myself when I  
25 got out of school. It gave 'em to me and you know I, I think when I was in high school,  
26 when I got out, I really didn't know what the heck I wanted to do with myself anyhow.  
27 And I found out working there. I found out what I didn't want to do and then what I did  
28 want to do and what I fit in, you know, and I would've never thought the way I did things  
29 I would be sitting up here, maintenance engineer/manager, you know. But, uh, but I am  
30 because of the opportunities it gave me. And there was a history there. You know.  
31 When you start coming down some place as a kid and, and you experience those things  
32 and memories, and it gave my family a good living. I mean, I, I stayed because it was the  
33 right thing to do for me, and you know, I had some opportunities at the end there and, and  
34 you got vacation to come and go as you please. Nobody really tells you what to do, and  
35 it's pretty hard to leave that. When you can say, "Hey, I gotta go to the doctor's I'll be  
36 back." You know. Nobody cares. You know. And then after you'd be around for years  
37 people kinda let you get away with murder. So, you know, you could come in here  
38 crabby and, "Oh, we're not messing with him." You can get away with murder after  
39 you've been here forty-some years. You can get away with murder. You can yell at  
40 people that you could never get away with that before.

41  
42 1:32:22

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Who were some of your most memorable work colleagues  
45 and why?  
46

1 **TERRY FRANK:** Well that's a good question. Bob Zeman. Bob Zeman, um, was, uh,  
2 a metallurgist and a good one. Good field metallurgist. And he taught me, uh, when I  
3 went over in the maintenance engineering I worked for Bob, and we worked together  
4 when I ran the shops. Very knowledgeable man, um, never, ever, uh, hesitated to take the  
5 time to teach me things technical that I didn't know or help me with technical things that  
6 I wasn't learning or getting. Good man and friend and, uh, I haven't seen him for a while,  
7 we usually do a lot of skeet shooting and I haven't seen him for a while. I need to call  
8 him. He works for Jacobs now for Shell. Uh. And, very, he's, he's very memorable. Um.  
9 Mike Meining. He was my boss. Uh. He was the maintenance manager for a time. And,  
10 when I was in the shops and then when I, he was part and parcel to moving me into  
11 engineering and, uh, he was from Palmerton, Palmerton plant. Good guy. He always had  
12 your back. Knew how to get people together. You could get along with him. He's  
13 another guy, um, that sticks in my mind. But there's dozens and dozens more that I  
14 consider friends to this day. Um. Didn't have a big impact on my life, but, uh, just had  
15 that daily, daily rapport that you have, you know. There was a machinist in a shop,  
16 Teddy, um, he and I talked our way through family troubles and issues and different  
17 things like that, and divorces and I mean we didn't socialize after work, but you know we  
18 were always there for each other in times of trouble, you know. We could talk it out, you  
19 know. And, uh, he had a big impact. But there's dozens and dozens more of good people  
20 that I know to this day that, that just had a good daily impact on me. Um. Ray Doyle.  
21 Ray worked for me and he was across from my office and worked for me. He was in  
22 maintenance records. Good guy. We, we just had a good daily rapport, you know, and,  
23 uh, Sandy used to be my secretary. I used to call her mom. Um. I could go on. You  
24 know. A lot of negatives too. You know. I'm, I'm a dominant personality, so there's a  
25 lot of negatives too. A lot of people negatively impacted me as well. But, uh, uh, I don't  
26 know. I guess I could talk a long time about that, but that's all I'll say. You know. But  
27 there was dozens of good, good people. Dozens. Those are the ones that come to mind  
28 right away. Pretty faithful friends, you know. So...

29

30 1:36:33

31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

33

34 **TERRY FRANK:** I don't know. I go back to, you know, maybe if I'd went to school  
35 first, maybe it would've been better, but no, you know, then I think gee, I spent a lot of  
36 time with guys in the power plant, working shutdowns and feed department. I'd go after  
37 worker's shutdowns and learn things and learn from these guys and work with these guys  
38 and I, I wouldn't had that opportunity to, to lay in the mud and blood, you know. I  
39 wouldn't had the opportunity to do that if I went to school first. Um. I don't know.  
40 Come to think of it maybe I, maybe I wouldn't want it different. You know. Maybe I  
41 kinda like it the way it was, although maybe it wasn't the best for me, maybe it was the  
42 best, maybe it was the best for me. You know what I mean? Maybe it wasn't best for my  
43 financial life or life, but you know maybe it was the best for me as a person. When  
44 you're out working and you're getting dirty with people and you're sweating and it's in the  
45 middle of the night and you're pulling wrenches and doing things, you know, it's, uh, it's,

1 that's a good experience. You know. So, I think you learn a lot. So maybe I wouldn't do  
2 anything. Kinda contradicted myself, but you know.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about that last day at Monaca?

5  
6 **TERRY FRANK:** I couldn't wait to get out. It was dead to my, to me in my heart and I  
7 couldn't wait to get out, and I haven't missed it. By that time, it was dead and I was sick  
8 and tired and I just wanted to leave. So that's the truth. You know. And, uh, that's really  
9 that. I was ready. I was. It was dead to me, and I was sick and tired of the place and the  
10 things that were going on. So I was happy to go.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

13  
14 **TERRY FRANK:** I think it's good for the area. You know, Shell likes, Shell has no  
15 problem spending money. They do everything pretty right, you know, and, uh, they'll put  
16 a lot of money in the community. They'll come in there and buy firetrucks and buy  
17 police vehicles and do things. Um. You won't have to fight, fight them to, uh, put  
18 flowers at the intersection. You know. They'll do it anyhow. They'll buy the  
19 intersection. They'll put a lot of money in the community. Uh. I think the community is  
20 going to be better off in the end with them here, to be honest. You know. I'm, I, I'm sad  
21 to see it happen, happen that way, but I think, I think it'll be good for the community.  
22 They'll do a lot for the community and that's the way they are. They don't mind spending  
23 money in the community doing things to help the community. That's what, the kind of  
24 things they do. And they have the money to do that. But they also do it, you know.  
25 They put their money where their mouth is. If you go past the site down there, it's, it's  
26 going to be a pretty thing. I mean, they're building a couple of bridges down there and  
27 some of the buildings they put up and they, not only are they going to be functional.  
28 They make them look good too. So that when you go by there you're not looking at a  
29 mess, you know. Um. I think it'll be great.

30  
31 1:40:33

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** All right.

34  
35 **TERRY FRANK:** So I wish them the best. I hope that's very successful there for them.  
36 So...

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

39  
40 **TERRY FRANK:** No. No. Um. It was a good place to be. It was a good place to  
41 grow up. It gave a lot of men a good opportunity. I'm sorry to see it go the way it went,  
42 but, uh, for a long time it was really good. And, uh, for a time it was family and, uh, I  
43 don't know that I. I don't know. You know. I don't know that I'd trade it in for some  
44 place else around here, you know, that I wish I would've went to J&L or anywhere else.  
45 I'm glad I went there. You know. It's been good to me. So, um, that's pretty much it.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Thank you very much for your time.  
2  
3 (END)



**Victor Hall**  
**Interview @ November 16, 2016**

## **VICTOR HALL**

### **Summary**

The interview with Victor Hall took place on November 16, 2016, in the kitchen of his home in Beaver, Pennsylvania; his wife was present during the interview. Victor worked at the St. Joe zinc plant from August 1966 to May 2011, other than roughly one year following the December 1979 shutdown. He started out in the yard department and soon transitioned into the furnace department, where he spent most of his career, progressing from basement cleanup, to condenser floor, to utility gang. Victor also worked briefly in the lead shed.

Victor provides a comprehensive view of the furnace plant: various processes like furnace cleanout and pouring metal into slabs, products made, and manpower needs. He describes the system of shift work, working conditions, safety hazards, and safety procedures and precautions, both before and after OSHA regulations were introduced. Victor explains the changes in the furnace plant and production after St. Joe reopened in 1980 and, within this context, the closing of the acid plant, roaster, and ore shed with the switch to secondary feed materials.

Victor touches upon other subjects of interest including the function of the lead shed, the reward system for employee suggestions implemented, opportunities for women working in non-clerical positions, and the Horsehead Corporation's period of ownership. He highlights the benefits of voting in the union and the policy, or lack thereof, for sick days for hourly workers. An avid storyteller, Victor shares anecdotes about people like Plant Manager Chuck Henderson, a place in the furnace plant known as Jerry's Alley, pranks and fun on the job, and paying for drinks after hours at the Midway.

1 **VICTOR HALL**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/16/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 VICTOR HALL  
6 MRS. HALL  
7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Victor Hall November 16, 2016. Could you please  
9 state and spell your full name?  
10

11 **VICTOR HALL:** Victor Hall. V-I-C-T-O-R, H-A-L-L.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** Please state your date of birth and your full address.  
14

15 **VICTOR HALL:** [REDACTED], Beaver, PA, 15009.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?  
18

19 **VICTOR HALL:** Retired.  
20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year  
22 did you stop working for the company? And then we'll fill in the history in between. I  
23 just want to set those parameters.  
24

25 **VICTOR HALL:** I started. Okay. I started August 1, 1966. I retired May 27, 2011.  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area or did you come here because  
28 of employment opportunity at St. Joe Lead?  
29

30 **VICTOR HALL:** I'm from here.  
31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any family members who worked at St. Joe Lead?  
33

34 **VICTOR HALL:** I had an uncle who worked there.  
35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what was his name and what department did he work in?  
37

38 **VICTOR HALL:** John Bragg. He was a draftsman.  
39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** What was his name again?  
41

42 **VICTOR HALL:** Bragg. B-R-A-G-G-.  
43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever go the plant while he was working there before you  
45 were an employee?  
46

1 (0:01:28)  
2  
3 **VICTOR HALL:** No.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever hear your uncle talking about the plant?  
6  
7 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Once in a while when we got together, you know.  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Anything you remember?  
10  
11 **VICTOR HALL:** No. He was, like he was a salary guy. He was up there, you know.  
12 He. So we didn't.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you go about applying for a job at St. Joe?  
15  
16 **VICTOR HALL:** I just went and put my application in.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any kind of...  
19  
20 **VICTOR HALL:** I heard they were hiring at that time. So, I, I wanted to get a better  
21 job.  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What were you doing before that?  
24  
25 **VICTOR HALL:** I worked at, uh, a Ford garage.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** As doing what?  
28  
29 **VICTOR HALL:** Mechanic.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** In general, do you think your coworkers at St. Joe's moved to this  
32 area because they were hiring at that time or do you think that, um, St. Joe's employed  
33 people who already lived in the area?  
34  
35 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Probably from this area.  
36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have any idea why there was a hiring period then when you,  
38 when you started?  
39  
40 **VICTOR HALL:** No. Not really.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** What was going on at that company?  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** No. I don't remember offhand.  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall the, the plant or the area being referred to as  
2 Josephstown?  
3  
4 (0:02:54)  
5  
6 **VICTOR HALL:** No.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** What position in what department were you initially hired for?  
9  
10 **VICTOR HALL:** Hired in the, the yard department. That's where you start out. That's  
11 where you started out then in the yard department.  
12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you describe what you would do in the yard department?  
14  
15 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, you'd go all over the plant and do all kinds of work. They'd  
16 send you to the furnace plant to do something there, send you to the sinter plant to do  
17 something there. All over the plant you'd work.  
18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Was it different from one day to the next where you were sent to  
20 work?  
21  
22 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah.  
23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of instruction or training were you given for what you  
25 were going to do that day?  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** You didn't get much structured training back then. You just go and  
28 do it. You had a group leader. They'd show you, you know, a little bit.  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** So, was the group leader always a yard person, who took, who gave  
31 you some instruction?  
32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** It was the yard group leader.  
34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** How many people would be in the yard at a given time?  
36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. It'd be different at different times. It depended on how many they  
38 were hiring. Then you was in the yard and then they'd place you in the department after  
39 that.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** How long were in the yard before you were placed into a  
42 department?  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** I don't know. Probably a month and a half, something like that.  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was the process for being placed into a department?

1  
2 **VICTOR HALL:** Wherever they needed somebody. You didn't have a choice. They put  
3 you there.  
4  
5 (0:04:26)  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. How did the, the, the bid program factor in then for you to be  
8 able to ask to be in a certain position or department?  
9  
10 **VICTOR HALL:** You could ask for, like a bid will come up in another department and  
11 you could bid to another department.  
12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** But when you started off in the yard, you didn't get to bid on what  
14 you wanted to do first?  
15  
16 **VICTOR HALL:** Not. Really. No. But if a bid came up, most bids, you weren't allowed  
17 to bid till people in that other departments bid to the other departments. You know what I  
18 mean? They had the first choice to move. You had to take what was left.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** So, how did you feel when you came into work one day and they  
21 said, "Now, you're going to work in the furnace department?"  
22  
23 **VICTOR HALL:** What are you going to do? You got to do it. Right?  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there a department you would've preferred to be working in?  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, everybody said go to the furnace department.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Why'd they say that?  
30  
31 **VICTOR HALL:** Lots of overtime. If you want to make some money, go over there.  
32 So, at \$2.44 an hour. What can you do, you know?  
33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the, did, was the pay different from one department to the next?  
35 Other than the opportunity to make overtime?  
36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** It was pretty much the same, you know. They had different tiers in the  
38 furnace plant, you know. Cleanup and condenser floor, top floor operator, different,  
39 different jobs.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about what those different jobs were  
42 within the furnace plant?  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** What they were?  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

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(0:06:11)

**VICTOR HALL:** Like basement cleanup. That's where you started in the basement at basement cleanup. You clean up around the furnaces. Go down on the little end. Did anybody ever tell you about the little end of the furnace plant?

**INTERVIEWER:** Please tell me now.

**VICTOR HALL:** [Laughs] There was, uh, four furnaces at the little end, two, three, four, and five. They were smaller than the big. And there was a basement and there was a subbasement, but you had to go down into the subbasement and clean under the conveyor, but you had to crawl around your hands and knees and clean. Push that stuff out from underneath the conveyor and rake it out up cause there was a walkway there. You cleaned it up.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was the difference between the big furnaces and the small furnaces as far as their functions?

**VICTOR HALL:** Well the little ones made high-grade zinc and the big ones made PW zinc, Prime Western and high grade.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what was the, the importance of having those different products being made?

**VICTOR HALL:** The different what class of metal?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**VICTOR HALL:** Well different companies would buy, specify what they wanted.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of company might be more interested in high grade versus Prime Western?

**VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Probably automobile industry.

**INTERVIEWER:** Which one would they, which kind of metal would they prefer?

**VICTOR HALL:** Probably high grade. I'd say.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were the qualities of the high grade that made it more conducive for the automobile industry?

**VICTOR HALL:** Well it had more lead in it and cadmium.



1 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. So talk a little bit more about your job responsibilities in  
2 the furnace and your work schedule.  
3  
4 (0:08:00)  
5  
6 **VICTOR HALL:** When I started?  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** When you started and then I want to hear about how your job  
9 changed over the years. You were there for a long time.  
10  
11 **VICTOR HALL:** Forty-five years.  
12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. So, let's start with where you started and what you were doing.  
14  
15 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, I started in basement cleanup.  
16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of hours and shifts were you working then?  
18  
19 **VICTOR HALL:** We worked shift work. So, they called it a 21 turn. You worked five  
20 days. Then, you'd be off. Uh. Say you're working daylight. Uh. That would be your long  
21 weekend. You'd go out on night turn on Saturday night. If you're working four to 12,  
22 you'd go home at midnight. You have to go to work the next morning at seven o'clock.  
23 That's, they called that a short change.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the, did the shifts always change from the Saturday into the  
26 Sunday?  
27  
28 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. That was the changing day. Yeah. Yep. Then if you worked  
29 night turn, you had to be at work that afternoon from four to 12. That's short change they  
30 called it.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the hardest shift to work?  
33  
34 **VICTOR HALL:** For me, night turn. Staying up all night was pretty tough until you got  
35 used to it, you know. By the time your five or six days were up, you got used to it and  
36 then you was changing shift.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** When did you have time to see your family?  
39  
40 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Tough. Yep.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** So, after, well. What do you recall about your first day working at St.  
43 Joe Lead?  
44  
45 **VICTOR HALL:** My first day?  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Your first day. Showing up there for the first day to work.  
2  
3 (0:09:49)  
4  
5 **VICTOR HALL:** Why am I here in this hellhole?  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** [Laughter]  
8  
9 **VICTOR HALL:** That's what I thought, you know. I left a job paying six cents more an  
10 hour to go there. But they had benefits. So.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of those benefits?  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, healthcare. They had eye and dental and all that. And it was all  
15 paid for. You didn't pay for it back then.  
16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever think of leaving?  
18  
19 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, yeah, but where was you gonna go? So, I stayed.  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Let's, let's go back into the, the furnace now. Um. You  
22 mentioned how you started off cleaning in the subbasement.  
23  
24 **VICTOR HALL:** Cleanup. Yeah.  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Cleanup. At what point did you get moved into another position?  
27  
28 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Probably five or six months. I moved up to the condenser floor.  
29 That's where they poured the metal on the bench. Did they tell you about that?  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Go, go ahead. Uh. Talk about that please.  
32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** They tap it out of the furnace into a ladle, and then they poured. They  
34 had, uh, 26 molds. They poured it into those molds. Like that, this, but they were huge.  
35 They were this, this long and probably this wide and that thick. They weighed 40, 44 to  
36 50 pounds apiece. You'd pour 'em into them molds and then when they'd cool you'd, I  
37 was a helper. You'd flip that mold over and catch that slab and throw it onto a pile and  
38 make a load.  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** So, were you catching a hot slab of metal?  
41  
42 **VICTOR HALL:** Hot slab.  
43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you not burn yourself?  
45

1 **VICTOR HALL:** They had, uh, they called 'em, uh, pads. They were about yea thick.  
2 You'd put 'em on your gloves and then catch 'em and throw 'em on the load.  
3  
4 (0:11:45)  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any special technique for handling or flipping these molds  
7 since they were like 40 pounds apiece?  
8  
9 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Any...  
12  
13 **VICTOR HALL:** They just flipped 'em up and caught 'em and threw 'em on the load.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** And how many people did it take to work at the, this conveyor?  
16  
17 **VICTOR HALL:** One furnace...  
18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Level...  
20  
21 **VICTOR HALL:** There was an operator.  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Condenser level.  
24  
25 **VICTOR HALL:** An operator, a skimmer and a helper.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that process ever automated?  
28  
29 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** When?  
32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** They just started to automate it when I started there. But they only  
34 had one casting machine then, and it was just new and they had, they didn't have the bugs  
35 taken out of it. It was all a mess. They still had benches where you poured till they got  
36 that going.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they then add more casting machines?  
39  
40 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Once they got that worked out?  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** Um-hmm. Yeah.  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did anybody lose their jobs because there were now casting  
2 machines?  
3  
4 (0:12:48)  
5  
6 **VICTOR HALL:** No. Huh-uh. Nope.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** So, what happened to the people who had been doing that job?  
9  
10 **VICTOR HALL:** What the skimmers?  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** And the helper. Yeah.  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** Well they moved on to the casting machine.  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** So, how did, how did the casting machine work and, and if it still  
17 took the same amount of labor of people? Is that correct?  
18  
19 **VICTOR HALL:** No. It had. It was automatic stacker. It was a long conveyor of them  
20 molds. It went around and then fall, they would fall out and they went down a conveyor  
21 onto a stacker and it would stack 'em automatically.  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** So, was this now a two-person job instead of a three-person job?  
24  
25 **VICTOR HALL:** They had two on a machine. Two people on a machine.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** And before had it been three people with the...  
28  
29 **VICTOR HALL:** On the furnace, yeah.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So, how long did you work in the condenser?  
32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** On the condenser floor?  
34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.  
36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, as a helper?  
38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. In any capacity. What different jobs did you do on the  
40 condenser?  
41  
42 **VICTOR HALL:** Well I was a helper and a skimmer, then an operator. That took eight  
43 to 10 years to get to, to be an operator. So. That's what it. It was the highest paying job in  
44 there, an operator.  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** In the whole furnace plant?

1  
2 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh-hmm.  
3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** And how long did you stay as an operator?  
5  
6 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. I don't know. Seven to 10 years.  
7  
8 (0:14:21)  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** So...  
11  
12 **VICTOR HALL:** Maybe more. I can't remember really.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Did you move into any other positions in the furnace  
15 department?  
16  
17 **VICTOR HALL:** After a while. Yeah. I went to, I went to the utility gang. Did anybody  
18 ever tell you about that?  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Go ahead, please.  
21  
22 **VICTOR HALL:** That's when they shut a furnace down for it's called a cleanout. They  
23 shut it down to clean out the vapor ring and the brow and the washer. So.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** How often did they have to clean the furnace?  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** They did it every seven days, five to seven days.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** And how many people operated on a utility gang to take care of one  
30 furnace cleanout?  
31  
32 **VICTOR HALL:** Ah. There, I mean, I'd have to think about that. Let's see there was  
33 two guys on top, three guys on the washer, four guys on the vape ring, two guys on the  
34 brow. There was probably 12 or 14 on a cleanout.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** So, how many people would've been in, working in the furnace  
37 department on any given day in all the various jobs?  
38  
39 **VICTOR HALL:** Back then?  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. I mean take a shift if you had what about 14 people doing  
42 cleanup, utility gang.  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** Cleanout. Cleanout. Yeah.  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Cleanout. How many people altogether would be in the furnace plant  
2 to keep it, keep it running?  
3  
4 **VICTOR HALL:** In one day?  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. In one in, in a, in a shift.  
7  
8 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, dayshift is anytime they did a cleanout.  
9  
10 (0:15:59)  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** So.  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** So, daytime, how many people were in the furnace department?  
17  
18 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. I'm guessing, uh, 20, 25.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** And to keep it going on a night shift?  
21  
22 **VICTOR HALL:** On night shift, they didn't have cleanouts. They just regular. There'd  
23 be three guys on each furnace. Well, three guys, uh, man, it's hard to say. On the little  
24 end, they only had one operator and a skimmer cause they didn't make much metal, the  
25 small furnaces. There was two, four, six, eight, and the oxide furnaces, there was three of  
26 those. So, there was two on each of them. That's 12, 14, psh, I'd say 25. I'm guessing.  
27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** At, at, on a night shift?  
29  
30 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** And then about what?  
33  
34 **VICTOR HALL:** Maybe more. Maybe a couple more. It all depends.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** So.  
37  
38 **VICTOR HALL:** Cause it. There wasn't all 17 furnaces running all at the same time.  
39 They always had some down for rebuilds. One or two down for rebuilds. So, it changed.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** So, if you had 25 people on at night, when you added on the utility  
42 gang during the day?  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** Probably 35, 37.  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. [Background Noise] I'd like to get an idea of what it was like  
2 from the minute you arrived at the plant in the morning to getting to, to your job for the  
3 day. You arrive, park your car. Did you have to go through security?  
4  
5 **VICTOR HALL:** You had to go through the front gate. Yeah.  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have to show identification?  
8  
9 **VICTOR HALL:** No. They didn't have ID back then when I started there.  
10  
11 (0:17:57)  
12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Did everybody drive to work or was, was there an option for public  
14 transportation?  
15  
16 **VICTOR HALL:** No. Everybody drove.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Anybody carpool?  
19  
20 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. There was people that carpooled. Yeah.  
21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** When you, after you drove through the security gate. Um.  
23  
24 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, you didn't drive through the security gate. You walked through.  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
27  
28 **VICTOR HALL:** You parked in the parking lot and then you walked over to the main,  
29 main plant.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was your first stop in the main plant?  
32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** In the gatehouse, pick up your timecard. Go to your locker and  
34 change your clothes and go to your department.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** What did you need to wear to go to the furnace plant to work?  
37  
38 **VICTOR HALL:** You had. Back then you had to have steel toes shoes and some and  
39 glasses, safety glasses. That's it.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** No helmet?  
42  
43 **VICTOR HALL:** No helmet. Not when I started there. A soft hat. You'd wear a soft hat.  
44 No helmet.  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any, uh, protective clothing over your own clothes.

1  
2 **VICTOR HALL:** Your own. Your own clothes. They gave you gloves. But you had a,  
3 uh, they gave you an apron to put on when you tap the furnace. That was it.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** No respirator?  
6  
7 **VICTOR HALL:** Not back then. No.  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** When were some of the changes made for you to wear more  
10 protective gear and what were those changes?  
11  
12 (0:19:26)  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, when OSHA got involved, you had to, this was way down the  
15 line. This was probably right before they shut down. [REDACTED] You had, uh, well  
16 before they shut down.  
17  
18 [REDACTED]  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** '79 shutdown.  
21  
22 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. You had to, I think you had to wear respirators then and  
23 hardhats. Yeah.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Have you heard of many cases of, um, occupational health...  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Um, problems?  
30  
31 **VICTOR HALL:** Quite a few. Yeah.  
32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** What kinds of things were?  
34  
35 **VICTOR HALL:** The breathing. A lot of the guys have breathing problems cause it was  
36 dirty, dusty, dirty. Come out of there you'd look like a black man sometimes.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** So did everybody stay and shower there before they left?  
39  
40 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. Um-hmm.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you bring a change of clothes?  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Well you changed your clothes in the morning and then when  
45 you went back, you changed back.  
46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** And then did you take the dirty clothes home with you?  
2  
3 **VICTOR HALL:** We had to take 'em home. Yeah. Back then.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** How were you able to tolerate the temperatures in the furnace  
6 department?  
7  
8 **VICTOR HALL:** It was tough. It was cold in the winter and hot in the summer.  
9  
10 (0:20:48)  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Why was it so cold if you had these really, really hot furnaces?  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** I don't know why. You could be from here to that cupboard from the  
15 furnace in the winter and there'd be ice here and water over there. Just when heat  
16 wouldn't travel much, but it did in the summer, sh, 120 degrees, 130 degrees.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** How were you even able to function in that?  
19  
20 **VICTOR HALL:** Sh. It was tough.  
21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have guys passing out from dehydration? And...  
23  
24 **VICTOR HALL:** We had some pass out. Yeah. Yep.  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind...  
27  
28 **VICTOR HALL:** We had a first aid. They had a nurse on duty 24 hours a day. So, if  
29 you passed out, they'd take you over there. They had their own ambulance. If you had to,  
30 they'd take you to the hospital.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you given any safety training so you would know what to do if  
33 the guy next to you passed out?  
34  
35 **VICTOR HALL:** They had a safety meeting, supposedly, once a month, but it didn't  
36 happen all the time.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the safety meeting to talk about new procedures or was it like  
39 going over routine procedures?  
40  
41 **VICTOR HALL:** Routine. Routine stuff. Yeah.  
42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there some new procedures for safety that were introduced  
44 over time?  
45  
46 **VICTOR HALL:** Pardon me.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Were there new procedures for safety that were introduced?

**VICTOR HALL:** Every once in a while, they'd throw something in there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Anything you had to get training for like CPR or...

**VICTOR HALL:** Well, they did...

**INTERVIEWER:** The defibrillator?

(0:22:18)

**VICTOR HALL:** They did CPR training, but they didn't have the defibrillators back then. [Laughs] Yeah. They gave you CPR training. Certain people, you know. Uh. If you wanted to get it, they would provide it for you. So, I did that just to get out of work cause of CPR training.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you have to utilize your CPR skills?

**VICTOR HALL:** No. Huh-uh. Yeah. Well, it wasn't down there. It was on a golf course one time. A guy died of a heart attack. That's the only time I ever did it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, when you worked in the furnace plant, when you, after you clocked in and you're dress for your, your workday, how did you get your assignment for each day?

**VICTOR HALL:** Well, you were assigned to a furnace. So, you know to go to that furnace, you know. Then, then, if you were down in basement cleanup, you'd know what you had to do every day. You had a section to clean every day. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you work on the same? If you were assigned to a furnace, were you on that furnace for years, weeks, days?

**VICTOR HALL:** You could be. You could be on it for years. You could be on it for months. Depended on if you wanted to bid, move to another furnace, you know.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, was there any kind of, at the start of a shift, getting together with the foreman and going over what had to get done that day?

**VICTOR HALL:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who's going to do it?

**VICTOR HALL:** No. Uh. The, the operators know what had to be done and it got done. That was it.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** How did they work it so that you guys could take breaks and go to  
3 the cafeteria for whatever meal of the day you're there for and keep everything running?  
4  
5 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, you tap the furnace down. Uh. It might be, it might be for an  
6 hour before you had to tap it again. Well, you'd go eat at the cafeteria and go back to  
7 work.  
8  
9 (0:24:28)  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you mean by tap the furnace down?  
12  
13 **VICTOR HALL:** Tap the metal out. It would get so high. They'd have to tap it down.  
14 There was a chart there that showed how high it was. You'd tap it down and wait for it to  
15 go back up. But when you went to lunch, you'd really tap it down far so you could get a  
16 longer lunch.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever not tap it down far enough? Not you personally, but  
19 did that happen that lunch was longer or...  
20  
21 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. And they would holler. The operator next to your furnace  
22 would watch your furnace if it got too high.  
23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened if, if you didn't tap it down far enough or you stayed  
25 away from it for too long?  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** Smoke. Smoke would come. They'd holler. Boss would call over to  
28 the cafeteria and until tell 'em to get their ass back over there. Your furnace needs tapped.  
29 Okay. And a lot of 'em would get. They had a takeout in the cafeteria. You could go in  
30 there and get sandwich and take 'em back over and eat, you know, on the job.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Eat next to the furnace?  
33  
34 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. Yep.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** With all the dirt and zinc and lead floating around in the air?  
37  
38 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. They used to wrap their sandwiches, their piece of meat in  
39 aluminum foil and lay it on the skew ring on the furnace to keep it hot and at lunch time  
40 they'd go get it.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Did OSHA have something to say about that.  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** OSHA. No. OSHA wasn't saying too much then. No. They weren't.  
45 They weren't involved too much back then.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, by the time OSHA was requiring you to wear helmets and  
2 respirators, did they also prohibit you from eating in the furnace department?  
3  
4 **VICTOR HALL:** Right. They had to. They had to provide a lunchroom. Yeah.  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So was there a separate lunchroom at the, at the, um, furnace.  
7  
8 **VICTOR HALL:** After a while, yeah. Yeah.  
9  
10 (0:26:20)  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** So you didn't have to go to the cafeteria.  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** That was far down the road though.  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-huh.  
17  
18 **VICTOR HALL:** You know.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the, the typical safety, uh, hazards of working in  
21 the furnace plant?  
22  
23 **VICTOR HALL:** Psh. There was a lot of 'em. Getting burnt with the hot metal. Psh.  
24 Getting burnt with slag down in the basement. So, there was a lot of 'em. I can't hardly  
25 remember. It was pretty, it was dangerous.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** It sounds like you, you have to really pay attention to what you're  
28 doing.  
29  
30 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. You had to watch, uh, the operators coming down. Running  
31 the ladle. You gotta watch they don't get hit with the ladle or. Yeah, it was something.  
32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever get caught in any  
34 outages?  
35  
36 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** What'd you do then?  
39  
40 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, they had an area, like if you worked in the basement, you had to  
41 go to a certain area or if you worked on the condenser floor, you went to a certain area.  
42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** How'd you find your way in the dark?  
44  
45 **VICTOR HALL:** It was tough. It was tough.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have a flashlight?  
2  
3 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. We had flashlights. Yeah. That was one of our tools. A  
4 flashlight.  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you carry a flashlight at all times?  
7  
8 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** What other tools did you carry at all times?  
11  
12 (0:27:50)  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** That's about it. A flashlight. You know. I'll tell you what. When you,  
15 like I told you, there was a helper. Then, there was a skimmer on a furnace. But when you  
16 went from a skimmer, you went to, uh, utility a shift utility guy. He would help change  
17 skids, weld skids, and do the sumps in the basement. See there was. There's different  
18 positions you'd get before you could be an operator. So, there was a skimmer. No. It was  
19 helper, skimmer, uh, shift utility, and operator. That's the way it went.  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** So, we last spoke about your being on the utility gang. What was  
22 your next step?  
23  
24 **VICTOR HALL:** That was it.  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Is that what you were doing at the...  
27  
28 **VICTOR HALL:** That's what it. If you choose to stay there, you'd stay there. Cause it  
29 was steady daylight. That job.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** So how many years were you able to work on daylight?  
32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. I don't know. I worked there and then they shut down in '79.  
34 Probably six years, seven years.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** So when they shut down in '79, you were on the utility gang?  
37  
38 **VICTOR HALL:** No, I was, I was in a whole different department.  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So let's...  
41  
42 **VICTOR HALL:** Well that was, it was called the lead shed. It's where they made lead  
43 rolls.  
44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I've never heard about this at all. So please explain the lead,  
46 the lead shed.

1  
2 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, it was. Yeah. That's what they called it. The lead shed. They  
3 would melt lead and pour it into a big long slab from, psh, ah, that'd be 200 feet long, and  
4 then they'd put on a, uh, they'd turn it down. Put a rolling mill. Turn it down until it's real.  
5 It was that thick. And they'd turn down until it was real thin. And they'd sell that to the,  
6 they'd make batteries out of that. Car batteries. You know, plates in battery cars. That's  
7 what they, that's what they done. I only did that for a year and that's when they shut  
8 down.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** So right. So, before the plant shut down in 1979, you were working  
11 in the lead shed.

12  
13 (0:30:16)

14  
15 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any clue that there was going to be this shutdown?

18  
19 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. About a month before that, they said they was gonna shut her  
20 down. So, they did.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** What'd you do at that point for work?

23  
24 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, I didn't work for a while, but then I got a job at, uh, J&L as  
25 running a fuel truck till I got back down to St. Joe.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** And when did you come back to St. Joe?

28  
29 **VICTOR HALL:** It was '80. End of '80.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Basically when they reopened then.

32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Well I was down the list. So, I...

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Had, had you taken the severance package?

36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** But they did take you back?

40  
41 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh-huh. They took all the good workers back. I think that's why they  
42 shut down to weed out the dead, dead weight. You know.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know how many employees they reopened with compared to  
45 what they had before?

46

1 **VICTOR HALL:** They had 1500 before. But they shut, they tore the little end down  
2 and, uh, I think 400 to 500 when they opened back up at the final shutdown. That's salary  
3 and payroll altogether.

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** What was different in the operations of the plant when it reopened in  
6 1980?

7

8 **VICTOR HALL:** When it reopened, it was, uh, nobody knew what they was doing.  
9 You know. They had to go from scratch. Tried to hire the older guys that knew what was  
10 going on, you know, to get the furnaces back on.

11

12 (0:32:09)

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what were the changes such that they felt they could be in  
15 operation again? Whatever wasn't working before that made them shut down, what was  
16 going, what was the new plan? What they were going to do to be open?

17

18 **VICTOR HALL:** They wanted to be. They wanted to be smaller, you know. So, they  
19 only had 11 through 17 furnace. That's the only ones they had when they opened back up.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they stop, uh, any of the products they had been making before?

22

23 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** What products did they drop from their manufacturing?

26

27 **VICTOR HALL:** They dropped, uh, the acid plant. The acid plant. They quit making  
28 acid. Ore shed. They closed the ore shed. They closed the roaster plant. They closed all  
29 that.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they tear those plants down at that point?

32

33 **VICTOR HALL:** Later on, they did. They tore half the furnace plant down.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the role of the roaster plant such that it wasn't needed  
36 anymore?

37

38 **VICTOR HALL:** That's why they...

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** To operate the furnaces.

41

42 **VICTOR HALL:** They did the ore. They made the ore. Put it in, uh, like cooked it and  
43 shipped it to put in the furnaces.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Why didn't they need that process when they reopened?

46

1 **VICTOR HALL:** Ore cost too much. So, they, they had their own ore mine and  
2 everything, but they didn't have that no more. So. Ore cost too much. So, all they did,  
3 they put, uh, they called them secondaries in the top of the furnace. Dumped them in and  
4 old carburetors and stuff from cars, and it would melt down and become zinc.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So, it was like a recycling plant.

7  
8 (0:34:05)

9  
10 **VICTOR HALL:** That's what it was at the end. Yep. We didn't know what they was  
11 putting in there at the end when they shut down this last time. Had no clue.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Any environ, any environmental concerns about what was being put  
14 in there?

15  
16 **VICTOR HALL:** They didn't care. This company that owned it at Horsehead. They  
17 didn't care. They just dumped all kinds of crap in them furnaces.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** So, when you were hired back in 1980, what department and what  
20 position were you working?

21  
22 **VICTOR HALL:** The furnace plant. Back to the furnace plant. My first day back I was  
23 operating. Operating the furnace. Then, I went to the utility gang. Finished up there.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you compare the experience of working in the furnace  
26 plant after the shutdown versus before?

27  
28 **VICTOR HALL:** I think it was better before. It was dirtier, but it was better people to  
29 work with. Helped each other out, you know. At the end, they, them young people they  
30 hired they didn't care. They didn't care. They was just there for a paycheck. That's all.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you still have some of your, your coworkers from the earlier  
33 years?

34  
35 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** There with you toward.

38  
39 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Till the end.

42  
43 **VICTOR HALL:** Yep.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** You guys couldn't influence the other workers.

46



1 **VICTOR HALL:** Psh. No. Couldn't do that. They didn't want to work. They just  
2 wanted a paycheck. The superintendent of the furnace plant told me one day he was over  
3 interviewing these people for a job. This one guy fell asleep in the interview. [Laughter]  
4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was the superintendent of the furnace plant?  
6

7 (0:35:57)  
8

9 **VICTOR HALL:** When, when it shut down this last time? John DeChellis.  
10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh. Okay.  
12

13 **VICTOR HALL:** Did you talk to John?  
14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Yeah.  
16

17 **VICTOR HALL:** He'll straighten you out. John will. He knew everything. Old John, he  
18 knew everything. We got along alright though. We argued a lot, but, but it was a job.  
19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you, did you feel that if you had a suggestion, er, about how  
21 something was being done and could be done better, that you could go to your supervisor  
22 and bring it up?  
23

24 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. They had a, a reward system. If you found something that  
25 was easier to do and saved them money, you would get, you would get, uh, money. So, a  
26 few guys got some good, good bit amount of money a couple times. I didn't get none  
27 though. Everybody took my ideas. And when I told you when they shut down this last  
28 time or when I retired, I wasn't, I was on the utility gang, but I was a, a greaser. I greased  
29 all the conveyors and elevators and everything in the furnace plant I greased. But it was  
30 part of the utility gang. So.  
31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that daytime work?  
33

34 **VICTOR HALL:** Yep. It's day, daylight. Yeah. John. Did John tell you about the, uh,  
35 Jerry's Alley. They called this place Jerry's Alley. It was an alley from, probably as long  
36 as my house. Well, he renamed it when I retired. Hall's Hall he called it. Vic's Hall. I got  
37 a sign out in my garage out there. He renamed it after me.  
38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** So what alley was this?  
40

41 **VICTOR HALL:** Jerry's Alley.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. But where was...  
44

45 **VICTOR HALL:** It was in the furnace plant.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was this?  
2  
3 **VICTOR HALL:** That, they named it after some guy years and years and years ago. So.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** And was, was this a, could you just describe please what...  
6  
7 (0:38:16)  
8  
9 **VICTOR HALL:** It was just, uh, an entrance into the furnace plant on the bottom floor.  
10 Not the basement. The bottom floor. The ground floor. How it was.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know who Jerry was?  
13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** Nope. They named it before I got there. Jerry's Alley.  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** So, you were there when the workers voted in the union.  
17  
18 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the pros and cons of bringing in the union?  
21  
22 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, they wanted to make more money. That was the main thing.  
23 Get paid for holidays. You know how unions work, so. That was it.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you for or against?  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** I was for. Most guys were back then. I think '74. Is that when they  
28 told you it got in?  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** '74. Yeah.  
31  
32 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** What would you say were some of the, the downsides, some of the  
35 downside of the union in the plant?  
36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, the biggest downsides was the negotiation times. You know.  
38 We'd want so much and they wouldn't give any and that was the downside of it. But  
39 other than that.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you think you, you ended doing better with wages because of the  
42 union?  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Even with the limitations on negotiations?

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45

**VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Yep.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh. In what ways did the benefits get better by having the union in there?

(0:40:02)

**VICTOR HALL:** Well, you got more paid holidays. You got a cost of living. We didn't have cost of living back then. Things like that, you know, more money on the hour. Small things like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Before the union came in, how were you evaluated for pay increases?

**VICTOR HALL:** If the foreman liked you, you'd get a raise. You've probably heard this. They'd come up to you and tell you, "I'm going to give you a two-cent raise. Don't you tell nobody and don't let nobody see your paystub." That's what they'd tell you. A two-cent raise.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there any set time that you were reviewed for raises like once a year on the anniversary of your working there?

**VICTOR HALL:** Before the union?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**VICTOR HALL:** Nope. If your foreman liked you, he would take care of you.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did people ever ask for raises?

**VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. Yep. If you asked, they would give you one or two cents. Nothing more than a nickel.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were there Christmas bonuses?

**VICTOR HALL:** Uh-uh. They had a Christmas party for the families every year. They gave out nice gifts. Her ex-husband worked down there. So, they gave nice stuff, huh?

**MRS. HALL:** Uh-huh.

**VICTOR HALL:** That was it.

**INTERVIEWER:** There used to be a lot of company sponsored activities like athletic leagues.

1 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. They had a, they had a softball team, volleyball team,  
2 basketball team, bowling teams. They had all kinds of stuff like that.  
3

4 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you participate in any of those?  
5

6 **VICTOR HALL:** No. They was like falling off when I started there.  
7

8 (0:42:10)  
9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** All, already in the '60s they were falling off.  
11

12 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Uh-hmm. They still had the, uh, basketball and the bowling  
13 alleys, but all the baseball fields were gone and so I didn't get into any of that.  
14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** Was, was the, the trapshooting and pistol range still going on?  
16

17 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. They had trapshooting. Yeah. Yep. I did that a couple times.  
18 Trapshooting. Yeah. They had all kinds of activities back then.  
19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** The auditorium served several functions. Um. What do you  
21 remember about that building and its uses?  
22

23 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, that's where they had the Christmas party in the auditorium, and  
24 they'd have a, a plant meeting on payday. If you went to the plant meeting, you got your  
25 paycheck. If you didn't go the plant meeting, you'd have to wait till Monday to get it. So,  
26 that's how they got you to come to the plant meeting.  
27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, what if you were on a shift working and it's the plant meeting  
29 or what if you...  
30

31 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, the boss would bring your paycheck to you.  
32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And what if your shift was going to start later that night, were  
34 you expected to come in earlier for the plant meeting to get your check and then come  
35 back at night?  
36

37 **VICTOR HALL:** Right. If you wanted your check early. That was it.  
38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** Did anybody ever complain about that?  
40

41 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, they complained, but, psh, nobody listened. Yeah, they'd have  
42 different people there with like A to F and then G to so far setting at tables. You would  
43 go and get your check and go.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** What did they discuss at the plant meetings?  
46

1 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. How things were going and, you know, that was it.  
2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there ever any incentives, you know, like if, if they could, if  
4 you guys can produce this much more or cut down costs or anything?  
5  
6 **VICTOR HALL:** No.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Where you would get bonuses?  
9  
10 (0:44:23)  
11  
12 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Not that I can recall. No.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Outside of the company sponsored activities and the walls of the  
15 plant, to what extent was your family and social life connected to other St. Joe colleagues  
16 and their families?  
17  
18 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Not, nothing, not really. It was just there, you know, Christmas  
19 party and that was about it.  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you friends with...  
22  
23 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. They had a pic, they had a picnic at Idora Park. Do you  
24 remember Idora?  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** I've, I've heard of it.  
27  
28 **VICTOR HALL:** You ever heard of it?  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.  
31  
32 **VICTOR HALL:** They had a picnic there. Huh.  
33  
34 **MRS. HALL:** Uh-huh.  
35  
36 **VICTOR HALL:** Once a year. But that didn't last. It was what three or four years and  
37 they were done. Probably.  
38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Were, were you friends with your, your coworkers in the plant?  
40  
41 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh-hmm.  
42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you guys...  
44  
45 **VICTOR HALL:** Some of 'em.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any place you went after work to?  
2  
3 **VICTOR HALL:** Went to the bar, had a beer.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Any favorite watering hole?  
6  
7 **VICTOR HALL:** Mid, Midway it was called.  
8  
9 (0:45:33)  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** And where was that located?  
12  
13 **VICTOR HALL:** Right down from the mill on 18. Midway or the Kabuto Hotel.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Now, someone told me that you could show up there with a meal  
16 ticket and, and use it.  
17  
18 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Well you'd get 'em. It was called a meal book. It had five cents,  
19 one is 10 cents, one 25 cent ones and 50 cent ones in it. And you'd buy 'em and you'd go  
20 to the cafeteria to eat and whatever your meal cost you'd rip that out, but they'd take that  
21 out of your pay, your meal book whatever. But guys would go over and they was getting  
22 meal, meal books, cashing them in so they could go to the bar after work and get a, get a  
23 beer and they, they quit. You could only buy so many.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Would, would they Midway take the meal ticket?  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** No, no. Midway wouldn't take 'em. You'd cash your meal ticket in in  
28 the cafeteria. The whole book, and they quit that. So.  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** So, the cafeteria would give you cash?  
31  
32 **VICTOR HALL:** Cash. Yeah.  
33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** For the meal ticket that came out of your pay.  
35  
36 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh-hmm.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** And then you could go to the bar.  
39  
40 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Got it.  
43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, I never did that. A lot of guys did it though. The ones with  
45 drinking problems. Then their wives would call down and bitch cause their pay was so  
46 low.

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**INTERVIEWER:** [Laughter]

**VICTOR HALL:** So, they quit doing that. Yeah. They'd get \$30, \$40, \$50 out of one pay and that's, psh, that's a lot of money back then.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you heard any stories about the County Home that used to be on the property.

(0:47:10)

**VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. When I worked down at the lead shed, I went in there. I was in there. There's, there was cells down in the basement. Did they tell you that?

**INTERVIEWER:** Go ahead. Tell me.

**VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Well, when we were down there, it was kinda scary cause it was dark. We had our flashlights and just found the cells. Looked around. Didn't stay there too long. Yeah. We used to go in there every once in a while and check things out. That's where the main office was. One of the main offices. The other one was up beside the, uh, auditorium. Yeah. When I was, when I was there Chuck Henderson was the plant manager when we first started there. Did anybody ever mention him?

**INTERVIEWER:** The name might've come up, but I'd like to know more about him. So what can...

**VICTOR HALL:** Oh. He was a, he was a good guy. He'd come over in the furnace plant and talk to you and ask you how things were going. There was this one story. Our one friend he had cancer and his wife was from, uh, Newfoundland. Well he was dying and we wanted to send him to Newfoundland. So, we was selling these tickets for \$2 apiece and, uh, the furnace plant superintendent said, "You guys can't sell them." I said, "Why?" "Cause you can't." He was a real. He was a bastard. So, me and this other guy, we went over and seen Chuck Henderson and we told. He said, "You sell all them tickets you want, and if you can't sell 'em, well, I'll buy the rest."

**INTERVIEWER:** That's a good guy.

**VICTOR HALL:** Well he went over and chewed that superintendent's ass out. He up one side and down the other for that. So, he was a good guy, Chuck. He got along with the men, you know.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you have some more stories about Chuck Henderson?

**VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Oh. This one guy who worked with me. He was Howie Hill. He got drafted into the Army. Well, uh, when you got drafted, they gave you \$200 when you went in the Army. Well, he got drafted and he failed his physical because he, his one ear,

1 he couldn't hear out of his one ear. They, so, he went back to work and Chuck called him  
2 over to his office and told him. Said, "Howie, you're going to have to pay that \$200 back  
3 cause you didn't go in the Army." So, they took it out of his pay at \$10 a pay till it was  
4 paid off.

5  
6 (0:49:56)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the, uh, the plant lose many people to the draft?

9  
10 **VICTOR HALL:** No.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** During Vietnam?

13  
14 **VICTOR HALL:** Huh-uh. No. There were a lot of guys there that was in Vietnam, you  
15 know. But I made a living there. So. I raised two wives. [Laughter] So.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Where were women working in the plant during your years there?

18  
19 **VICTOR HALL:** Just in the office, but then they hired women. I forget what year it  
20 was to work in, uh, in the, in the mill. They couldn't work in the furnace plant if they  
21 could bear children because of the lead. So, they put 'em in other departments.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What other departments did they put them in?

24  
25 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Sinter plant, uh, refinery. Yeah. If they, where there was no lead  
26 they could work. You know. Transportation, stuff like that, railroad.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** How did that, how did that feel having women working in the plant?

29  
30 **VICTOR HALL:** As long as they held up their end I didn't care.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there guys who did care?

33  
34 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Yeah.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Got a story?

37  
38 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. Well I had one working with me one black girl. Her name was,  
39 uh, Joyce Jackson. She was a real short girl. And we're making what was called anodes.  
40 It's, it's zinc poured in special molds and I told her I said, "Joyce, now you got to do this.  
41 You got to flip these over." She says, "I can do it." I said, "You sure?" She said, "Yep."  
42 Well, she did her job. She handled it.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** What department was this in that she was?

45  
46 **VICTOR HALL:** Furnace plant.



1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, I thought women weren't allowed in the furnace plant.  
3  
4 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, she couldn't bear children.  
5  
6 (0:52:27)  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh. Okay.  
9  
10 **VICTOR HALL:** So. A lot of 'em worked in the furnace plant that couldn't bear  
11 children. They worked on cleanup. They had a daylight cleanup crew back then, you  
12 know, after a while. I think they created that for them women.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did Joyce work with you there?  
15  
16 **VICTOR HALL:** Ah. I don't know. A couple months and then she moved on  
17 somewhere else.  
18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Within St. Joe Lead?  
20  
21 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. But a lot of 'em didn't last. They quit. You know. Too hard.  
22 Dirty.  
23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm.  
25  
26 **VICTOR HALL:** But then it kinda phased out.  
27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?  
29  
30 **VICTOR HALL:** It was a job. It paid the bills, and I got too old. I couldn't go nowhere  
31 else.  
32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Why, why did you retire in 2011? Why the decision at that point?  
34  
35 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, so, I could get my Social Security and get out of there. So, I  
36 did. Well, my retirement age was 66, but I left at 65. So, when I went to Social Security,  
37 she told me, "You're crazy if you work another year. You're only gonna make \$10 more a  
38 month on your Social Security." So, so, I left. Glad I did. Well, after I left, then I had  
39 three back operations.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Were any of those related to having worked at the plant?  
42  
43 **VICTOR HALL:** Probably. Probably. All that lifting and bending and, but I'm still  
44 alive.  
45  
46 (0:55:14)

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Who were some of your most memorable work colleagues?  
3  
4 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. I don't know. I had a lot of 'em. They used a baggy with water.  
5 Did anybody ever tell you that? In the summertime, oh, yeah, they'd fill a couple paper  
6 bags up with water and go up a couple stories and somebody down there and they'd drop  
7 it on 'em. Shoo.  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that a welcome drop just to cool off?  
10  
11 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Yeah. Oh. My friend had bagged me once. He dumped a whole  
12 five-gallon bucket of water on me. I smoked back then and it washed the cigarettes right  
13 out of my pocket. Shoo. So much water. John Sabo did that.  
14  
15 **MRS. HALL:** What about what John did that time at the furnace plant?  
16  
17 **VICTOR HALL:** Who?  
18  
19 **MRS. HALL:** John. When he would [Inaudible] what the guys did.  
20  
21 **VICTOR HALL:** John, who?  
22  
23 **MRS. HALL:** Little John. Uh. That John from Monaca.  
24  
25 **VICTOR HALL:** John Williams.  
26  
27 **MRS. HALL:** Yeah.  
28  
29 **VICTOR HALL:** What?  
30  
31 **MRS. HALL:** No. That, uh, took his clothes off.  
32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** Took his clothes off?  
34  
35 **MRS. HALL:** Remember John came around the furnace?  
36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. John Williams.  
38  
39 **MRS. HALL:** John Williams.  
40  
41 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. This was really funny. It was hot. I mean it was hot in there. It  
42 was up on the electrode floor it was probably 110 degrees. Well, John goes behind the  
43 furnace. He takes all his clothes off but his hardhat and his boots. He's naked. He comes  
44 around the furnace and our group leader was Dick Lamey. He says, "God." He says,  
45 "Damn, Dick. Is it hot in here." Dick turned around and he says, "What the hell is wrong  
46 with you! You're gonna get us all fired!" [Laughter] John, he's laughing and says, "but

1 Lamey, it's hot in this place." Yeah. Some good times. It's hard to remember 'em all, you  
2 know, when you get my age.

3  
4 (0:57:24)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the, the best part about working at the zinc plant?

7  
8 **VICTOR HALL:** Payday. Well, friends, you know, you were with your friends every  
9 day. It was, we had good times there in the beginning. Not, uh, not in the end.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about the end that you're referring to?

12  
13 **VICTOR HALL:** With this, this Horsehead? Psh. Terrible. That CEO. What's his  
14 name? Hensler. The furnace plant superintendent brought him up to our lunchroom one  
15 day to introduce him to everybody. Well, he, he told, "Vic, here's, uh, Hensler, Jim  
16 Hensler." Psh. I don't want to shake his hand. I don't even like him. Oh, John, John  
17 DeChellis, he came back. "What the hell is wrong with you? Why didn't you shake his."  
18 "Why am I going to shake his hand, John? I don't like the guy." He turned around and  
19 walked away. [Laughter]

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what was changing under Horsehead's leadership?

22  
23 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh. They didn't know what they was doing. They had no clue. You  
24 know. They didn't know. It's like that plant they built down in North Carolina. It's still  
25 not running. I talked to a guy the other day that's down there. They filed bankruptcy three  
26 or four times. Just got out of it again. That's all because of that CEO. He's, psh, what he  
27 says goes. He don't know nothing. He don't know the first thing about smelting zinc.  
28 Well, I know that, that new plant it's all completely different the way they're making it. I  
29 don't know how they're doing it down there. They don't have furnaces like we had.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

32  
33 **VICTOR HALL:** I didn't do nothing. I walked around and seen all my friends and told  
34 'em goodbye.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you keep in touch with your friends from, um, St. Joe Lead?

37  
38 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. I golf with a couple guys.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you ever go to the alumni breakfast?

41  
42 (1:00:05)

43  
44 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. I missed the last one. I was in the mountains.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** We were there. We missed you.

1  
2 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. I heard you was there. Did you talk to Flubby, Forest Johnson?  
3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. One of our, our colleagues, Julie, who was there, she talked to  
5 him, but he didn't want to sit down and do an interview.  
6  
7 **VICTOR HALL:** No wonder he didn't. Gee. He's a friend of mine. I take him to a  
8 auction. He is the one walking with a cane.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Was he, did he work in the furnace with you?  
11  
12 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh-hmm. Well, he retired in '92. I think.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm.  
15  
16 **VICTOR HALL:** 1992. Yeah. He's 88. Flubby is.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?  
19  
20 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, I think it's a good thing. But I think they're blowing it way out  
21 of proportion. These jobs they're going to have 600 jobs. It's, it's, it's liking taking place  
22 of steel. There was 15,000 people who worked in J&L, you know. This is just one plant.  
23 But there'll be other business probably opening up I imagine. A lot of these Beaver  
24 aristocrats they don't like it down there. They don't want it over there. They were  
25 bitching because they cut the trees down across the river. Did you hear about that? Yeah.  
26 Well them Beaver people they was complaining cause they were cutting trees down  
27 across the river. What do they care about the trees across the river? You know.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Just because it's going to change their view. Is that what you...  
30  
31 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, they're gonna plant new ones. What, 150 new trees they said.  
32 That's where the, uh, railroad yard's gonna be, where they ship the cars in and out. You  
33 never seen St. Joe when it was there, huh? Just pictures?  
34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Yeah.  
36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. If I can find that lawyer's number, remember I told you I went  
38 to that deposition? I'll give him a call. He'd probably, I don't know if he'd still have him,  
39 huh?  
40  
41 **MRS. HALL:** I don't know.  
42  
43 (1:02:23)  
44

1 **VICTOR HALL:** If he'd have all cause he was in the furnace plant. He went from the  
2 base, subbasement clear to the top floor. He had a stenographer with him and everything.  
3 Took pictures. And. I'll give him. If I can find his number, I'll call him.  
4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Let me know if you find him. Uh. What else can you tell me  
6 about working at the plant that I haven't asked you?  
7

8 **VICTOR HALL:** Uh. That's about it. You know.  
9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Any more stories?  
11

12 **VICTOR HALL:** Some days you enjoyed it and some days you didn't. Short change,  
13 like I said, you'd go from four to 12 to daylight. That was tough. You know. You'd get six  
14 hours' sleep, back to work. Then if you was forced, like you're working four to 12 and  
15 you're on a short change, you're forced to work a double, you had to work a triple. Yeah.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** So what you'd be...  
18

19 **VICTOR HALL:** You worked 24 hours. Yeah. But then the law come out. You was  
20 only allowed to work 16 hours after a while.  
21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that a change because of the union or, or by law?  
23

24 **VICTOR HALL:** No. It was by law. Yeah.  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** And, and what if you were sick and couldn't go to work? What was  
27 the, the procedure?  
28

29 **VICTOR HALL:** You'd have to call off, down in there and call off. But before the  
30 union if you called off too much. Psh. Out the door you'd go cause they didn't want you  
31 if you didn't want to work.  
32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you get paid if you were out sick either before or when or, or  
34 once there was a union?  
35

36 **VICTOR HALL:** No. No.  
37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** So even with the union you didn't get paid for sick days?  
39

40 **VICTOR HALL:** Huh-uh. We didn't have no sick days. Nope. Salary did. We didn't.  
41 Salary had sick days.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what was the rapport like between the salaried employees and  
44 the non-salaried, the hourly workers?  
45

46 (1:04:34)

1  
2 **VICTOR HALL:** What was it like?  
3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.  
5  
6 **VICTOR HALL:** Well, some of your foremen were nice guys. Some of 'em were,  
7 weren't. In a way, it was everywhere. You know. I had pretty good foremen all the time I  
8 was there.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** In general, do you [Audio cuts out]  
11  
12 **VICTOR HALL:** Yeah. Like John DeChellis, him and I'd get into arguments almost  
13 every day. But we were still friends, you know. Cause that John, he knew everything. I  
14 always told him, "John, you forget I started here six to eight years before you even  
15 started, so I know a little bit more than you do." But see he went to college. He went to  
16 school. Uh.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Was he receptive to hearing that from you?  
19  
20 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. We argued and screamed, but we got along. Yeah.  
21 John worked on the utility gang when he first started there. Then he moved up. Joe Nard,  
22 the guy that did the hiring. You'd take a foreman's test. He said, "Ah, you missed it by  
23 one point." He'd tell you.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any...  
26  
27 **VICTOR HALL:** They didn't want you to be a foreman.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Redo's?  
30  
31 **VICTOR HALL:** That's why. They didn't want you to be a foreman. That's why.  
32 [Laughter] Yep. So, that was about it.  
33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Well that's the end of, of my prepared questions, but if there's  
35 anything else that you'd like to...  
36  
37 **VICTOR HALL:** Oh, I can't think of anything else.  
38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Share any memories.  
40  
41 **VICTOR HALL:** I told you some stuff I shouldn't have told you. [Laughter]  
42  
43 (1:06:35)  
44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Thank you very much.  
46

1 **VICTOR HALL:** Okay. You're welcome.  
2  
3 (END)

**Thomas E. Janeck**  
**Interview @ May 23, 2017**



## **THOMAS E. JANECK**

### **Summary**

The interview with Tom Janeck took place on May 23, 2017, at the Hilton Homewood Suites in Erie, Pennsylvania. As a college student in 1964, Tom began three summers of employment at St. Joe's in the leach plant, the acid plant, and the lab as a summer engineer. After receiving his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering, he worked for the company in a permanent position from 1967 until retirement in 2010 (other than an interlude from 1999 to 2002). Tom worked in the metallurgical control department, secondary materials department, company environmental programs, government and regulatory affairs, and corporate environmental, health and safety programs.

Tom describes the operations of the leach and acid plants (in detail), safety precautions, and the commercial products generated in each. Of interest are reflections about Bob Redelfs, who hired him for the summer program, the professional relationship he developed with Dick Knapp while working in the lab on a chloride extraction project, and the experience of working as a college student among longtime employees. From his fulltime work in the metallurgical control department as a metallurgical quality control engineer for the smelter, Tom explains the department's role within the scope of plant operations, staffing, and the types of labs and their locations. Similarly, he sheds light on the secondary materials department, including: increased reliance on recycled materials after the plant reopened in 1980, making blue powder into briquettes, and dross furnaces.

Tom elucidates the corporate structure of St. Joe Minerals Corporation, corporate-wide activities that were based at Monaca, and St. Joe Minerals' facilities and operations beyond the zinc smelter, including a lead smelter in Missouri and coal and gold mining interests. He talks about corporate environmental affairs in the 1980s—regulatory work with EPA, DEP, and other agencies—and provides an excellent explanation of the types of pollutants the various plant operations generated and measures to control them.

Tom highlights Bob Sunderman's pivotal role in re-envisioning and reopening the smelter after the 1979 shutdown, with an emphasis on recycled materials and fewer furnaces and sinter machines. He also explains the relationship between Sunderman and Dave Carpenter of Horsehead Industries and the coming together to form Zinc Corporation of America (ZCA) with Horsehead providing a recycled material stream containing zinc and St. Joe processing and recovering the metals. He also talks about the shift to Horsehead Corporation's ownership and the experience of working for them.

Other topics include: a St. Joe pilot plant for mercury production; plant access before the bridge was built; a study on mine tailings; and industrial hygiene, health hazards to workers, and steps the plant took to minimize them.

1 **THOMAS E. JANECK**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 05/23/2017**  
3

4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF ("INTERVIEWER")  
5 THOMAS E. JANECK  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Tom Janeck on May 23, 2017. Could you please state  
8 and spell your full name? Um.  
9

10 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yes. Thomas, T-H-O-M-A-S, middle initial E., last name  
11 Janeck, J-A-N-E-C-K.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** And please state your date of birth and your full address.  
14

15 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Date of birth is [REDACTED], and my address is [REDACTED]  
16 [REDACTED], Erie, Pennsylvania 16506.  
17

18 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?  
19

20 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I am retired.  
21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area?  
23

24 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I am.  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did you grow up?  
27

28 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Actually, I grew up in Beaver County. Uh. I went to Beaver  
29 High School, uh, and went to elementary school, uh, in the area, Saint Peter and Paul's.  
30 Uh. I was actually born in Los Angeles. Uh, but, uh, my father was in the, uh, stationed  
31 out there during the war, I guess the tail end of World War II. Uh, and, uh, the family  
32 basically was back in Beaver County, principally Aliquippa and so we came back and,  
33 uh, uh, I grew up in the Beaver area.  
34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you know about the St. Joe Zinc plant when you were a kid?  
36

37 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. That's a good question. Uh. Yeah. I guess I would have  
38 to say yes because, uh, in our travels, uh, you know, we would see the, the smelter. Uh.  
39 Although, uh, that was less frequent than, than you might otherwise expect because back  
40 when I was growing up, uh, there was no bridge right there across the Ohio River, uh,  
41 adjacent to, uh, adjacent to the smelter. But I knew of it. Let's put it that way.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall the area, uh, around the plant ever being known as  
44 Josephtown?  
45

1 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Absolutely. That's what I always called it. Uh. In, in my more  
2 formative years I guess with the company.

3  
4 (0:02:15)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you define the area of Josephtown?

7  
8 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Well, Josephtown to me was, uh, probably consisted of just a  
9 couple of things. Uh. In addition to the plant proper, uh, there was an old railroad station,  
10 uh, right there on the, I guess it would be the, uh, uh, the east side of the plant and, uh, it  
11 was identified as Josephtown. Uh. And then there was a clubhouse, uh, where, uh, some  
12 of our summer engineers and so on would, uh, would spend, uh, their time where they  
13 lived while they were working for the company during the summer. And to me that was  
14 Josephtown.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Do you know when the name Josephtown faded away from  
17 use by the community?

18  
19 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** You know, I, I don't know that I, uh, by community if you're  
20 referring to, uh, you know, the plant personnel. Uh. Then, I would say probably with, uh,  
21 individuals such as myself, uh, when, uh, a lot of us went in, in different direction. And I  
22 don't mean me from the standpoint of retirement, but I'm thinking of some of my former  
23 colleagues that, uh, may have ended up with, uh, uh, other, uh, pursuits and so on. Uh.  
24 I'm guessing it would be those types of people probably, uh, individuals that are about my  
25 age. Uh. I think the younger, uh, folks, uh, would probably not associate the Monaca  
26 facility with the term or word Josephtown.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have family members who worked at the St. Joe Zinc Plant?

29  
30 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. I did not. My dad worked at, uh, Jones and Laughlin Steel  
31 on the, uh, on the other side of the river.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have childhood friends whose parents worked at the Zinc  
34 Plant?

35  
36 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Not that I recall. No. I, I, uh, I may have, uh, because, uh, you  
37 know, it employed quite a few people. But I don't recall any.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Cause we've, I've heard from some people how they used to go with  
40 a friend of an employee and they'd go and play on the basketball courts after school.

41  
42 (0:04:48)

43  
44 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I do remember one individual, uh, and I think his, one of his  
45 children was about my age. Uh. This individual, who of course I became very familiar  
46 with once I started working there, his name was George Schuler. Uh. He had several

1 daughters and I think they may have been, you know, close to me in terms of, uh, school  
2 or what have you.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What education did you complete before working at St. Joe's?

5  
6 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Uh, that, that's an interesting question because I actually  
7 started at the plant in 1964 between my freshman and sophomore years at Pitt. Uh. And  
8 then I worked subsequent summers, two additional summers beyond that and, uh, until I  
9 graduated in '67. And then, uh, took a permanent position, uh, with, uh, St. Joe in, uh, I  
10 think it was August of '67.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk more about the summer jobs when you were a college  
13 student?

14  
15 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure. Uh. That, that was, uh, those were interesting, uh,  
16 experiences. My first summer, let's see, I, actually, there's an interesting story in, in how  
17 I, uh, ultimately became a summer, uh, employee. [clears throat] And that is, uh, my  
18 mom when I was at home over Christmas vacation, she saw in the paper that St. Joe was  
19 hiring engineers. So, she said, "Tommy, you ought to go down and, and see what's going  
20 on down there." So, I said, "Oh, okay." So, I went down and I ended up talking to a  
21 fellow, who is, uh, long since passed, God rest his soul, Bob Redelfs, who was, uh, at the  
22 time he was the technical recruiter. Uh. And I ended up, uh, probably spending about two  
23 and a half hours talking to Bob Redelfs, uh, not about work, but about the Beaver School  
24 System because at the time Bob Redelfs was a, uh, was on the schoolboard. And, and he  
25 found, uh, you know, a lot of interesting things to talk to, talk about then. So, that's how I  
26 first became connected, uh, to St. Joe. And then, uh, prior to my, uh, finishing my  
27 freshman year, uh, I got a letter from Bob, uh, offering me summer employment. And so,  
28 I, uh, I took that and that worked out pretty well because at Pitt we were on a trimester  
29 system and the trimester ended in April. So, I had the summer plus to work, which  
30 ultimately, uh, uh, relieved the financial burden from, uh, from my parents and gave me  
31 the opportunity to pay for my own education, which worked out really well. But at any  
32 rate, the summer job, my first summer job was in the, uh, was in the leach plant, uh,  
33 which was the cadmium processing and production facility at, uh, at the smelter. Uh. And  
34 that was an experience. Uh. Here, here I am a, you know, knowing nothing about  
35 industrial life, uh, now associating with guys that have, you know, been there for many,  
36 many years. I made some awfully good friends, uh, that first year and in subsequent years  
37 as well. But the first year, I got to know my foreman really well. Uh. His name was Lee  
38 Morrow.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** How do you spell that?

41  
42 (0:08:54)

43  
44 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** M-O-R-R-O-W. Uh. He had a, a son, who also worked there.  
45 What in the world was his son's first name? Uh, I've forgotten. But, but Lee, huh, I  
46 would say Lee probably taught me as much about life in general as, as, as anyone and,

1 you know, I found that experience to be a very positive one going, going forward in life.  
2 Uh. I also found my first summer and subsequent summer work, uh, one that gave me a  
3 conviction that, uh, I was going to go to school and, and graduate as a, uh, as a chemical  
4 engineer and, uh, find, uh, find employment that, uh, was not of the labor variety, which  
5 is of course what the summer work was. Uh. But, uh, yeah, I learned to do a lot of things.  
6 Uh. A lot of manual labor, uh, and, uh, started to learn more about the chemistry of at  
7 least that phase of the operation.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk more please about what happens or happened in the  
10 leach plant?

11  
12 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Physically?

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. The process.

15  
16 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Sure.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** How tied into...

19  
20 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** The operations of the plant.

23  
24 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure. Um. The, uh, the leach plant pretty much picked up, uh,  
25 as a byproduct operation off of the sinter plant. The sinter plant, uh, produces, uh,  
26 produced a fume that was collected in various types of devices, uh, mostly, uh, uh,  
27 electrostatic precipitators or Cottrells. Uh. And that, uh, fume was enriched in cadmium  
28 and lead for that matter. Uh. The leach plant was physically located in two different areas  
29 of the smelter. But the leach plant's job was to take that fume and extract the metal values  
30 from it. Uh. And that was accomplished by way of, uh, first, uh, roasting the fume so as  
31 to make the, uh, the metals, uh, uh, water, preferably water soluble, but, uh, certainly  
32 soluble in weaker, uh, acid, uh, uh, solutions. Uh. And then recover those, um, uh, those  
33 metals from solution as the, the product metal in the case of cadmium. Uh. And basically,  
34 that was done by, uh, uh, taking, uh, leaching the roasted fume, uh, and then, uh, uh,  
35 precipitating the cadmium, uh, basically with, uh, zinc dust, uh, to form a cadmium  
36 sponge, which was then, uh, uh, briquetted and retorted, uh, into, uh, uh, the final  
37 cadmium product. Uh. And, um, that was a, uh, pretty substantial operation. Uh. Of  
38 course, the, the real, the thing that made, uh, nonferrous smelters, uh, economically, uh,  
39 uh, favorable was basically being able to get the squeal out of the pig so to speak. And if  
40 there was something of value coming in with the incoming concentrate or what have you,  
41 going after those values, recovering them, and being able to market them, uh, is really  
42 what, uh, gave the, uh, gave the smelter the, the economic, uh, advantage.

43  
44 (0:12:53)

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the market for cadmium?

1  
2 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Well, cadmium, uh, was used in, uh, a number of different  
3 areas principally, uh, in, uh, plating and also in, uh, uh, pigment, uh, production. Uh.  
4 Lead was also recovered at the leach plant in the form of a, a cake. Uh. That was not  
5 further, uh, refined. Uh. That was sold to other smelters, principally lead smelters. Uh. I  
6 think ASARCO was, uh, one of the major, uh, consumers of, uh, what we called lead  
7 cake, uh, that was produced, uh, in the leach plant as well. So, basically, two products  
8 cadmium and lead cake.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** And did you work in the leach plant for the three summers?

11  
12 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. I worked in the leach plant for one summer. Uh. And I  
13 worked shiftwork. Uh. Um. And, uh, we at the time we were working a six-day-a-week  
14 schedule. So, you know, the, the sixth day was a, was an overtime day, a time and a half  
15 day. Uh. And, of course, uh, being, ha-ha, the kid looking for, looking for, uh, uh, money  
16 to put myself through school I worked an awful lot of overtime. Uh. You know, that was  
17 also, uh, getting, uh, accustomed to, uh, working nightshift, uh, and sleeping during the  
18 day and so on and so forth, things that, uh, up to that point I'd never experienced.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Now, when you came back for your second summer, where did you  
21 work then?

22  
23 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** The second summer was in the, uh, acid plant. And I worked,  
24 uh, both shiftwork in the acid plant and also, uh, on the daylight utility gang and there  
25 again was, uh, you know, a whole host of different personalities, uh, and, uh, you know,  
26 new people, new people to get to know and to work with. But the acid plant was the  
27 sulfuric acid plant. Uh. It was the part of the smelter that processed the, uh, the sulfur  
28 dioxide gases that were, uh, driven off in the roasting process, uh, and converting those,  
29 that sulfur dioxide gas to, uh, actually sulfur trioxide and then, uh, sulfuric acid from  
30 there. And that was, uh, you know, shipped, uh, uh, all over by barge, by truck, by tank  
31 car.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** What was it used for?

34  
35 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sulfuric acid? Oh, lots of things. Uh. Probably the, one of the  
36 biggest uses is in the production of rayon, uh, but it's also used in, uh, uh, pickling  
37 operations, although I think more hydrochloric in pickling than sulfuric, but certainly the  
38 steel mills used it and, uh, a lot of chemical manufacturers would use it in, uh, in  
39 producing, uh, various chemical products.

40  
41 (0:16:12)

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was your day-to-day job in the acid plant?

44  
45 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh my. Uh. Well I guess as, uh, in the operating section being  
46 on shiftwork again, basically, what I did was first of all, fill trucks with sulfuric acid, uh,

1 when the trucks came in. Uh. And then, um, basically, going around and taking readings  
2 from various pieces of equipment, looking at pressure drops across a unit. What else?  
3 Um. Titrating, uh, samples, uh, taken from various parts in the operations to determine,  
4 uh, what if any acid was, was there. Like we had a lot of, uh, water coolers and, uh, we  
5 might sample a water cooler the water itself to ensure that, uh, there was no acid leaks. I  
6 do remember though, uh, you know, sulfuric acid splashes on the pants and things of that  
7 nature and, uh, uh, it goes after, uh, cotton very well. [laughs]

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of safety gear were you wearing to work in the acid plant?

10  
11 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Rubber gloves, uh, of course safety glasses and hardhat, uh,  
12 were a must anywhere. Uh. We would wear goggles. We would wear, uh, in addition to  
13 safety glasses goggles, uh, or a full-face shield. Um. And when we were handling, uh,  
14 metal, molten metal, uh, we would wear various types of, uh, flame retardant clothing.  
15 Although back in those days I will say that, uh, uh, that I think from a general standpoint,  
16 uh, other than sort of the more rudimentary safety equipment, uh, you saw less than what  
17 you would see today.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of safety training did you get coming in for your summer  
20 job?

21  
22 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** You know, I would say it was more, maybe a, a walkthrough  
23 with a foreman or his designee pointing out various risks and, and hazards and proper  
24 precautions. Uh. But I wouldn't say it was formalized. Now, there was a safety manual as  
25 I recall, um, and I, uh, I would have at least looked through that safety manual in specific  
26 to those areas that I was working. Um. But again, I think probably not as rigorous as you  
27 would find today.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** That was your second summer. Is there one more summer  
30 [inaudible]?

31  
32 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** There is one more summer.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Tell us about that please.

35  
36 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** The third summer, uh, I was, uh, first of all, we, they, we were  
37 called summer engineers regardless of the type of work that we were doing. But my third  
38 summer I was at, I actually did have more of an engineering project. I did not work  
39 shiftwork. Uh. I worked, uh, under the tutelage of one of the other, uh, permanent  
40 engineers. And the work that I was doing there was, um, huh, one, one of the problem  
41 elements, uh, at Monaca was, uh, chloride and my summer project was a project in which  
42 we were trying to find various ways of extracting the chloride from various solutions, uh,  
43 that, uh, that were in the plant. And, uh, it was when I first met an individual that turned  
44 out to be a, uh, a very, well he, he was a mentor for me obviously at that juncture, but as  
45 time went on, uh, over the course of years he and I became, uh, probably, uh, as close as,  
46 as you could come in terms of a professional relationship.

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(0:20:46)

**INTERVIEWER:** Who was this?

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** His name is, uh, [REDACTED], uh, I always called him Dick Knapp. Uh. And he responded to that or, or John or John Richard. Anyway, uh, the project was a, a solvent extraction project where we were attempting to get the chloride to move, uh, from a, an, an aqueous or liquid phase, uh, into an organic, uh, extractant and then recover the, uh, uh, or strip the chloride out of the organic extractant. This was mostly done in a lab. Uh. In fact, almost all of my time was spent in the lab during that summer and then, uh, at the, uh, at the conclusion of the summer, uh, and I wasn't the only one of course. There were any number of individuals at that level in their training, uh, in their, I should say in their, um, in their schooling that were, uh, doing project work only varying project work. We had mechanical engineers. We had electrical engineers. We had chemical engineers, like myself, and metallurgical engineers. So, we were all doing different things. At the end of the, [clears throat]. Excuse me. At the end of the year, we would have a, uh, a, a session where the entire technical staff of the smelter would come. In other words, all of the, the, uh, permanent engineers, uh, and the, uh, the staff, office staff and so on, plant manager, uh, and we would make a presentation of the work that we had done, uh, which was, uh, also interesting. Some of those sessions could be very difficult. Uh, uh. The, the permanent engineers would, uh, you know, ask questions. "Well what about this?" "Well why didn't you look at that?" Uh. That type of thing, which to some was intimidating. But anyway, uh, that was the third year. That was the third summer.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, it sounds like your third year was a very different experience?

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** Absolutely.

**INTERVIEWER:** Then your first two. So, first going back to the first two, coming into work in the plant, a college student clearly seeking to do something other than work in the plant doing labor, what was the experience like working with people who were going to do this for the, the long haul? How...

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** Well...

**INTERVIEWER:** How were you received by people who were there to stay there?

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** [Laughs] Well, uh, I, I won't, I won't begin to suggest that, uh, there weren't times when, when individuals tried to take advantage of, you know, a young, young guy, uh, coming to work. Uh. A lot. Uh. But good natured stuff. Teasing. That sort of thing. Uh. I think by in large the people that I encountered during my two years as a laborer, uh, I think were, were all good-hearted people. Uh. And I think they, uh, were genuinely I think interested in seeing this young buck succeed. Uh. We got, I got and I'm sure others did to, got plenty of the, the work that was probably the least



1 desirable [laughs] during that period of time. I mean, you were the low man on the totem  
2 pole. Uh. But, I, I think it was all, uh, it was all appropriate, good-natured, and from my  
3 standpoint, uh, an enjoyable experience. I mean, I, I certainly didn't mind going to work  
4 every day. Notwithstanding the fact that I knew some of 'em was going to tease me about  
5 the date that I, uh, shouldn't have said anything about maybe the day before or something  
6 like that. But, uh, it, it worked out well. It really did. And I, I think those people were,  
7 were very, very good people. I haven't seen any of 'em for quite a while, but when I have  
8 last seen 'em, uh, I mean, they still, "Hey, hi, Tom. How you doing? What've you been  
9 up to?" Dot, dot, dot, dot type of thing. So, a positive experience.

10  
11 (0:25:37)

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Then, my question going back to your third year, the followup  
14 question. Was that what was considered the summer intern program? For college  
15 students?

16  
17 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Uh. Well, I'm not sure what you mean by summer intern. I  
18 think all three summers, the group of individuals like me that participated were all part of  
19 the summer engineering program. And it was in the year, the summer immediately before  
20 you graduated that you were assigned the more engineering type work. Um. Now, there  
21 was also, I'm trying to think of the name of the program. Some schools had a school,  
22 work, school, work type program. There's a term for that and it's...

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** A co-op.

25  
26 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Co-op. Thank you. Uh. And, and there were a couple of co-op  
27 students as I recall, but, uh, certainly, uh, uh, I think the summer engineering program  
28 was, uh, a term that was used to encompass all of it. At least that's my recollection. And I  
29 think there's some pictures actually. Uh. That document that you and I talked about I  
30 think you'll find some pictures in there of a summer engineer's class if you will. Uh. But I  
31 think those people would, uh, you know, were all, uh, were probably a mix of both the  
32 engineering type work and the laborer work.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** And I also heard that they lived in, or some of them anyway, lived in  
35 the clubhouse.

36  
37 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Of course. In fact, there was a, uh, there was one  
38 permanent employee, several permanent employees that lived in the clubhouse. Uh. And  
39 I don't know the, the personal stories behind those, but yeah. Yeah. Those that were from  
40 out of town. There was no hotel around like you see today. And so, yeah, they lived in the  
41 clubhouse. Oh, I was fortunate enough that I lived, actually, I lived right across the river,  
42 but I had to drive all the way to Rochester, Monaca, and then back. I had to drive upriver  
43 and then downriver to get to the plant because there was no bridge.

44  
45 (0:27:59)

1 **INTERVIEWER:** When was that bridge put in?  
2

3 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Hmm. Boy, you know, uh, I'm not sure. Uh. Uh. I'm fairly  
4 certain it was still. It wasn't there when I graduated. So, that would've been '67. So,  
5 sometime in the early '70s would be my guess. Um. I'm pretty sure that's right, but, uh,  
6 I'm not certain. Anyway, that made it quite easy for people like me that lived over in the  
7 Beaver side to, to get to, uh, to get to the plant.  
8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead as an employee  
10 and when did you stop working for the company? Just a parameters of start and end and  
11 then we'll fill in in between.  
12

13 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** As St. Joe Lead or as various, uh, uh, iterations of the  
14 company over time?  
15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Just your, your starting employment after college, and also, what was  
17 your college degree in?  
18

19 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Chemical engineering, Bachelor of Science Chemical  
20 Engineering from, uh, the University of Pittsburgh. Uh. And I started in August of, uh,  
21 uh, 1967. And, uh, frankly I, you know, I, I've been there, I was there all the way through,  
22 uh, my retirement. Oh, well, I take that back. Uh. I did have one, one break in, in service  
23 I suppose, which would've been 19, 1998, '98 or '99. I had a, a break in service. But from  
24 the time that, that I first stepped foot on the property until 1998 or '99, uh, I was there.  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** And then you went back though and then...  
27

28 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Then I, then I was, uh, away from the, the company, uh,  
29 for a period of about a year and a half. Uh. I was, uh, I did some, uh, litigation consulting  
30 work, uh, in the Denver area. Uh. And then I came back to the plant, uh, I don't recall the  
31 year, but it would've been, probably on my CV there someplace.  
32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. We'll get, we'll get, we'll catch up on those details.  
34

35 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Uh. Uh. It would've been in the, uh, the 2001, 2002,  
36 something like that. [clears throat] Excuse me. Um. And, uh, then I, then I was there  
37 through retirement.  
38

39 (0:30:58)  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** And that was in 2010?  
42

43 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Exactly. August of 2010.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. All right. So, going back to 1967, what position and  
46 department were you initially hired for?

1  
2 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I was a technical trainee, was the, my job title as I recall.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Which meant?

5  
6 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Uh. Whatever you wanted it to mean. [laughs] It meant that,  
7 uh, here comes a new engineer, uh, and, uh, we don't really have a home for him yet or,  
8 or he doesn't know or we don't know collectively where he would best fit into the  
9 organization. But we do know we want him in the organization. So, uh, I was a technical  
10 trainee and my first assignment was in the research department, and I think I was there  
11 either three or six months. Something like that. Uh. And then, uh, I was offered, uh, an  
12 opportunity, uh, in the smelter itself, uh, as a, uh, quality control engineer. But, uh, the,  
13 the time in the research department was, was fairly brief, but I got to know a lot of people  
14 that, uh, that I would, uh, uh, then continue to have relationship with, uh, through the, the  
15 rest of my career there.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was running the research department then?

18  
19 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Um. I want to say it was Bob Lund, but I think that's wrong.  
20 Uh. I think it was Doc, Doctor, hmm, I can't think of his name now. I got a mental picture  
21 of him, but I can't think of his last name, uh, that I think was the head of research, but  
22 shortly thereafter, I believe, Bob Lund, uh, became the, uh, director of research. Uh. But  
23 like I say, I was only there for a short period of time and worked on a, on a project that  
24 was, uh, up in the roaster plant for that period.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** And then you went to the smelter as an engineer?

27  
28 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Then, I went to, actually, the metallurgical control  
29 department. Uh. Bob Redelfs, who initially hired me, who the technical recruiter he was  
30 also the superintendent of the metallurgical control department, and so was, uh, and also  
31 in that department was, uh, Dick Knapp. Uh. And, um, they brought me to the department  
32 and, uh, my task was as quality control engineer and the purpose was to set up quality  
33 standards and, uh, uh, for the smelter, uh, and, uh, report on a regular basis on quality  
34 issues to the management staff principally to Bill McCullough, who at the time was  
35 general superintendent. Um. And I also did, uh, various other types of work. Uh. Dick  
36 Knapp was, uh, he was, I think his title was plant metallurgist at the time. And he was  
37 interested in just about everything. [laughs] And, and if, if there was something that, that,  
38 uh, uh, a trace metal or something like that, that was interesting and potential for recovery  
39 he would, uh, he would run after it. Uh. And it was through that process that, uh, we  
40 ended up, uh, with a, uh, a mercury production facility. We produced elemental mercury.

41  
42 (0:34:58)

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk about that more please?

45

1 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure. The concentrate that came into the smelter principally  
2 Balmat, uh, from the Balmat Mine, uh, contained as compared to other concentrates a  
3 significant amount of, uh, mercury. Uh. The mercury was driven off in the roasting  
4 process into the SO<sub>2</sub> gas, uh, and ultimately was, uh, filtered out as elemental mercury in  
5 various of the acid plant, uh, gas purification systems. Most notably the, we had system,  
6 one system that we called a coke box, which was nothing more than a, a, a large container  
7 that had coke in it, carbon, uh, coke. The same type of coke that's used in, that was used  
8 in, uh, the electrothermic furnaces. And, uh, uh, Dick Knapp, uh, you know, identified  
9 this early on and started looking for ways of recovering it. And we actually had a little  
10 pilot plant. It was more than a pilot plant. We ran, uh, all of the coke box coke, uh,  
11 through this, uh, through this plant and it was basically a little kiln with a condenser,  
12 series of condensers associated with it. And, and we produced elemental mercury and  
13 probably the year that, uh, we did all of that and produced the bulk of it probably the  
14 largest mercury producer in the U.S., maybe the world at that point. But it was just a blip,  
15 you know. Uh, because...

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what year was this?

18

19 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, I'm not sure exactly the year. It would've been in the '70s.  
20 It would've been in the '70s. Um.

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the market for the mercury?

23

24 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Uh. Oh. Shoot. Back then, it was used, uh, in various places. I  
25 think the biggest use would probably be in the operation of the chlor-alkali cells, uh, in,  
26 and I'm trying to think where those would've been used exactly. But I believe that was the  
27 largest, the largest use, uh, of mercury. But mercury in smaller quantities was used in a  
28 lot of things. Used in switches, uh, shoot, uh, you may have had, I know I did, uh,  
29 amalgams, uh, in my, uh, teeth. Um. So, the plant produced a lot of mercury. I mean, a lot  
30 of mercury. Probably over a thousand flasks and one flask held 76 pounds. It was  
31 determined back in the medieval time that that was the weight that the slave could handle  
32 during the course of his workday and not get overly tired out. And that apparently is more  
33 than just a wives' tale. You can trace that back. Seventy-six pounds. Um. So, yes.  
34 Substantial amounts of mercury.

35

36 (0:38:20)

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the mercury production and marketing it continue until the plant  
39 shut down in '79?

40

41 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. No. Because. Seventy-nine? Yeah. The first shutdown.  
42 Yeah. Uh. No. Uh. Because the, uh, the Balmat concentrate, the Balmat Mine, uh, started  
43 to, uh, uh, uh, mine out, the, uh, the minable zinc deposit and so as the Balmat  
44 concentrate, uh, tailed off in terms of percentage of smelter feed, uh, the amount of  
45 mercury coming in would tail off as well. Uh. And ultimately, it would become, uh, you  
46 know, non-distinguishable.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you say something more please about the role of the  
3 metallurgical control department within the scope of plant operations and the staffing it  
4 took to run that department?

5  
6 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, sure. Uh, actually, it was a pretty good size department  
7 because it was more than just, oh, it was quality and control in a, in a, um, in the largest  
8 sense of the word. It was all the laboratories. The, uh, uh, uh, the, the instrumented  
9 laboratories. The, uh, what we called the wet laboratory, which is where, you know,  
10 people would, would use, uh, uh, solutions and so on to, uh, uh, to do the work, uh, that  
11 was required. Uh. We had a, uh, development laboratory. This laboratory, uh, and several  
12 of the, uh, the chemists that were involved in it and again Bob Redelfs was the  
13 superintendent at the time. Uh. This laboratory, uh, did a lot of, uh, ASTM work, uh,  
14 American, uh, Society for Mining, no, for, uh, American Society, huh, I've lost it. I don't  
15 know why. Anyway, you can look it up, but it's pretty standard. ASTM is the  
16 certification, uh, uh, entity for a whole host of, uh, techniques, uh, laboratory techniques,  
17 sampling techniques, uh, uh, metallurgical analysis techniques and so on. Uh. American  
18 Society for Testing of Materials. Goodness. I drew a blank there. Um. Uh. I'm trying to  
19 think how many people would've been in that department. Uh. I, I'm going to have to  
20 guess, but I would guess it was, uh, upwards of, uh, you know, 40, 50 maybe. It was a  
21 good size. I mean, it wasn't the largest department in the plant, but it was a good size.  
22 Uh. And, uh, uh, all different levels of individuals. Uh. There was, uh, uh, several PhD  
23 chemists, uh, in the department. Uh. A number of, uh, uh, uh, degreed chemists. Uh. And  
24 other individuals that had, uh, you know, more of a, a technical background, but maybe  
25 not, uh, a degree, uh, background. Uh. But all of the testing for the entire smelter was  
26 done within that department. [clears throat]

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was that department located?

29  
30 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Well, initially, uh, initially it was in a, uh, I'm not sure how  
31 familiar you've become with let's say the geography of the plant, but the main office  
32 building, uh, was located on the, uh, uh, on the, uh, south, south side, southeast side of  
33 the plant. Uh. The laboratory, the initial laboratory would've been, uh, further south and,  
34 and east of that building. There was a small building that contained, uh, I guess all of the  
35 laboratory now that I think about it, uh, including the, the instrument, uh, labs and there  
36 were several of those. There was, uh, oh, I'll take that back. You know what, the direct,  
37 the direct reader, which was used to, uh, run, uh, oxide and metal analyses, was located,  
38 actually right across from the, the old cafeteria, uh, and separate from the building that I  
39 was just trying to describe to you. Uh. I think the building that I first started talking about  
40 was the wet lab and maybe one of the other instrument labs. But then ultimately, uh, met  
41 control, uh, uh, was housed in a new building that was right off of the entrance to the  
42 plant, shortly after you came into the plant was the met control building and all of the  
43 laboratory facilities were then housed in that one building.

44  
45 (0:44:01)

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have a rough idea when that new met control building was  
2 built?

3  
4 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Um. Yeah. I would, I would say that was probably mid '70s.  
5 That would be my guess.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

8  
9 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Um. Maybe a little earlier than that. Yeah. I'm, I'm, uh, I  
10 don't, I don't recall exactly, but I, I was involved actually in, uh, you know, some of the,  
11 uh, some of the work that, uh, we as the met control department were doing in terms of  
12 reviewing the layout of the building and, uh, you know, so on and so forth to meet our  
13 needs.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** For staffing met control, would you have people who were assigned  
16 to specific plants?

17  
18 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. You would have people assigned to specific quality  
19 control functions, as opposed to a specific plant. Uh. As an example, uh, most of the  
20 sinter plant samples would be, would be received as a, as a solid, sinter, coke, calcine, uh,  
21 things of that nature. These materials would come into a sample preparation lab, uh,  
22 where the fellow that managed that operation, uh, came into met control right about the  
23 same time I did. His name, uh, a very dear friend of mine, who passed away, uh, Bob  
24 Sunderman. Uh. Bob has a long and rich history within the organization and I can't tell  
25 you how dear of a friend he was to me. Anyway, Bob ran that, that group initially. So, the  
26 sample would come in there. It'd be ground. Sized and ground. And then depending on  
27 the type of analysis that was, that was required and let's, let's take a couple of examples.  
28 Let's say you wanted a zinc concentration on, uh, uh, the night shift sinter. That ground  
29 sinter would then be pressed into a disc and it would be run on an x-ray spectrometer to  
30 determine the zinc content, and it would also get the lead content and the cadmium  
31 content all off of the spectrometer. We talked about chloride initially. Let's assume you  
32 wanted to know what the chloride content of the sinter was. Typically, you wouldn't. But  
33 let's assume you did for some reason. The x-ray spectrometer couldn't tell you that. So a  
34 split of that sinter sample would then have to go to the wet chemistry lab where it would  
35 be dissolved into an appropriate, uh, solution, whether it would be water or couldn't be  
36 water in the case of sinter. It'd have to be some acid solution. And then the chloride  
37 content would be determined from that. So, it'd depend on what type of quality control  
38 parameter you were looking for. Maybe you were looking for the size of the sinter, the  
39 size distribution of the sinter. How much was +1 inch? How much was +3/4 minus 1  
40 inch? How much was, uh, uh, -3/4 plus 3/8 inch? That would be determined back in the  
41 sample prep lab. All of that data then would come into the met control department and  
42 then would be disseminated out to the let's say client departments like the acid plant or  
43 the furnace plant or the secondary materials department. And then guys like me in my  
44 initial assignment would also aggregate that data, produce monthly reports, uh, produce  
45 weekly reports in terms of, you know, the zinc and sinter for the week was out of spec,  
46 uh, x out of y times. Uh. Why was that? Well, I'd make a phone call to the sinter plant

1 and talk to the technical superintendent or the superintendent there. Were you having  
2 problems? What was the deal? Write that up. You know, you can see how that goes. So,  
3 yeah. It would, it would depend on the type of work to your specific question that, or the  
4 type of, of quality control parameter that you were looking for as to where it would go  
5 within the met control department.

6  
7 (0:49:11)

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about Bob Sunderman?

10  
11 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, my.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** His, his rise to be a plant manager.

14  
15 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, wow. Yeah. Um. Yeah. Bob, uh, as I said, Bob started out  
16 as the, uh, manager of the, uh, sample, sampling and sample prep group within met  
17 control. From there, Bob I believe went to the furnace plant as superintendent if I'm not  
18 mistaken. Let me think about that a second. Eh. I'm not sure. I'm not sure where he was.  
19 I'm not sure where he went within the smelter when he left met control. He may have  
20 gone to the roaster plant. Anyway, I, what I'm trying to think of is where was Bob when  
21 the smelter closed in '79, and I don't remember. I don't know where he was then. He had  
22 to have been. I think he was still in Monaca. I don't think he was out in St. Louis yet. But  
23 eventually, he was, he, he ended up in St. Louis. Uh. He had to be in St. Louis. Had to be  
24 in St. Louis at the time. What I don't remember is when that trans, when his transition  
25 from Monaca to St. Louis occurred. I, I've lost that. The reason why I think he had to be  
26 in St. Louis at the time was because it was Bob convincing others that the now closed  
27 smelter post December of '79 should, could, could be a viable operation and should be  
28 reopened. And I don't think he did that from Monaca. I think he did that from St. Louis.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Did he have the idea as to how it could be viable?

31  
32 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Um. Streamlining it, you know, and downsizing it.  
33 When I first started at, at, uh, St. Joe, I think the smelter had a quarter of a million ton of  
34 zinc equivalent capacity, uh, which is huge, uh, there's only one smelter that I know of  
35 today that has anything close to that, uh, and that's, uh, a smelter up in British Columbia  
36 that I think has 300,000 metric ton a year of capacity. But Bob's idea was to, uh, was to  
37 shrink the size of the smelter number one, uh, and, uh, uh, and cause it to operate as much  
38 as possible in recycled materials. Getting back to Bob Sunderman, I, I, I still don't recall  
39 what took him to St. Louis, but I'm fairly certain he was there when the smelter closed in  
40 '79. I don't recall, although I believe, what his steps were between the met control  
41 department, which would've been like in '67 to what took him to St. Louis in '70,  
42 whenever that was. I believe he was superintendent of one or more departments within,  
43 within the St. Joe, uh, structure. It would've been St. Joe Minerals at that time. Uh. And I  
44 think, I think it was probably both the roaster plant and then probably the furnace plant.  
45 Those were normally the, the sort of the stepping stones, uh, path that people followed.  
46 Um. But I think he, he did go to, to St. Louis, which is where St. Joe Minerals was

1 headquartered at, at that time. Uh. Previously, when it was St. Joe, uh, Lead, uh, and even  
2 while it was St. Joe Minerals for a while, it was in New York on 250 Park Avenue. Um.  
3 But I think, uh, an individual by the name of, uh, John Wright, who was president of St.  
4 Joe Minerals at the time or chairman of St. Joe Minerals at the time, uh, probably brought  
5 Bob to St. Louis and, like I said, again, I don't know exactly what it was, uh, why. But I  
6 think it was then shortly after the smelter closed in '79 that Bob, after a lot of the old, old,  
7 old St. Joe Lead management people were no longer in the organization and John Wright  
8 who was, uh, a very young, uh, man for his, his stature within the company, uh, I think it  
9 was Bob that convinced John Wright that there's an opportunity to do something here.  
10 Uh. So, let's take all of this huge infrastructure that we have, this sinter plant that has  
11 three different lines, three different quality lines of sintering and let's just shrink that  
12 down to one line and let's, let's just use instead of, I don't remember how many sinter  
13 machines there were at the time, uh, instead of using all of those eight or 10 sinter  
14 machines, uh, let's just two. And or whatever the number was. Uh. And instead of 17  
15 furnaces, let's just use x, a subset of those 17. The ones that were the best producers or  
16 the whatever. Um. And let's make a, let's make a go of it. Uh. Let's start using as much  
17 recycled materials we can and that was the process through which the ultimate  
18 relationship with Horsehead Industries occurred. Uh. And I don't know how Bob  
19 Sunderman got to know some of the New Jersey Zinc people, but the ultimate connection  
20 would've been Bob Sunderman to Dave Carpenter. Dave Carpenter, again, no longer  
21 with us. Um. Dave was an owner and the president of Horsehead Industries, and  
22 Horsehead Industries at its peak was a, uh, a billion-dollar-a-year company. It was a large  
23 conglomerate. Uh, uh. The zinc piece of it was the zinc part of the old Gulf & Western  
24 Company. Uh. But Bob Sunderman and Dave Carpenter somehow gravitated towards one  
25 another and because Dave Carpenter had a process that he was getting going that took  
26 what was ultimately to become defined by the Environmental Protection Agency as a  
27 listed hazardous waste, electric arc furnace dust, and process that into a zinc rich stream.  
28 Well, where does the zinc rich stream go? Well, it has to go to a zinc smelter. And, and,  
29 and that's what ultimately brought Bob Sunderman and Dave Carpenter together. Uh.  
30 Bob during this period of time was president. Uh. St. Joe Minerals had divided the  
31 company into product lines. There was a president of St. Joe Zinc, and there was a  
32 president of St. Joe Lead. Bob was president of St. Joe Zinc. Uh. This was after the  
33 smelter was restarted in '79. Uh. And, uh, Bob was working this mini, now, Monaca plant  
34 design operation to process more and more recycled material and of course Monaca  
35 always processed recycled materials, even way back when I first started there in '64 and,  
36 uh, I ultimately became general foreman of the department that handled all of the  
37 secondary materials. Uh. But I guess my point is that, uh, Bob saw a trend to capturing  
38 more and more zinc units from recycled materials and here's Dave Carpenter providing a  
39 recycled material stream containing zinc, which ultimately lead to the asset purchase in  
40 1987, where Horsehead Industries bought the zinc interest of St. Joe.

41  
42 (1:00:21)

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** When, when, uh, St. Joe reopens in 1980, it's still, it opens as St. Joe  
45 Resources.

46



1 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yes, yes.  
2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** And then in '81 Fluor Corporation buys it, but it continues to operate  
4 as St. Joe Resources.  
5  
6 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. [coughing] No.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Then, it's not until '87 that it's the Horsehead...  
9  
10 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Puts together the ZCA.  
13  
14 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Fluor Corporation purchased. Uh. That helped me. That  
15 helped me a lot. I, I shouldn't have forgot that. Fluor Corporation purchased St. Joe  
16 Minerals long before that.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Before the shutdown?  
19  
20 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Because. Yes. And the reason I say that is  
21 because it was. John Wright rose to power during the Fluor ownership, and it was John's,  
22 um, desire for more power that ultimately lead in '87 to Fluor exploding the St. Joe  
23 Minerals Company into various pieces and selling 'em off. Fluor owned St. Joe Minerals,  
24 would've purchased St. Joe Minerals, I believe, prior to the smelter closure in '79. I'm  
25 fairly certain that's the case. Bob Sunderman and his, uh, his rise through, uh, various, uh,  
26 uh, stages in his career.  
27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** For me, what's most important is what was his contribution to the  
29 reopening of the plant?  
30  
31 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, well, uh, again, I, I think it was Bob, uh, as, as I recall that  
32 had the foresight, uh, to not give up on Monaca, but rather to transform Monaca, which  
33 had to have come, now that I think about it, from his experience in departments other  
34 than the met control department at Monaca, probably more notably the furnace plant. Uh.  
35 And, and I'm, I'm relatively certain now as, as I'm thinking about it that Bob was, uh,  
36 probably at shutdown superintendent of the furnace plant. And it may have been when,  
37 uh, now that the, the plant is no longer operating and there's no longer a position for Bob  
38 at Monaca that John Wright prob, most likely now in St. Louis says, "Hey, Bob, how  
39 about coming out here?" That makes perfect sense to me. Uh. And, and it would've been  
40 then Bob and John working together. John having the stick, if you will, to make it happen  
41 once all of the other, uh, once all the other St. Joe people, older St. Joe management  
42 people were no longer in, in play or in, in the, in the picture to make this happen and to  
43 give Bob the freedom to go ahead and do it. So, yes, uh, Pierpont. I had forgotten about  
44 Pierpont, but yes. Pierpont turned out to be a very, very rich, uh, zinc deposit. Not very  
45 big, but very rich, very high grade. Uh. And by mining methods was able to high-grade it  
46 even further. In other words, initially maybe cherry pick the really good, the best stuff,

1 uh, and send, uh, to Monaca a very rich, uh, uh, concentrate. Uh. But then make up the  
2 difference with like I said secondary materials or other forms of zinc bearing materials  
3 and that, that was Bob's vision. That was Bob Sunderman's vision. I mean, he, he knew  
4 that, he believed that that could happen and somewhere along the way that vision  
5 morphed into a relationship with Dave Carpenter.

6  
7 (1:05:09)

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Of Horsehead?

10  
11 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Of Horsehead Industries.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-hmm.

14  
15 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yes. Which then created the opportunity to transform Monaca  
16 into the facility that it was prior to its most recent closure.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you just comment a little bit about Bob Sunderman as a  
19 person?

20  
21 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, yeah. Uh. Well, first of all, I knew, uh, he, he and I lived,  
22 uh, uh, for a while about five doors from each other. Uh. I helped him build his house and  
23 he helped me build my house five doors up. Our families, our girls played together. Uh. I  
24 knew his wife, Aggie, she passed away from breast cancer. Um. Bob was a, he was an  
25 energetic, he was a hardworking guy. Uh. A lot of fun to be with. Uh. Sort of laid back.  
26 Uh. You know, he wasn't the gregarious, outgoing guy. But you get him in a group, I can  
27 recall any number of, sitting around playing poker, where all of a sudden Bob Sunderman  
28 would come up with a story and everybody would fall off their chairs laughing. You  
29 didn't find that happening too often. But to me, uh, like I said, he and I were probably  
30 about as close as two people can get, and, uh, I, uh, uh, actually it was he that ultimately,  
31 well, it was Dave Carpenter and then it was Bob through Dave Carpenter that eventually  
32 brought me back to the company after I left and did the five years or so that I did in my  
33 later stages of my career. Um. I miss Bob. I miss him a lot, and he and I had a lot of good  
34 times together. He was the kind of guy that you wanted to have at your side, as was Dave  
35 Carpenter, and I knew Dave very, very well too.

36  
37 (1:07:41)

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** You had mentioned before that secondary materials, using secondary  
40 materials had started prior to the shutdown.

41  
42 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, yeah. Secondary materials was in existence, uh, right from  
43 the get go...

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** From the time...

46

1 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** As, as long as I...

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** From the time the plant opened in 1930 or...

4

5 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No, no. No. It was from, from as long as I can remember, and

6 my guess is it probably goes back well beyond when I started in '67.

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** In 1974, you moved into the secondary materials department as a

9 technical superintendent. Could you please describe the function of the secondary

10 materials department within the scope of plant operations and how and why the emphasis

11 on secondary materials shifted over time?

12

13 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** What do you mean shifted? Do you mean became more and

14 more important?

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Yes.

17

18 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure. Um. The answer to the second question first. Uh. It was

19 a cheaper source of raw material. Uh. And, uh, it was cheaper to process. You didn't have

20 to put as much energy into a unit of zinc coming from secondary materials as you did a

21 unit of zinc coming from mined concentrate.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did these secondary materials typically come from and what

24 were they?

25

26 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** They, basically, they came from the same people that bought

27 the zinc. That's the circle. Galvanizers. Hot dip galvanizers. Continuous galvanizers. Uh.

28 They produce a zinc waste in the form of skimmings, in the form of drosses that are

29 somewhat oxidized forms of zinc, but more metallic than, than oxidic. Uh. And, uh,

30 there, the, the galvanizers didn't know what to do with it, what would they do. They

31 couldn't put it back in their galvanizing pots or baths. Uh. So, we purchased it from them.

32 Um. The secondary materials department, generally speaking, uh, served I would say

33 three specific functions. Uh. First of all, it handled byproducts of the smelter itself.

34 Several different types of byproducts. You may have heard the term blue powder. Blue

35 powder was, is, was, uh, is the zinc that escaped the condensers of the electrothermic

36 furnaces and was scrubbed out, uh, uh, prior to the, the carbon monoxide gas stream

37 being the coming and going elsewhere within the smelter. The secondary materials

38 department took blue powder and briquetted it into little almond shape or pillow block

39 shape briquettes. Dried it. Then briquetted it along with other secondary materials that the

40 department processed from the smelter. The smelter produced a lot of other things as well

41 that had zinc in it. Well, remember I told you about getting the squeal out of the pig?

42 That's getting the squeal out of the pig. Taking these materials, processing them to a form

43 that the smelter, that could be reintroduced into the smelter, to take another crack at

44 getting this zinc that the smelter missed the first time out the second time and they took

45 various forms, uh, blue powder, skimmings when, uh, zinc was being casted in the

46 product. Uh. All of that stuff ended up at the secondary, within the secondary materials

1 department. Blue powder was briquetted and returned to the furnaces. Skimmings and  
2 other purchased materials from the galvanizers would be processed through what was  
3 really nothing more than a classification system, a size classification system. And  
4 fortuitously the real fine material from this system tended to be more oxidic in nature and  
5 the larger material tended to be more metallic in nature. So, you could separate those two,  
6 send the metallics right straight back to the furnace plant because they didn't have to be  
7 converted into anything else. They could be fed through one of the bins in the furnace  
8 plant into the furnaces and take the undersize, the fines as we used to call it, secondary  
9 fines and either send that to the sinter plant to be mixed in with the sinter mix and  
10 returned to the furnaces or to the briquette plant and mixed in with the blue powder to  
11 form the briquettes to go to the furnaces. That was the secondary materials department in  
12 a nutshell. Uh. And, uh, it was a fairly large department.

13  
14 (1:13:24)

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** How many people worked in it?

17  
18 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Well, when I was general foreman, uh, I had like 11 or 12  
19 foremen and over a hundred hour, hourly employees.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Is this around, around the clock staff department as well?

22  
23 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, yeah. Oh, oh. Well, yeah, yeah. The, the briquette plant.  
24 Yes. The briquette plant and the, uh, the classification. Sorry. We had one other function  
25 there that just recurred to me. Uh. And that is, uh, we had a, what we called the dross  
26 furnaces, where you were, we were taking principally purchased secondaries in the form  
27 of large chunks of zinc maybe several ton each and melting those in a, in an induction  
28 furnace and taking the, the melted product and granulating it. Uh. Did you take high  
29 school chemistry? Do you remember making hydrogen using zinc and, uh, either  
30 probably hydrochloric acid or sulfuric acid? Mossy zinc, the stuff, the, the solid stuff that  
31 you put in the reactor. That's what the granules looked like. They sort of looked like  
32 popcorn. And those too could be sent to the furnace plant and directly been fed. So, that  
33 plus, uh, I mean, I, I seem to recall our budget down there, which most of it was  
34 purchasing the materials from galvanizers, our budget when I was there was probably  
35 \$30-40 million a year. It was, it was a sizable operation.

36  
37 (1:15:14)

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there technical innovations that came out of St. Joe for  
40 operating the secondary materials plant?

41  
42 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Mmm. Oh, I, I don't, I don't think there was anything  
43 groundbreaking. I mean, certainly there were, I mean, we rebuilt the entire department  
44 while I was there, rebuilt the classification circuit, uh, added dross furnace capacity, um,  
45 liquation capacity. We did various things there that improved the operation of the  
46 secondary materials department, but I wouldn't say there was anything game changing

1 like [clears throat] how the plant got from only being able to produce zinc oxide to being  
2 able to produce metal. The Weaton-Najarian condenser. Nah. Nothing like that.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of your biggest challenges when you were the, um,  
5 general foreman of the secondary materials department from 1977 to 1980?

6  
7 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Personnel management. Um. We had a tough crew down  
8 there. Uh. And it, I would say that it was probably notorious.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Why that department more so than in other...

11  
12 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I don't know. I have no idea. It was that way before I got  
13 there. It was probably that way when I left. [laughs] Uh. There, there was some, there  
14 was some tough, tough hombres that, uh, I don't know, bucked authority. Um. I mean, I,  
15 dealing with, with personnel type issues was probably the way that I spent most of my  
16 time when I was general foreman. That and, and, you know, scheduling and budget  
17 management. That sort of thing, but, uh, I did a lot of babysitting when I was there.  
18 [laughs] It was an important part of my career, but it wasn't the most enjoyable.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** You were in secondary materials when the plant was shut down in  
21 December of 1979.

22  
23 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yes.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any inkling that the shutdown was coming and if so  
26 that it would only be temporary?

27  
28 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I had no idea that it would be temporary. Um. I think it.  
29 Knowing what I knew about the, uh, the operation, the, uh, and knowing what I knew,  
30 although much less at the time about the zinc industry generally and, and how other zinc  
31 facilities were structured and maybe what their margins were and so on. It became  
32 increasingly clear, I guess to me, that Monaca as it was constituted at the time was, uh,  
33 one that would have difficulty surviving the long haul. I didn't know it was coming. I  
34 mean I obviously knew about it at some point prior to the actual time that it occurred  
35 because I was responsible for making sure that certain things happened or didn't happen.  
36 Uh. But no. I, I mean, I didn't, I didn't see it coming any earlier than I don't know maybe  
37 a month or so or two months before it happened.

38  
39 (1:19:34)

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** How much notice were the employees given that the, in your  
42 department, that the plant was going to shut down?

43  
44 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I, I don't recall. I don't know. I, I'd be guessing. I would  
45 imagine it was on the order of at least a month, but I don't know that. I don't remember.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Was your job terminated with the shutdown or did they keep you  
2 working on something until the plant reopened?

3  
4 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. I was terminated.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So, what did you do at that point?

7  
8 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Um. In, uh, February of, uh, 1980, uh, I went to work for St.  
9 Joe Minerals, uh, as, uh, a director of environmental planning, I think something like that.  
10 It's on my CV. Um. There was an individual at Monaca that was I think, he was sort of  
11 the recruiting guy, technical recruiter at the time and, you know, he was aware of certain  
12 openings within the organization and a fellow by the name of Gary Welch, who, uh, also  
13 was a, a former, uh, Joetown [laughs] individual, and he will refer to it this day as  
14 Joetown. I can tell you that. In fact, I know he does because I saw him about a year ago.  
15 He lives in, uh, the Villages in Florida now, and I visited with him. Um. He was looking  
16 for an individual. Gary was, Gary was director of environmental planning. That was it.  
17 He was director of environmental planning for St. Joe Minerals, and he was looking for  
18 an individual to assist him in the corporate environmental affairs. And you can look on  
19 my CV as to what my title was at that point, but, uh, I went to work for Gary. But I  
20 stayed in Monaca because even though Monaca was closed, there were still certain  
21 environmental obligations, like there was a, a wastewater discharge that still occurred and  
22 there was a permit associated with that that had to be maintained. Uh. And there were, uh,  
23 other things and, and in fact it became even more important when Bob's vision started to  
24 take place because now we had to start thinking about, you know, a broader suite of  
25 compliance issues at Monaca. So, although that wasn't known, at least by me, when I  
26 hooked up with, with St. Joe Minerals and Gary Welch, uh, it ultimately became, uh, the  
27 justification for someone with the environmental background to be there. Uh. But, yeah,  
28 so I ended up, uh, going to work for Gary, who was in Clayton, Missouri, St. Louis and,  
29 uh, I stayed here and that's when I started traveling. Uh. And since then having put about  
30 2 million miles on it.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** So, when you stayed on working for corporate, what was involved  
33 with that job?

34  
35 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** You know, I, I was in, uh, the title was environmental control  
36 specialist and it was corporate responsibility. So it entailed all of the, uh, corporate or St.  
37 Joe operations, St. Joe Minerals operations at the time. Uh. In addition to Monaca, it  
38 would've been all the other facilities, the mines, the lead smelter, uh, the gold operations,  
39 uh, a little bit in the coal, uh, and some of the international, although I didn't get as  
40 involved in the international at that time. Um. But, uh, the specific compliance facility,  
41 uh, activities at Monaca, but then, uh, regulatory analysis, uh, legislative analysis and I  
42 mean at the, at the federal level, uh, regulatory analysis, environmental regulations, uh,  
43 including dissecting a, a proposed regulation when it come out, uh, putting together, uh,  
44 public comment to be submitted to the agencies, uh, occasionally testifying before  
45 agencies, uh, even before Congress once, uh, and trying to be the, uh, trying to anticipate  
46 and mitigate to the extent mitigation was necessary, uh, environmental impacts on any of

1 the affected facilities within St. Joe. A lot of that was done actually through trade  
2 association work. Uh. It started out as the American Mining Congress, uh, and it  
3 eventually became known as, uh, uh, National Mining Association, which it is known as  
4 today. Um. We spent a lot of, uh, effort within these kinds of groups. Not only did we do  
5 it on, on the regulatory side, uh, environmental regulatory side, but we also did it on the  
6 health and safety side as well. Uh. And actually the company, uh, you know, uh, spent a  
7 lot of money in terms of supporting these kinds of organizations. Uh. International Lead  
8 Zinc Research Organization was one. ILZRO. Uh. Uh. A, a world, worldwide as the  
9 name suggests, uh, place where, uh, anyone with an interest, uh, you know, could have a  
10 seat at the table for the appropriate, uh, amount of dues. And really work on, you know,  
11 uh, really, uh, important projects that would potentially modify, you know, the scope and  
12 path going forward. Uh. Again, we did a lot of that. I did a lot of the regulatory side  
13 through the American Mining Congress. Uh. And, uh, in, uh, attended many, many, many  
14 meetings, uh, both with my own, with that group and, and, uh, people like me from all  
15 the, the other companies, ASARCO, AMAX, you know, you name it. Uh. Uh. And, uh,  
16 visiting, uh, on an ongoing basis with, uh, the regulatory personnel themselves. Uh. And  
17 talking about issues, uh, that either they were looking for information on, uh, or we were  
18 looking to, uh, either provide them information or insight in, as to how this would impact  
19 and affect what we do. That was a pretty intensive, pretty intensive activity and  
20 eventually it, it got to the point where, uh, Gary before me and then after Gary, uh, we  
21 took on, you know, chairmanships of these various committees within these trade  
22 associations.

23  
24 (1:27:44)

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** There seems to have been a pretty large leap from what you were  
27 doing in secondary materials when the plant closed to the plant reopening and you having  
28 all these responsibility for regulatory issues and environmental affairs. Did you need to  
29 get any kind of additional training or education to be able to jump into that?

30  
31 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Well, some. I mean, uh, there, you know, there's, there are  
32 various types of, uh, you know, secondary type education and I don't mean in, uh, formal  
33 university sense, but I mean like, uh, you know, lawyers have continuing education  
34 courses, uh, doctors have 'em, various people have 'em. Technical people have 'em. Uh.  
35 Not only technical people, but technical people with environmental responsibilities have  
36 'em. Uh. I remember one that I took, uh, but I don't know that I used it a lot, uh, was, uh,  
37 on environmental impact statements. Uh. Actually environmental impact statements  
38 aren't used that often anymore. I mean, uh, well, I shouldn't say anymore. They weren't  
39 used in the settings that I was involved in. They've been talked about most recently I  
40 supposed in, uh, you know, the pipelines, uh, from, from, uh, Canada. Uh. But it's not  
41 that often, uh, that we got involved in that. But anyway, I mean, through things like that.  
42 Sure. I took short courses. Uh. But no additional formal training. Uh. It was really on the  
43 job type stuff. It was, interaction with Gary, interactions with, uh, others from other  
44 companies that I was meeting. Several of which are super great friends today. One lives  
45 not too far from here over in Cleveland. Uh. So, that was the process. But it was, it was

1 substantial. It was a change number one. Uh. And it was, uh, well, it was, uh, it was some  
2 additional responsibilities.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the key environmental and regulatory issues the  
5 company was facing in the 1980s and what measures did they take to address them? And  
6 specifically please address the impact of the 1972 Clean Water Act.

7  
8 (1:30:28)

9  
10 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. I anticipated you wanting to talk about that. So, I've  
11 thought about that before this session. Um. I would say that, that the Monaca facility,  
12 given the technology that was involved, pyrometallurgical technology, uh, faced more air  
13 related environmental issues than it did water. However, the '72, uh, Clean Water Act,  
14 which ultimately mandated what is known as BAT or best available, uh, technology for  
15 existing wastewater discharges. It was actually one of the, uh, environment regulatory  
16 programs that I worked directly with the EPA on, uh, post, uh, well after I, after 1980.  
17 Because it was about that time that, uh, that rulemaking was underway for zinc smelters.  
18 And so, it turns out Monaca had a state of the art wastewater treatment plant. Uh. And in  
19 fact became what would be ultimately mandated in terms of, uh, as it turns out the, the,  
20 the best available technology for, uh, zinc smelters was not a number. It was a  
21 technology. You had to apply this technology. Because EPA concluded that if you  
22 applied that technology, it was capable of meeting the numbers that they needed to meet  
23 for terms, for purposes of, uh, water quality protections. And so, our plant and several  
24 plants in the various industries like ours became best available control technology. I think  
25 there was just one little twist in the final regulation that was added and it was a little  
26 polishing step. Um. I think it was through the use of. Well first of all, the technology that  
27 was used at Monaca was classical lime and settle. So, basically, you took wastewater in,  
28 you raised the pH. When you raised the pH, the metals precipitate out as hydroxides. You  
29 take the solids out of the bottom of the reactant vessel, generally a clarifier, uh, and  
30 thicken it, separate the water from the sludge. The water is clean. It discharges to the  
31 river. The sludge has the baddies in it. Well, guess what, it had some zinc in it. Gee,  
32 where did that go? Back to the smelter. [laughs] Uh. So, that was really the effect of the  
33 Clean Water Act, uh, on the Monaca smelter. Now, the Clean Water Act did a lot of other  
34 things too. It wasn't just technology forcing. Um. It, uh, it required. It, it gave the, the  
35 agency some very, very, very broad enforcement powers. Let's put it that way. Uh. By in  
36 large, uh, if you kept your wastewater, if Monaca kept its wastewater treatment plant  
37 operating properly, maintained it, which by in large happened, then things were good. So,  
38 uh, now there were some problems in, in later years, uh, at Monaca, uh, with, with water  
39 treatment. Uh. Things didn't go quite right. Uh. And, uh, you may have been exposed to  
40 this in, in your research, but, uh, uh, Monaca was sued, uh, by a, uh, environmental group  
41 and we settled that suit, uh, agreeing to do certain things.

42  
43 (1:35:06)

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** What things did you have to do?

46



1 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Basically, better maintenance of the wastewater plant. That  
2 started to slide a little bit. And, uh, it was a, you know, it was a bit of a wakeup call. Uh.  
3 And as I recall, there were, there were some, uh, there were some fines levied as a result  
4 of that. But water, water really wasn't much of an issue at Monaca in my opinion. Air  
5 was far more of an issue.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** That's our next topic.

8  
9 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Let's go.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Let's talk about, uh, what were some of the key causes of air  
12 pollution from the plant and what's steps did you need to take to remedy those as the  
13 regulations became, um, stricter?

14  
15 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Uh. We're going to have to compartmentalize this discussion a  
16 little bit. We're going to talk about, um, specific types of pollutants, and where, what  
17 portions of the plant they were associated. And let's talk about sulfur dioxide first. Sulfur  
18 dioxide, um, was one of the very earliest pollutants that were, that was, um, uh,  
19 designated by EPA, standards set by EPA, uh, as a criteria pollutant and a criteria  
20 pollutant requires then the individual states to develop what's known as a SIP or state  
21 implementation plan. The state implementation plan for sulfur dioxide was developed,  
22 uh, many years prior to me getting involved in environmental affairs and in fact, there  
23 was a specific, uh, provision in the SIP regulations relative to Monaca and the Monaca  
24 sinter plant. And I don't remember the exact numbers, but interestingly it was, you were  
25 allowed to emit x number of pounds of sulfur dioxide per so many units of calcine  
26 consumed in the sinter plant. That was the standard and, I mean, you can, you can, you  
27 can look up the specific number. It's in the code of federal regulations. Um. So that was  
28 the sinter plant source, and I'll come back to the control issues here in a minute. The other  
29 source of sulfur dioxide, the other major source of sulfur dioxide at Monaca was the  
30 power plant. Um. And the power plant had a specific, uh, regulatory provision in the state  
31 implementation plan, and basically what it said was you can emit so many pounds of  
32 sulfur dioxide per so many BTU units consumed by the power plant. So, basically it was  
33 a question of, you know, how many BTU units are coming in in this coal and what rate is  
34 that coal being used, which translates into how much sulfur dioxide can be emitted. Um.  
35 Low-sulfur coal back in the sort of the beginnings of this dialogue, the '80s, wasn't  
36 something that you, with all that available. Uh. Most of it was western coal and getting it  
37 from the west to the east, I, I don't understand the transportation issues or the  
38 impediments to the transportation back then, but it just wasn't something that happened a  
39 lot. So, the Monaca power plant was basically faced with, uh, and, and used eastern coal.  
40 Well eastern coal is not low-sulfur coal. Eastern coal is typically higher sulfur coal,  
41 bituminous coal. Um. And so that was a problem. That was a point. Let's say for the sake  
42 of discussion, a point of noncompliance. The power plant stack for SO<sub>2</sub>. The sinter plant  
43 stack for, the 400-foot stack for SO<sub>2</sub> wasn't a problem and in fact when we, and now  
44 we're getting into control. Well, uh, yeah. Well, let me stay, stay on the power plant for a  
45 second. The power plant from the standpoint of control. The, the classical control  
46 approach with other power plants was some sort of an alkali scrubbing system. Those

1 things were problems. Uh. What do you do with the alkali? It didn't have any zinc in it,  
2 so you couldn't consume it in the smelter. You had to find a landfill or whatever. Um. So,  
3 St. Joe and EPA and the, was it the Corps? No. Not the Corp of Engineers. Uh. Shoot. I  
4 can't think who the other party was. There was a, there was a triparty agreement to pilot  
5 something called the citrate process, which was a development process for recovering or  
6 for removing sulfur dioxide from power plant gasses. Well, I don't know. A million  
7 dollars or a couple million dollars or, well, I don't know how much money was spent on  
8 it. It didn't work. Uh. So you still have this noncompliant point. So, now what do we do?  
9 Uh. The Department of the Interior was the, uh, was the other group that was involved in  
10 it. So, now what do you do? Well, now is about the time when the eight or 10 or 12,  
11 however many there were sinter machines start shrinking down to a couple. And the  
12 roaster plant, which was processing all of this ore, is starting to process less and less and  
13 less and less ore. So, there is less sulfur in the, in the calcine coming over. Less calcine  
14 period coming over. More secondaries coming in it. So, there is less sulfur dioxide from  
15 the sinter plant, but there's more sulfur dioxide from the power plant. Uh. This is  
16 something I worked on for years. In fact, I worked on it, brought it to a not so satisfactory  
17 conclusion, left it lie, re, brought it back in another incarnation years later. It was the  
18 concept of creating a bubble. And basically saying, okay, out of this bubble comes  
19 something that is, if you take compliance at the sinter plant and compliance at the power  
20 plant, add 'em together coming out of that bubble will be nothing more than that. Well,  
21 that sounds very simple, but believe me [laughs] in order to make that happen is  
22 incredibly difficult. And I don't mean physically difficult. I mean getting it through the  
23 regulatory agency.

24  
25 (1:43:43)

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Negotiating.

28  
29 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh my god. Uh. Jim Reese, if, you interviewed Jim, right?  
30 Jim probably talked about that or may have talked about that. Uh. That was incredible.  
31 Uh. It's, uh, we. We had some very good allies to that through the local, it was DER at  
32 that time. But DEP office now. Uh. Ken Bowman and Joe Pezzi, uh, Ken is now in  
33 Kansas City. Uh. And Joe I think is still working at his consulting group, uh, up in, uh, I  
34 think, uh, up in the North Hills some place. But anyway, uh, getting it through DEP  
35 Harrisburg was just incredible. We spent hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to do  
36 the things that, trying to cross the roadblock and then the next roadblock and then a new  
37 roadblock and then two more new roadblocks after that. Clearly Harrisburg didn't want it  
38 to happen. Uh. But we crossed 'em and, uh, I, uh, we met. I met personally with members  
39 of the Environmental Quality Board. I have testified before the Environmental Quality  
40 Board. I've met with the, uh, local, uh, politicians. Um. All of which trying to garner the  
41 political support for this because, uh, it meant a lot to Monaca. It meant a lot to, uh, cost  
42 reduction. Uh. It meant a lot to the viability of Bob's plan going forward. Um. It turns out  
43 we got it through the state, but then you got to get it through EPA, and that didn't happen.  
44 And in fact, EPA sued us, and we went to court, had a trial in, uh, federal district court of  
45 western district of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh. Uh. And, uh, it turns out we settled it prior to  
46 the judge rendering an opinion. Um. And I don't remember the details of the settlement. I

1 remember the fine. Uh. What were the details of the settlement? Oh, uh, yeah. I do  
2 remember. I do remember. What facilitated it, and this was Bob Sunderman again. What  
3 facilitated the settlement was right about that time, natural gas became deregulated and  
4 all of a sudden it became more cost effective to use. So, for a, uh, a fairly modest  
5 investment, the power plant at Monaca was retrofitted with the ability to also burn natural  
6 gas. So, what you could do then, and, and with the proper analyzers on the stacks looking  
7 for SO<sub>2</sub>, you could modulate the amount of natural gas that you were burning based upon  
8 the amount of sulfur that was coming through in the coal. So, as the coal sulfur went  
9 down, natural gas burning went down. As the coal sulfur went up, natural gas burning  
10 went up to balance out and maintain the limit the, the SIP limit on the power plant. So,  
11 the dream of a bubble never became ultimate reality even though it, frankly, it prevented  
12 the state from enforcing against the company because the state regulations had that  
13 provision in it, which is why the Feds ultimately sued. Because the Fed didn't have that.  
14 That was the fun part. That was, uh, that was the SO<sub>2</sub> part of the sinter plant and the  
15 furnace, uh, and the, and the, uh, the power plant.

16  
17 (1:48:22)

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the other major pollutants that you had to  
20 address?

21  
22 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Continuing with the, uh, the air related issues, we talked  
23 about SO<sub>2</sub> at the sinter plant and, uh, power plant. The two other pollutants and then we  
24 can talk about sources. The two other pollutants were just particulate, dirt, dust particles,  
25 little, you know, particles, uh, and lead. Now, lead came later in the life of Monaca. So,  
26 let's talk about that last. Um. Lead as a, as a major issue came later. Uh. So, let's talk  
27 about, uh, particulate pollutants. Um. Because of the technology that was involved,  
28 pyrometallurgical technology, heat, handling of, uh, bulk materials, dry bulk materials.  
29 Now, dry hot bulk materials, the tendency is to create a lot of dust. Dust, fume, and the  
30 like. Hot gasses. Hot dusty gasses are very difficult to control. You require either large  
31 hoods over whatever the offending source is, point source is, or you require very, very  
32 high airflows or you require both, and in addition to that you require very, very, large  
33 collecting devices to collect and filter the dust once you've captured it from these gases or  
34 from this air before you can discharge the air clean. Now, Monaca had some very large,  
35 uh, dust collection devices. However, even in the final configuration of Monaca, the  
36 sinter plant and the furnace plant were pretty much the way they were many years ago.  
37 Although the sinter plant did have one major change. The sinter plant eventually went to  
38 one big sinter machine, which was a little easier to control. But the, the mere fact that you  
39 are handling these, these hot, uh, materials and a lot of it creates a huge challenge to try  
40 and collect all of this stuff in the air that could get away from you and the structure of  
41 Monaca just, in my opinion, wasn't particularly amenable to that sort of thing. Uh. I  
42 mean, what could you do? Well, to go to the extreme I suppose, you know, you could  
43 vent the entire furnace plant as an example. Uh. You wouldn't do that and survive  
44 economically. Uh. It would just be out of sight. You probably couldn't do that at the  
45 sinter plant either. And so, Monaca was constantly fighting these, you know, a, a little  
46 hiccup in the operation and all of a sudden you have a plume that you had to deal with or

1 a little hiccup with, uh, a collection device and all of a sudden you have a dust cloud that  
2 you have to deal with. We were constantly fighting that. Constantly fighting that. And,  
3 and during my tenure even as with, with Horsehead, uh, I mean, we had, we had order  
4 after order after order that we were negotiating with the state, uh, on, on those issues. Uh.  
5 And, and, and I would bet that left to continue, uh, it would eventually become a more  
6 serious, uh, enforcement. Probably not by the state, probably by the Feds. So, that was  
7 the, that was the particulate air issue. Now, let's talk about lead. Um. And I don't  
8 remember the exact time of this. It would've been prior to my retirement, which was  
9 August of '10, probably going back maybe three or four years prior to my retirement. The  
10 EPA determined that the, that the, the number that the states had to reach, had to maintain  
11 as part of their SIP for lead was to be changed tenfold. Um. And that, when that  
12 happened, that almost immediately put this air basin into a state of noncompliance, which  
13 meant that the state was obligated to, number one, identify the sources, source or sources.  
14 And number two, put in place a plan that once achieved, would bring the air basin into  
15 compliance with this new standard. And I don't remember the numbers exactly, but it  
16 was a major, major reduction. Um. Well, again, hot materials, lots of 'em containing lead  
17 created a lead emission issue that I think if you dig back into the public documents you'll  
18 find that the, the way in which the state demonstrates to EPA that this air basin becomes  
19 lead compliant with the new standard is by the curtailment, the shutdown of Monaca.  
20 That's pretty much that.

21

22 (1:55:45)

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please comment on the environmental issues as they  
25 pertain to industrial health, people who are working...

26

27 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Oh, yeah.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** There around these materials...

30

31 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** And efforts. Forget about state and federal compliance...

34

35 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Industrial hygiene type stuff.

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** But you've got people working there...

38

39 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Around this.

42

43 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure, sure.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what did the plant do to minimize the hazards to the  
46 employees?

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(1:56:17)

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure. Um. Well of course there's a, there's a large, uh, just as we talked about specific pollutants. There's, there's a lot of, uh, industrial hygiene, um, criteria or, or issues or potential issues. Let's say. I mean, there's exposure to, uh, to hot metals. Uh. There's lead. There's, uh, particulate. There, uh, dust. There's, uh, noise. Uh. And there's generally just certain training requirements. Uh. The training, um, under the, uh, under the old, the most recently departed regime was pretty good. Uh. It, it was, it was upgraded substantially. Uh. Over the course of, uh, uh, Horsehead's, uh, ownership. Keep in mind also though that, you know, criteria were evolving rapidly over that period of time. So, I don't mean to suggest that prior to Horsehead it was shoddy and after Horsehead, it wasn't. Uh. There's this evolution that you have to keep in mind as well. Um. Probably the one that, uh, the one program that, that was very critically, uh, well, a lot of programs were critically and capably managed. But the one that, lead as an example, was, was a hazard, a risk in many locations within the smelter and, uh, there were postings, you know, you, you don't enter this area without the properly fitting and approved, uh, personal protection devices, respirator. Um. Confined spaces was another issue. You don't go in there. This is a confined space. It requires a permit to go in and in order to get a permit it requires this, this, this and this, which might include testing for oxygen deficiency. It might require testing for some other type of, uh, of, uh, hazardous gas, and I don't mean flammable. I mean, you know, some other type of gas, arsine. Uh. Back in the, uh, leach plant days, arsenic was a common contaminant and, uh, arsine gas was a concern, uh, in confined spaces back then. Uh. Once the leach plant was gone it was no longer an issue, but. [clears throat] Excuse me. Um. Personal protective equipment. Uh. Sort of the nuts and bolts. Uh, uh, meat and potatoes type stuff that you would maybe take for granted, uh, or things that, uh, that, uh, people were pretty, pretty strong about. Uh. Safety glasses with side shields, hardhat, uh, if you were around molten metal or in places where there's, uh, hot materials, flame retardant clothing. Uh. I don't recall whether there was a, yeah, there was a requirement. Safety-toed shoes. Um. But I think the facility as long as I can remember had an active industrial hygiene component to it. In fact, uh, if you interviewed him, you interviewed a board-certified, uh, industrial hygiene person, Jim Reese. Uh. Jim worked for me for any number of years and Jim, Jim had, uh, had that certification, as did some other people that worked for the company, uh, during this course of time. So, the, the techniques, the programs, the equipment was there. Sometimes it was difficult to get people to, uh, observe the practices that were necessary and appropriate. And that led to other issues. Um. Personnel issues.

(2:01:34)

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think was your biggest accomplishment as director of corporate and environmental programs?

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** Hmm. Back in that time, I would probably have to say, there was a, uh, May of 1980, EPA, EPA's regulations, the first core regulations on hazardous waste became effective. One of the things that was preliminarily identified as a hazardous

1 waste was mine tailings. Now, mine tailings, if you don't know what they are, are  
2 basically the waste that is separated from the valuable ore once it goes through the, the,  
3 uh, concentrator, the mill. And. [clears throat] These aren't just, you know, a bucket here  
4 and a bucket there. I mean, these are hundreds of acres and, and probably thousands of  
5 acre feet of these materials. When I was in that position, one of the things that, that we  
6 did in conjunction with the American Mining Congress was to, uh, with the EPA conduct  
7 a study of these tailings operations. [clears throat] And from which it was determined that  
8 these, these materials rightfully should not be characterized as hazardous waste. Had they  
9 been characterized as hazardous waste, the cost of managing them would've been  
10 astronomical and during, well, with, with metal prices, uh, as you may or may not know,  
11 metal prices are, they're commodities and so they fluctuate, uh, on the world market. Uh.  
12 You can't necessarily pass along your cost to the consumer. Uh. And it would probably  
13 have put the domestic, portions of the domestic mining business out, out of business. And  
14 so, I think that was, that was a significant accomplishment. A very significant  
15 accomplishment. And, and I was proud to be a part of that.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** When Horsehead Industries bought the Monaca plant in 1987 and  
18 merged it with New Jersey Zinc to form ZCA, Zinc Corporation of America, um, so you  
19 were appointed director of government and regulatory affairs.

20  
21 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** For HRD.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Right.

24  
25 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** For Horsehead Resource Development Company.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Right. Could you kind of clarify please what that entity is versus  
28 what ZCA and Monaca was?

29  
30 (2:05:00)

31  
32 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure. Sure. Um. Horsehead Industries, uh, was comprised of a  
33 number of, uh, entities. Uh. Great Lakes Carbon Company was one. Um. Pony Industries  
34 was another. Horsehead Resource Development Company was yet another. Now, what  
35 was HRD? HRD was the corporate structure within which Dave Carpenter, who I  
36 mentioned earlier developed the, uh, advanced the thought process and eventually  
37 developed the use of certain of equipment that was part of Horsehead Industries to allow  
38 for the processing of electric arc furnace dust from the steel mill, steel mini mills, to  
39 produce a usable zinc concentrate of its own. So, HRD was this, this entity and when,  
40 basically, what happened was, uh, in '87 when the, I guess it was an asset. Yeah. When  
41 the asset purchase occurred, uh, my function within St. Joe Minerals ceased. I was  
42 terminated in essence. But then I had some relationship during the course of this, uh, the  
43 due diligence that was involved in this asset purchase with a number of people at  
44 Horsehead and HRD, most notably David Carpenter. Uh. And it was through that process  
45 that I got to know Dave very, very, very well. Uh. And I would characterize Dave just as  
46 I have characterized Bob Sunderman, exactly the same way from my perspective. Uh.

1 And I was offered an opportunity to work for HRD, uh, in this whatever it was that you  
2 said. [laughs] Which was sort of a continuation of what I was doing for Horse or for, uh,  
3 uh, for St. Joe Minerals. Uh. Uh. Only in this case it was HRD.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** How did your responsibilities change once you started working for  
6 ZCA in 1991 and just sort of, if you could summarize taking that forward?

7  
8 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Sure. Uh. Forward to my retirement?

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

11  
12 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Um. The, uh, they were really a continuation of the same types  
13 of responsibilities. Now, there was a point in time in that timeframe where I also had  
14 safety and health. Uh. And then eventually, uh, we hired an individual to do the safety  
15 and health piece, which was good. Uh. And then, uh, I was back to just strictly  
16 environmental. But, uh, I suppose what happened during that period though was what  
17 expanded. The responsibilities did expand because now not only were all of the, let's say,  
18 ZCA facilities, but now all of the Horsehead or HRD facilities, all of the recycling plants,  
19 the electric arc furnace dust plants and there are five or six of those came into the fold of  
20 responsibility. So, it, it broadened quite substantially over that period of time. Uh. Uh.  
21 But in terms of the, the type of activity, the issues, uh, they were pretty much the same.  
22 Again, the, the Horsehead facilities were, again, pyrometallurgical. So, they were, you  
23 know, uh, dealing with particulate matter. However, there were newer facilities and so  
24 there was the ability to design in the appropriate controls. Um. And, you know, I, I don't  
25 know that there's a lot to add, uh, beyond that point other than, uh, you know, the normal  
26 ebb and flow of, uh, regulation and, uh, and so on. We did have a number of additional,  
27 uh, uh, what I'll call orphan, not orphan sites, but, uh, sites that were no longer operated  
28 that we had to deal with. Superfund type. No superfund designated, but superfund type  
29 sites if you know what that term means or CERCLA sites, uh, that we had to deal with.  
30 So, a lot of my work, I suppose, took on more and more of the dealing with the historical  
31 issues in addition to the ongoing operating issues of the current day. And, uh, and frankly  
32 since I've retired, uh, that's probably where I've spent the bulk of my time, uh, uh, doing  
33 expert witness work on superfund type issues.

34  
35 (2:11:11)

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** To what extent was environmental affairs its own sphere of  
38 operations at the plant? And to what extent did you interact with employees who worked  
39 in the various plant departments on the production end?

40  
41 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I understand the second part. Give me the first part again.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** To what extent was environmental affairs its own sphere of  
44 operations?

45  
46 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Its own sphere of operations.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Like the people whom you were interacting with in doing your  
3 job and to what extent did you engage with people who were working...

4  
5 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Okay.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** In other facilities.

8  
9 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Um. Well, uh, again, it, it, it varied over time. But, uh,  
10 in terms of the, the, uh, uh, the structure of the environmental affairs function within  
11 Horsehead Corp and so on, uh, you know, I had individuals responsible for various pieces  
12 of it. Never a really large staff, uh...

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** How many would you say?

15  
16 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Uh. Well, I, I would say in terms of direct reports, probably no  
17 more than two or three. But I would also say that, that we had functional equivalents in,  
18 in each of the operations that didn't on, on a direct line report into the corporate  
19 environmental function, but rather reported to the effective plant managers. But we had a  
20 lot of interaction of course with those individuals. Um. A tremendous amount of  
21 interaction with the plant managers. Uh. And used to visit the plant sites individually on a  
22 regular basis. Uh. And, and then on an ad hoc basis if need be with whatever the issue of  
23 the day might be. Um. Once you got beyond that, except in the health and safety side,  
24 probably less interaction as you go down the chain. Um. So, yeah. I mean that, that's sort  
25 of the way it played out. Uh. Now, we occasionally would have, you know, some sort of  
26 a, uh, a session with various people where we were trying to explain something and we  
27 might have a broader, uh, mix of individuals in a session like that. But, you know,  
28 typically it was with, with ever, whoever the designee was that we worked with and the  
29 plant managers.

30  
31 (2:14:08)

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Horsehead Corporation bought the company in 2003 after the  
34 Horsehead Industries bankruptcy. What was your experience of the working there from  
35 that period until you retired in 2010? What changes did you feel with Horsehead  
36 Corporation owning the plant?

37  
38 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Actually, the, the, uh, Horsehead Corp was, was  
39 formed, was bought out of bankruptcy by a, uh, oh, what do I want to call it? Uh. Was it  
40 Sun. Not Sun. Yeah. It was a private equity firm that bought it out of bankruptcy and, and  
41 formed Horsehead Corp. Then eventually took it public. Um. I don't know. I, uh, the  
42 people. I mean, there, there was a different group of people, uh, in the senior management  
43 group in particular. Um. Uh. My job became more difficult I thought because, uh, it, it  
44 was more, there was more resistance. I had to do more of a selling job. I mean, I never  
45 brought good news. Um. But it was just tougher. It was tougher. Uh. Then all the way up  
46 to the point of my retirement. I enjoy retirement. [laughs]



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**INTERVIEWER:** On that note, we're going to shift to some lighter questions right now.

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** Okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** To wrap this up. Um. You were part of the younger generation of guys working at St. Joe's during the '60s and '70s, an interesting period in U.S. social history with the counterculture, the peace movement, civil rights, women's rights, etc. Did any of this trickle into the plant environment?

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** Not that I recall. No. None whatsoever that I. No. I don't remember any of that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh. You didn't have people who were, you know, engaging in, in those issues or?

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. I mean, when, uh, during the early times, I mean, St. Joe was a family. One that I never thought would ever end. Um. And so, uh, there was, if, if you, if you talk about discussions about various things, of course. If you talk about conflict as a result of some of these social issues, I never saw any. Um. I mean to the extent that there was conflict, it may have had to do more with, you know, the labor movement than anything else.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Even not necessarily conflict, but participation.

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. I don't, I don't remember, I don't remember that stuff.

(2:17:37)

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** I mean I was, I was a young kid. I had, I was raising a young family. Uh. I didn't have time for that. [laughs] I worked six days a week. [laughs]

**INTERVIEWER:** That's true. Who had time to protest back then? [laughter] In addition to providing employment, how did St. Joe's contribute to the larger Beaver Valley community?

**THOMAS E. JANECK:** Huh. That's an interesting question. Well, I mean, I think back in the earlier days, uh, there was a lot of, uh, community involvement by the, uh, management staff. I mentioned Bob Redelfs name and I mentioned that he was a schoolboard director. Uh. I think a number of the other, uh, management people were involved in things like that. Uh. There may have been the same thing in later years that I just didn't see. But beyond that I don't know that I can really point to one or two things. And, and maybe it's just, you know, my senior moment right now, but I [laughs]

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Or three hours into an interview. [laughter] Why did you work at the  
2 plant as long as you did?

3  
4 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Well...

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** With the company as long as you did. Not necessarily at the plant  
7 itself.

8  
9 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Yeah. Probably the people. I mean, the, the people up until the  
10 Horsehead Corp timeframe, the people were, uh, it, it, it was impossible to find a better  
11 group in my opinion. I was always treated fairly. I thought reasonably well compensated.  
12 Um. And I don't know. Maybe the, maybe the times were different. Maybe the, the later  
13 years became, I don't know, maybe things were moving at a faster pace in the world  
14 generally. Things [REDACTED] more rapidly. Maybe I was just, maybe it was just  
15 because I was getting older. [laughs] I don't know. Maybe I was just looking forward to  
16 that retirement. Actually, I wasn't. Uh, I'll tell you. I, I enjoyed generally enjoyed  
17 working, generally enjoyed doing what I was doing and, um, I'm glad I retired because  
18 I'm enjoying retirement very much so. But, uh, well, I, I enjoyed doing the occasional,  
19 you know, expert witness stuff. I wouldn't want to do a lot of it, but I love it when I'm  
20 doing it.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

23  
24 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** The last day on the job. Oh my. Saying goodbye to good  
25 friends. And that's probably the one thing about retirement I'll talk about here that, that I  
26 find, uh, a little depressing. That once, once you walk out that door and you separate  
27 yourself by 120 miles, those relationships sort of stop. That's tough especially when  
28 you've had 40 plus years of it. And some very, very good ones. So, I guess that's what I,  
29 that, that's the most difficult part of the last day on the job as it turns out so many years  
30 into retirement.

31  
32 (2:22:08)

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

35  
36 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** I think it's great. I think from, from Horsehead's standpoint,  
37 um, let's put it this way. If Horsehead has an opportunity now it's because Shell came to  
38 Monaca. Because Horsehead would've never survived remediating that plant. Ever.  
39 Period. End of discussion. I've managed remediation on plant sites that are 15% that size,  
40 and I know what the costs are. Horsehead could've never done it. As far as the, uh, Shell  
41 coming to the community, I think it's just fantastic. Uh. I think there's, uh, lots of  
42 opportunities for a lot of people. Uh. And, and from what I'm able to read and I do [clears  
43 throat] look at the *Beaver County Times* every day, admittedly I look at the obituaries  
44 first. [laughs] But, uh, from what I've read about Shell and, and how they've reached out  
45 to the community, communities and so on, uh, I think, I think people should love 'em, and

1 I hope they do cause I think it's probably the best thing that's happened to Beaver County  
2 in all the time I can remember.

3

4 **INTERVIEWER:** Since St. Joe opened.

5

6 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Since St. Joe opened. Yeah. I mean it's, it's sort of like. You  
7 know, it's sort of like a, uh, a J&L back in my dad's day coming to Aliquippa. You know.  
8 Only then it was 10,000 to 12,000 jobs. It was huge. So, I, I wish 'em all the best. And I  
9 wish the people of Beaver County all the best too.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** That concludes my prepared questions. Is there anything you'd like to  
12 add?

13

14 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** No. I don't think. Uh. I think this, this is great. I, uh, I've  
15 enjoyed it. Um. I mean it's, it's helped me, uh, uh, it's triggered my memory, which I'll  
16 admit is not very good these days. But it's helped me to recall somethings that, uh, well,  
17 some good things, some bad things, but a lot of good things. So, I appreciate the  
18 opportunity.

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, thank you very much for your time.

21

22 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** You're very welcome.

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** I appreciate it.

25

26 **THOMAS E. JANECK:** Thank you.

27

28 (END)

**Fred Knight**  
**Interview @ October 15, 2016**

## **Fred Knight Summary**

The interview with Fred Knight took place on October 15, 2016, at his home in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. Working at St. Joe was a family tradition for Fred, whose father and two brothers were employed there. Fred started in 1966 and retired in 2009. He worked in shipping, the sinter and furnace plants, and maintenance.

Fred talks about the process of being hired, starting off in the yard department, his first job as a skimmer in the furnace plant, safety gear for that work, and what it means to tap out the furnace. He addresses learning on the job from co-workers, the seasonal temperature extremes in the plant, and metal slab production. From his experience in the shipping department, Fred explains how railroad cars were prepared to handle slab loads.

Fred describes the bid process for changing jobs, which led to his position in the maintenance department. He discusses the interest he developed in welding, obtaining an associate degree in welding engineering at Community College, which St. Joe paid for, and how he ended up teaching welding classes for apprentices at the plant. Fred also provides an excellent overview of the sinter plant, both its operations and routine maintenance. Not long after the 1979 shutdown, Fred was called back to help get the plant ready to reopen. He discusses this turn of events and the work needed to return the pipes to working condition.

Fred relays an anecdote about the time and motion study that inadvertently contributed to the movement to unionize and highlights the benefits of having the union in the plant. He provides a detailed account of a female employee welding pipe bombs in the structural shop to break up material lining the furnaces.

Other topics covered include: the auditorium—basketball, volleyball, and bowling—and the payday meetings that were held there; East Secondary, where metal “garbage” was deposited to be recycled through the furnaces; plant security; the Draco dust collection system; Fluor Corporation’s impact on pension plans; and management under Horsehead Corporation.

**FRED KNIGHT**  
**INTERVIEW - 10/15/2016**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
FRED KNIGHT  
MRS. KNIGHT

**INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Fred Knight October 15, 2016. Could you please state your full name, your date of birth and your address?

**FRED KNIGHT:** Uh. Fredrick James Knight. Uh. [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?

**FRED KNIGHT:** Uh. Retired but working, uh, out at the Stone Crest Golf Course as a starter.

**INTERVIEWER:** As a, I'm sorry?

**FRED KNIGHT:** Starter.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where were you born and raised?

**FRED KNIGHT:** New Brighton, Pennsylvania.

**INTERVIEWER:** And where did you go to school?

**FRED KNIGHT:** New Brighton. [laughter]

**INTERVIEWER:** And what, what were the local people doing for employment before St. Joe established a smelter here in the 1930s?

**FRED KNIGHT:** Oh good heavens, no idea! It was, it's like a steel town, you know, like Aliquippa was a steel mill, that was J&L and they had B&W, which is steel mill here in Beaver Falls.

(0:01:23)

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall people referring to the St. Joe plant as Josephtown?

**FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** What does Josephtown bring to your mind when you hear that name?

1 **FRED KNIGHT:** Just St. Joe itself, you know. Uh, like when I first started, they still  
2 had a rooming house down there, so.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Tell me more, please, about the rooming house.

5  
6 **FRED KNIGHT:** The rooming house, I just vaguely remember what it was like. It was,  
7 to me, it just seemed like there was apartments over top of like, uh, there was like a  
8 garage where you could park your car underneath, but that, like I say, I was only back  
9 there once or twice, so, and that's when I was real young.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Where on the site was it?

12  
13 **FRED KNIGHT:** That was, if you went past the plant and continued to drive like you  
14 was driving towards the mall. It was back in that area. In other words, uh, it was if you  
15 remember where the Humane Society is, this would have been down at the foot of the  
16 bottom of that hill where the Humane Society used to be.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you think you could show me on the site plan?

19  
20 **FRED KNIGHT:** For sure.

21  
22 0:03:01

23  
24 [Paper rattling]

25  
26 **FRED KNIGHT:** Okay. Now, get me going up here. Okay, this is over here. When you  
27 come down 18 and you turn in to go to the plant, this road down here, it come back along  
28 this way and then a rooming house was back in here and the Humane Society used to sit  
29 up here.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** And this is what you had mentioned before we started talking on tape  
32 about the secondary?

33  
34 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah. This was, yeah, you would come down 376. This used to be  
35 called, uh, East, what we called the East Secondary and, uh, that's where all the, uh, uh,  
36 for a better term, garbage used to [chuckle] come in here and they would sort it out.  
37 They'd sort out, we used to get, uh, parts from cars, carburetors, uh, uh, grills, and  
38 anything that would melt down in the zinc. It would come in here and it would come over  
39 to the furnace plant and be dumped in the top of the furnace there and go down through.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I'm just going to mark on there where the . . . [paper shuffling]

42  
43 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah, this was probably...

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Right around here?

46

1 **FRED KNIGHT:** Right there. That is probably where the rooming house used to be.  
2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay, thank you.  
4  
5 [Papers shuffling]  
6  
7 0:4:48.  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** In general, do you think people moved to this area because St. Joe's  
10 offered employment, or did St. Joe employ people who happened to live in this area?  
11  
12 **FRED KNIGHT:** They mostly employed, shall we say, friends or family of the people  
13 that already worked at St. Joe. It was like a family thing. Now, my dad worked there and  
14 uh my two brothers, we all worked there.  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** I would like to talk more about your family who worked at the plant.  
17 So, let's, let's start with your dad. When did he work there and in what capacity?  
18  
19 **FRED KNIGHT:** He worked, why I couldn't even tell you the years, he worked there. I  
20 started there in 1964 and he worked there before me, but I don't remember how long, and  
21 I can't remember when he retired from there, but he worked [coughing] on, uh, he worked  
22 down at East Secondary for a while and then he got on to the, uh, maintenance gang and  
23 that is where he retired from was the maintenance gang.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** And what kind of stories did he tell you about working there when  
26 you were a kid?  
27  
28 **FRED KNIGHT:** He never really said too much about down there, so just the typical  
29 war stories, that is about all.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember any of his war stories?  
32  
33 **FRED KNIGHT:** [Laughter] No. Nope.  
34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Were a lot of his friends when you were growing up, other families,  
36 who had, had ties to St. Joe?  
37  
38 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. Uh, some of umm, but like I say with, uh, diversity with J&L  
39 with B&W, you know, like the neighborhood I grew up in, you know, it was split up that  
40 way.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** And you have had two brothers who worked there?  
43  
44 0:7:18.8  
45  
46 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yes.



1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** In what capacity did they work there? And their names please.  
3  
4 **FRED KNIGHT:** My oldest brother, Gary Lee Knight, he, uh, worked in, uh,  
5 maintenance in the roaster plant and my youngest brother, Donald Earl Knight, worked in  
6 maintenance and then he went to the garage and worked there.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** And I forgot to ask you your father's name.  
9  
10 **FRED KNIGHT:** James Fred Knight.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any point in time when all four of you were working there  
13 together?  
14  
15 **FRED KNIGHT:** Uh, man, that I can't remember. I think so, yeah. Because, I think, uh,  
16 Dad retired right after Donnie got in. So, there was probably a short period of time.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** So what do you recall from being, growing up as a child, with a  
19 parent working at the plant?  
20  
21 **FRED KNIGHT:** There was no, you know, nothing special, I don't think, you know.  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you spend time there using the facilities, going to events?  
24  
25 **FRED KNIGHT:** No. Uh, not till after I started working there. And they used to have a  
26 bowling alley there and we bowled on a bowling team there and, but other than that, they  
27 had picnic grounds down there and once a year they would have a big picnic down there.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Where were the picnic grounds located?  
30  
31 **FRED KNIGHT:** Let me look at your map again.  
32  
33 [Papers shuffling]  
34  
35 0:09:04  
36  
37 **FRED KNIGHT:** Okay. The picnic grounds would be, the picnic grounds if I recall  
38 right, used to. They was out closer to... This map, but the picnic grounds, they were out  
39 towards the, uh, road where the old road that come in down past the plant, and but they  
40 was out there, but I can't recall whether it would be right in this area or...  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, here, here's the County Home if that gives you any perspective.  
43  
44 0:10:20  
45  
46 **FRED KNIGHT:** There used to be a jail cell in there too.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about the jail cell?  
3  
4 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh, I was [laughter] down there one time. That's about all. That, I  
5 think this used to be something like a mental facility at one time or something. I'm not  
6 sure. But, uh, yeah, I seen the jail cell, but it...The picnic area was either here. I can't  
7 remember. I always thought in my mind it was up towards the... This part of the road that  
8 come in down past the plant itself.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
11  
12 [Papers shuffling]  
13  
14 **FRED KNIGHT:** Then there was another picnic area we used afterwards. This was later  
15 on. It was down behind where the, what we called the Poor Farm where the main office  
16 used to be. There was a picnic ground down there we used.  
17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there, was there an annual picnic there?  
19  
20 **FRED KNIGHT:** It was usually like, uh, a, a maintenance picnic, or there'd be, they'd  
21 have, picnics every so often towards the end [cough], especially when it became  
22 Horsehead. It wasn't so much that it was like when it was St. Joe or Fluor Corporation.  
23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Were they having corn roasts then?  
25  
26 **FRED KNIGHT:** They, well we used to have, every once in a while, we would have  
27 like, uh, steaks they'd grill or corn or...  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** [Inaudible] I mean, way, way back in the '30s and '40s, they actually  
30 called it a corn roast.  
31  
32 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah, yeah, but that was before my time [laughter].  
33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about the company farm?  
35  
36 **FRED KNIGHT:** I, I vaguely remember it because it was more or less in the process of  
37 shutting down when I started working there. They was still getting some produce and  
38 stuff from down there, but it was shutting down at the time. It was just getting, I think,  
39 too expensive or something to run it.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. The auditorium served several functions.  
42  
43 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah.  
44  
45 0:12:50  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Please describe your recollections of the building and its use for  
2 business functions, as well as recreational and social functions.  
3

4 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well, uh, St. Joe's used to have a basketball and a volleyball team and  
5 they had a softball team also one time. And, of course, they played basketball there and  
6 they played volleyball there and down below the auditorium was where the bowling  
7 alleys were, and every once in a while we'd have a group meeting, (clears throat)  
8 especially on payday. They'd want to go to that meeting and then after the meeting then  
9 they'd pass out your paychecks and that was kind of like come to the meeting and you get  
10 your paycheck then.  
11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** How often was payday?  
13

14 **FRED KNIGHT:** Uh, every, I think every other week, something like that, every, I can't  
15 remember.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Do you recall a school being on the property?  
18

19 **FRED KNIGHT:** Ooh. No. That I can't help you with.  
20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** That might have been gone by the time you worked there. Okay. Was  
22 there a family expectation that you would work at St. Joe's because your father did and  
23 your older brother did?  
24

25 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah.  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there discussions at home about that?  
28

29 **FRED KNIGHT:** No. Not really. I mean, you know, uh, like well in, in my case, you  
30 know, in that you could go to college or you could go get a job. Well, you know, most of  
31 the time, all of us would get a job, you know, make some money, buy a car, you know,  
32 and that was it. So...  
33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** Other than the zinc plant, what options, if any, had you considered for  
35 a job?  
36

37 **FRED KNIGHT:** Probably, myself, the zinc plant was the only one because my dad  
38 worked there. So, you know, I figured that I'd work there. He would look out for me.  
39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you see him much when you were on the job?  
41

42 **FRED KNIGHT:** Hmm. Not too much because, like I say, when I first started there, he  
43 was in maintenance. He had worked in East Secondary.  
44

45 0:15:43  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead?  
2  
3 **FRED KNIGHT:** July 30, '66.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** '66?  
6  
7 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. Cause we got married in '68.  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** And what year did you retire?  
10  
11 **FRED KNIGHT:** Ah, let's see, I'm 72 and I retired at 65, so whatever year that was  
12 that's when I retired.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** That sounds like about 2009? Okay. How did you apply for a job at  
15 St. Joe's?  
16  
17 **FRED KNIGHT:** Went down and filled out an application. That was the easiest thing,  
18 you know, they did that right there on site.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a personnel office or an employment office there?  
21  
22 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah, there was a personnel office in the, uh, that office building  
23 was right along the, the main part of the road where you drove into the plant. There was a  
24 personnel office there. There was personnel was there. There were some offices upstairs.  
25 The nurse's office was there.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any kind of, um, medical exam or a, a doctor's note  
28 required to be able to work there?  
29  
30 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. They'd have a doctor come in periodically and, you know, if, if  
31 they was going to hire you that you'd go down for a physical and the doctor would  
32 examine you right there.  
33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
35  
36 **FRED KNIGHT:** So.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** What position were you initially hired for?  
39  
40 **FRED KNIGHT:** Uh, usually when you got hired, you went to the yard department and  
41 worked in the yard department and the yard department consisted of anything that had to  
42 be done out and about, you know. Like the first day I was there, I uh, they had a pile of  
43 bricks and they had me taking the old cement off the bricks saving the wet bricks that  
44 were savable and then the next day, or two days later, I went to the... They shipped me  
45 over the furnace plant to work over there and I spent fi...four years in the furnace plant  
46 and then I went to maintenance after that.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Let's talk a little bit more about the four years at the furnace plant. What were your job responsibilities and what kind of shifts were you working there?

**FRED KNIGHT:** We worked three shifts and what I did was, when I first started there, was, uh, all it was, what they called a skimmer as they poured the metal down. We had a bench at that time. It wasn't automated. They had a bench of, uh, forms there and you'd get down and the operator would pour the metal after he tapped it out of the furnace into the ladle, he'd get down across that, those forms, and pour in the metal in there and you'd skim the dross off and then he'd go up and tap out the furnace again. While he was tapping um out, by the time you was done, the forms were cold enough that you could dump um and stack um, so you did that by hand. They did that by machine [laughter] later on.

**INTERVIEWER:** What does it mean to tap out the furnace?

**FRED KNIGHT:** They had, the the furnaces had a cooling well on 'em and there was a spout that come out of the furnace and ah, [coughing] they had ah... There was a hole that went back into the cooling well where the molten metal was and we used, uh, ohhh, we used... asbestos, uh, asbestos mixed with, it was just mixed with something and what it looked like was gray mud and they had these plungers that would, we'd hang right by the spout that come out of a thing and you'd make, like a, a pointed mud ball and put it on the top of this plunger and what you'd do is, you'd take a rod and you'd tap out this mud ball that was holding the metal back and that would run down into the furnace. [Laughter] Run down into the ladle and then when the ladle was full, then you'd pick up this plunger that had a mud ball on it and plug the hole off [laughter]. A lot of stories about that [laughter].

**INTERVIEWER:** You have a favorite story to tell?

**FRED KNIGHT:** [Laughter]. We had, every once in a while, we'd have to [laughter] drill that hole out, what we called drill the hole out, because after you plugged it off so many times, then all the metal did was just more or less trickle out and it would take so long to fill the ladle, so that they had these air driven grills, drills, and these drills had a shaft on 'em with a bit and what you'd do is, you'd tap that hole out and you'd take this drill while the metal was running and you'd run the drill in there to make the hole bigger. Well it kind of took two guys to do this by the time you got the hole drilled out, the ladle was almost full, so he hands the drill off to like, myself, what they called we had. Each furnace had an operator, a skimmer, and a helper, so that he'd hand the drill off to somebody and then he'd plug the hole off. Well, I was working with a guy one time, he's passed away, Al Robaski, and when we'd come in, we was working in afternoon time. [laughter]. The operator that was working daylight, he told us, he said, "Be careful." He said, "I drilled the hole out with a star bit." Well, we had a regular-like small bit and then this star bit and it really made the hole big. So, when my operator come out, I told him, I

1 said, you know, I said, that was drilled out with a star bit. He said "Yeah, no problem." I  
2 said, "Okay." So, he gets up there and usually when you'd go up there you'd make up two  
3 mud balls and you'd, because there was two plungers, and you'd put both mud balls in the  
4 plunger just in case you had an accident or one didn't work or something. [laughter]. Al  
5 made one, one mud ball. I said, "Al, you better make two." He says, "Be alright. It'll be  
6 alright." I'll tell you what. He opened that, opened it up, took the old, you know, got the  
7 old mud ball out, [laughter] and they all were coming out of there and he picked up the  
8 plunger and he went to plug it off and the mud ball went pop. It went down the ladle, so  
9 now he is hurrying up with the mud can was right there. He is hurrying up trying to make  
10 another mud ball and put it on, what with, by now, the ladle was flowing over. There's  
11 metal going everywhere. [laughter] That's funny. So...

12

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14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** How do you clean up hot metal like that, that's spilled?

16

17 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well, as soon as it hits, the floor was uh, uh, uh ... You've seen steel  
18 that has little square buttons on it. I forget what you call it, but anyhow, the metal would,  
19 as soon as it almost hit the floor, it cooled. Well, what was funny was, my boss comes  
20 down and he seen what had happened, so Al says, uh, he told the one helper, he said,  
21 "Start digging up the metal and we will re-lay it, you know, put it, re-melt it" and  
22 [laughter] and my boss said "Al, you was informed that it was done with a star bit. You  
23 clean up the metal and let Freddy do the pouring. You clean up the mess." It was funny.  
24 He wound up doing [laughter] the grunt work instead of the helper and me. It was good.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, it sounds like there were some dangers in what you were doing  
27 there. What kind of safety precautions were you taking and was there a training program  
28 before you would start working in the furnace?

29

30 **FRED KNIGHT:** No not [laughter] really. [laughter] It was, no, we didn't have any  
31 training, you know? They'd like if you, when you was a helper on a furnace, that's how  
32 you started out. Well they would teach you, show you how to be a skimmer, but it wasn't  
33 like the company showed you. It was like the guy you was working with. He'd show you  
34 how to do it and that is how you went from there. And then to be, become an operator,  
35 then that was a whole different process. They'd have to show how to shut down a furnace  
36 and there was various things you had to do to shut a furnace down.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of gear did you wear for safety purposes working in the  
39 furnace plant?

40

41 **FRED KNIGHT:** What we had was, ah, just regular cloth gloves and, ah, we had blue  
42 aprons that we wore when you was skimming and then what we called we had spats that  
43 we would put on and what [cough] what they were was like a, ah, legging that had, it was  
44 a leather legging and there was like steel springs in there. You could open it up, slip it  
45 over your leg and then it would stay there, and it covered probably from right below your

1 knee and a part of it went down over the top of your shoe, and then we had a face shield  
2 on.

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5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** It must have been rather hot there, especially by the summer.

7  
8 **FRED KNIGHT:** Ah, during the... When I first started in the furnace plant, ah, I said to  
9 one of the guys that had been working there, I said, "Oh," I said, "this will be nice  
10 working here in the winter, at least you will be warm" and he said "let me explain it to  
11 you this way." He said, "during the winter," he said, "you'll be able to go back and you  
12 can stand up against the furnace" and he said "your back will be warm and your front will  
13 be cold." He said, "that's the easiest thing I can explain to you" and that's the way it was.  
14 [coughing] The condenser floor, when I started there, right below the condenser floor was  
15 the shipping area and that is where there was a shipper that worked shift work with you  
16 and what you'd do is, we had slabs. We had, we made loads of 60 slabs in a load, or I  
17 think it was 56 slabs in a load depending on what the company wanted, but once we  
18 finished the load, we'd set 'em right over at the edge of the, where we worked, and then  
19 the shipper would come along with a fork truck and take 'em down off, [coughing]  
20 excuse me, and weigh 'em and put 'em in a cooling area down there.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** How many 60-pound slabs a day would you produce during a shift?

23  
24 **FRED KNIGHT:** I wish you hadn't asked. [laughter] I can't remember. You'd do,  
25 depending on what the furnace was making, how much metal the furnace was making,  
26 you'd probably do maybe two and a half loads or three loads when we made a run. In  
27 other words, you'd work like for maybe 45 minutes, something like that, tapping, what  
28 we called tapping the furnace down. The cooling well, it would get so much metal in it  
29 and when it got to a point then we'd have to tap that, what we call tap the furnace down  
30 and that would be, that's when we made them loads. And it was like maybe half an hour  
31 to 45 minutes and you'd make a couple loads and then you'd go, wait to the furnace made  
32 more metal and then you'd start the process all over again.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So you worked in the furnace, in this position, for four years?  
35 Is that correct?

36  
37 **FRED KNIGHT:** In the furnace plant.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Furnace plant. Okay. Did you work in any other positions within the  
40 furnace plant?

41  
42 **FRED KNIGHT:** I worked one year down on the shippers, which was a very nice job,  
43 but the boss wasn't [laughter] so nice.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** [laughter]

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3 **FRED KNIGHT:** Then the whole time I worked there, I had one bad boss and that was  
4 him. The rest of 'em were angels.

5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** What were you doing in that one year that you worked in the shipping  
7 department?

8

9 **FRED KNIGHT:** A shipper, or what they called metal hauler, a shipper or metal hauler.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you operating the forklift?

12

13 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah.

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And where were these plates of, uh, zinc stored?

16

17 **FRED KNIGHT:** Originally, we stored 'em outside in a certain area and then they built a  
18 building and then whenever we stored the metal in there. And your job during the day  
19 was [coughing] was, ah, when they had railroad cars and you'd have to do what they  
20 called setups in the railroad cars depending on what load they was putting in or how the  
21 company wanted 'em, you'd take steel bands and run 'em down through the railcar and  
22 they had, and I can't remember what we called them. Uh, they were pieces of metal that  
23 had six holes on 'em, I think, and a metal strap was run through them and you'd nail those  
24 pieces of metal down to the railcar and then they'd bring the loads in and then we'd have  
25 to take a banding machine and band a load so they wouldn't move in the railcar. And then  
26 on shift work, it was your job to take the metal down off the floor as they made it and  
27 take it up and weigh it and then take out to the storage area.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you transfer from one job or one department to another?

30

31 **FRED KNIGHT:** There, they had what they call bids would come up and if you had  
32 enough seniority. Like, I got placed from the yard into the furnace plant [coughing] and  
33 then I worked with, ah, the bricklayers temporarily right after. Well, when I went into the  
34 yard, I worked out in the yard a couple days and then I worked with the bricklayers for a  
35 short period of time and then, ah, an opening come up in the furnace plant. I bid on the  
36 furnace plant and I got that, and then I worked three years and on the condenser floor,  
37 and then I went down to metal haulers and I worked there maybe almost a year and  
38 [laughter], and then I because the boss and I wasn't getting' along, and then I bid back up  
39 in the condenser floor, and then I was on the condenser floor, I think, almost a year, and  
40 then was a number of maintenance jobs that come up, and I bid on a maintenance job and  
41 got them, but everything was through the bidding process.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have to interview with the boss that you'd end up working  
44 with when you were bidding for another job?

45



1 **FRED KNIGHT:** No, not really. They'd just, you know, you'd go over, ah. If you got the  
2 job, you'd just go over to the shift and the boss would tell you, you know where you was  
3 working and that's where you would stay until there was a change or something else.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** So then you went over to maintenance?  
6

7 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah.  
8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Could you please describe your job responsibilities in the  
10 maintenance department and the, the role of the maintenance department?  
11

12 0:34:24  
13

14 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] Keepin' everything running and [laughter] and keep your  
15 boss happy. You worked on, what they call, pan conveyors, belt conveyors, mix  
16 machines, ah, ah, fans, fan housings, ah, just anything that moved.  
17

18 **INTERVIEWER:** When you would show up for work on a given day, in the  
19 maintenance department, would you get your assignment for that day or would you have  
20 long-term projects that maybe were going to take you several days or a couple weeks and  
21 you came in and worked on them?  
22

23 **FRED KNIGHT:** Normally, what happened with me is you'd go in and you'd get  
24 assigned with a guy and the boss would come out in the morning, first thing in the  
25 morning, [coughing] excuse me, and give you a list of jobs that he wanted you to do. So,  
26 you went about that. Well then I was lucky enough at one point, ah, this was after the  
27 plant shut down and when they opened back up, I was lucky enough to get hooked up  
28 with this one guy. He used to be, he used to work in the sheet metal shop down at the  
29 structural shop. The boss would give you jobs first thing in the morning. That was, well  
30 that even continued on after they opened back up, but I got hooked up with this one guy  
31 who was sheet metal and it, ah, him and I worked together all the time, and because of  
32 the duct system that went through the sinter plant that supposedly took all the fumes and  
33 everything out, these duct systems would wear out. Well then, because he worked sheet  
34 metal previously, that's where he always went to repair the duct system, so that's what  
35 him and I did for a quite a while. We worked on them.  
36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** So, you developed some welding skills?  
38

39 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah. Well, when, what happened was, ah, I seen the guys down  
40 there welding and so I though, oh, this is, I wouldn't mind doing that. And the, the only  
41 way you could learn down there was if you went through the apprenticeship and they had  
42 a guy by the name of Nick Buyan, that taught welding to the apprentices. So, somebody  
43 mentioned, the one guy that worked with me in maintenance. He said, well, let's go up to  
44 Community College and learn how to weld. I said, oh, okay. That sounds good. So him  
45 and I went to Community College and learned how to weld. So I became really interested

1 in it and after he was, after we learned how to do the welding, I proceeded on with classes  
2 and stuff, and I acquired an associate degree in welding engineering technology.

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5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So was this a degree from St. Joe's apprentice program?

7  
8 **FRED KNIGHT:** No. This is from Community College.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Did St. Joe pay for your course work at Community College?

11  
12 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah, as long as my grade was, I forget what...I think like 80 or  
13 better.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** A C.

16  
17 **FRED KNIGHT:** They'd pay for the whole thing.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** How were you able to, to juggle taking classes and working at the  
20 plant?

21  
22 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh, I would work at the plant. I was working daylight then in  
23 maintenance and usually if I had class, instead of coming home, I'd go up to the mall or  
24 go up to a restaurant or something up there and get something to eat and study and then  
25 I'd go to class and just worked around it that way.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did it take you to get the associates degree?

28  
29 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter]

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** [laughter]

32  
33 **FRED KNIGHT:** You don't want to talk about that. That was [laughter] about four  
34 years, something like that. [laughter]

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay, so once you had that degree and you were trained as welder,  
37 did that open up a new position for you at St. Joe's?

38  
39 **FRED KNIGHT:** Kinda. In a way it did. Ah, what happened was, ah, this Nick Buyan, it  
40 was gettin to a point in his life where he didn't, when you, when he taught welding, he did  
41 not work during the day, he worked afternoon shift. That's, that's when the apprentice  
42 would come in and he would work with them like it was a second shift teaching them  
43 how to weld. [clears throat] And I think it got to a point in his life where he just didn't  
44 want to do it anymore, so he tried to get a couple guys that he worked with down at the  
45 structural shop to take over the welding class, and they wouldn't do it. They, they didn't  
46 want to be bothered with working afternoon time and all of that. So, I was approached

1 about doing this and I said yeah, but you know, I never taught welding. I said I know, you  
2 know, and they said well, I went down and talked to Nick Buyan and he said "We'll do  
3 this gradually." He said, "the next class I have, he said you take the classes and  
4 apprentice," and I said "well, I already know how to weld." He said, "it don't make any  
5 difference." He said, "you'll take this class just like the rest of them," [coughing] excuse  
6 me, "doing the test and everything." I said, "okay." You know. And this got me out of  
7 maintenance and it kept me nice and clean for...

8  
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10  
11 **FRED KNIGHT:** How long did that, I forget how long that lasted.

12  
13 **MRS. KNIGHT:** Six weeks.

14  
15 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. Six weeks. So I figure well I will be nice and clean for six  
16 weeks down at the structural shop. You know, this is cool. Why not? So, ah, I went  
17 through the first six weeks with him and what was nice was and the instructor I had at  
18 Community College kind of taught me one way to weld and when I went through the six  
19 weeks with, ah, Nick, he taught me like a different way. So, ah, I always felt like I was  
20 lucky. I had two different welding instructors and basically they'd teach you the same  
21 thing but showing you little different things, you know, to improve yourself on the way.  
22 And then the next time I did it with Nick I was like an assistant instructor, you know? He  
23 was actually teaching the class, but if somebody came with a problem, then he'd say,  
24 "Okay, Freddy, let's go see what's goin' on." So we'd go see what's goin' on and he'd ask  
25 me, "well what's he doing wrong?" So I had to tell him what he was doing wrong. So then  
26 after that six weeks, then it was me. [laughter]

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** [laughter] Did, did you get a raise for becoming the welding  
29 instructor?

30  
31 **FRED KNIGHT:** Ah, just shift differential.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Which means what?

34  
35 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well on, uh, when you worked daylight, you ah, and when you  
36 worked maintenance, I forget what I made, but then if you worked shift work, ah,  
37 afternoon turn was, and don't hold me to this [tapping fingers on table] the upper echelon  
38 I can tell you about [inaudible]. At one point, it was like a quarter or 35 cents and then  
39 night turn was maybe 10 cents above that or something like that. So when I worked,  
40 when I was teaching welding, I got shift differential and at, at some point, they even, they  
41 give me [tapping table] uh, uh, they paid me a different pay raise than what I'd normally  
42 get working daylight. But it was, I enjoyed it. That was good.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did you teach the welding classes?

45  
46 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] 'Till the place closed down. [laughter]

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** So roughly what year then did you start taking over the welding  
3 classes?  
4  
5 **FRED KNIGHT:** (sighs) [laughter] I was hoping you wouldn't ask. Ah, oh my, I don't  
6 even have the slightest. I can't even remember.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you, any rough idea of how many years you were teaching in the  
9 apprentice program?  
10  
11 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] No. No, I don't.  
12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** [laughter] No. Okay.  
14  
15 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] I haven't.  
16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
18  
19 **FRED KNIGHT:** That's what strange. I see some of the guys out and about now, you  
20 know. These are guys that I taught welding, you know, that was in maintenance or  
21 something.  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any new technologies introduced into the plant that  
24 affected how you did your job or what you had to do for your job?  
25  
26 **FRED KNIGHT:** Maintenance-wise, they was always trying to improve stuff, but most  
27 of the time, the old stuff worked. You know, now like over in the furnace plant, they  
28 automated, ah, how I used to make the slabs, excuse me, they automated that. That come  
29 down to where it was on a conveyor and, ah, it just ran down along and the metal poured  
30 right into it, but you still had your skimmer. [coughing] But this, the, ah, the slabs would  
31 run down along and they'd cool off, drop down onto a machine and the machine would  
32 actually stock, stack the palette. So...  
33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Did that replace anybody's job?  
35  
36 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. It did. Ah, it usually replaced the, uh, helper's job, but there was  
37 uh, they probably had one or two guys, you know, just kind of floatin' around helping  
38 out. Once I left the furnace plant, when I bid on maintenance, I went over the sinter plant  
39 and that is where I stayed the whole time.  
40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk more about the sinter plant?  
42  
43 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh, the illustrious sinter plant!  
44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, what was the function of the sinter plant to start with?  
46

1 0:45:43

2

3 **FRED KNIGHT:** The sinter plant was, ah, where the, ah, the stuff from like the slag  
4 from the furnace come over to the sinter plant [clears throat and coughs] and some of the  
5 stuff would come through the sinter plant and it would be, ah, it would go through a pan  
6 conveyor through crushing rolls and, and it would be, ah, go into to a sizing system and it  
7 would be sized to different things and then it would go back, ah, use it again. It would get  
8 shipped back over to the furnace plant and some of it would be used again.

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was your job in the sinter plant?

11

12 **FRED KNIGHT:** Keeping everything running. [laughter] I worked maintenance and if  
13 something broke down, that's what you had to go fix on. Two days a week on Tuesdays  
14 and Thursdays we had what they called shutdown days and there was [clearing throat]  
15 three parts to the sinter plant. There was high grade, what they called high grade, PW and  
16 intermediate and depending on what day, they'd like on a Tuesday, they'd shut down, ah,  
17 high grade and PW and then on Thursdays they usually shut down the intermediate  
18 section, but that was and then you'd have to go in and [clears throat] and they had these  
19 elevators that moved the product like from the ground floor up to the top floor and you'd  
20 have to, uh, and they had everything shut down. You'd have to open up the elevator, run  
21 the elevator and checking if there was any buckets missing, you would have to replace  
22 the buckets. Pan conveyors they had, what they called liners on the inside from where  
23 that, and these liners would wear out because of the charge that was running through  
24 there would wear out the liners and you'd have to go in there and replace [laughter] the  
25 liners [laughter] and uh, uh, and check the pans, check the, the drive on that, that moved  
26 the pan and just made sure everything was good [laughter]. So.

27

28 0:48:13

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Good. Were you working at the sinter plant when the overall plant  
31 was shut down in 1979?

32

33 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yes.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** When the plant reopened in 1980?

36

37 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah.

38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you come back on at the beginning of that?

40

41 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] Yeah.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** And...

44

45 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] Well...

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** [laughter] It seems like you have a story to tell. [laughter]

2

3 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] Well, [laughter] I was away. I forget what I was doing, but  
4 anyhow, ah, Bob Bell called here and talked to my wife and uh I had, I'd heard rumors  
5 that, uh, they was, uh, working down in East Secondary doing stuff down in East  
6 Secondary. So I called my, what used to be my boss, I called him up and I said "Hey." I  
7 said, "I hear, you know, they might be starting back up." "Well," he said, "it kinda looks  
8 that way." He said, "right now," [coughing] excuse me, "nothing is for sure." I said,  
9 "well, if they are, how about keeping me in mind?" He said, "okay." He said, "That's no  
10 problem." So, I forget what the period of time was after I talked to him. That's when Bob  
11 Bell called and so Bob, I called, in fact, he left a message with her and she had told him I  
12 would be back late and he said, "It don't make any difference. Have him call me when he  
13 gets in." So I called him and I said "What's up?" He said, "Do you want a job?" I said,  
14 "sure." He said, "good." He said, "Come on down." I think it was the next morning or the  
15 following, maybe two days later, I can't remember for sure. So when I drove down, we  
16 parked right outside of the office down there. This was eerie. I mean this place when we  
17 was there working, it was noisy, so when I pulled up, I got out and Bob Bell was standing  
18 there. This place is dead quiet! You could hear a pin drop. So I'm walking up and he says  
19 the first words out of his mouth was "Hi, Freddy" and he says "I'm telling you right now  
20 there is no welding school. Because," [laughter] I said "Oh. Okay". So we went in for the  
21 meeting and uh they told us who we was going to be working for and never replaced so  
22 much copper tubing in my life.

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** So, were you back in the maintenance department?

25

26 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. We went in and uh that like in the sinter plant, we had a lot of,  
27 uh, cooling lines. There was water running through for personal use like drinking water  
28 and water that was used for different things and that was our first job. They wanted the  
29 water back on as soon as you'd turn the water back on and there was running everywhere,  
30 so you had to shut the water off, find the leaks, replace the pipe and go from there.

31

32 0:51:54

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** Were these problems with the pipes because the system had been shut  
35 down for a few months?

36

37 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. The lines were never drained or drained to the best that they  
38 could and you know, if say, you lose your job because they shut the place down, what's  
39 your feelings going to be? It's going to be I really don't give a hoot what happens to this  
40 place. So that is what happened.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** From the time they brought you back on to start getting the plant  
43 fixed up to run, when did it reopen? Like, how, how long were you working to get it up  
44 and running again?

45

1 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh my! I couldn't honestly tell you there. Probably a couple weeks  
2 anyhow or probably more than that before they really got everything up and running.  
3 Because depending on how the furnaces were shut down. If they weren't shut down right  
4 then they was going to have to rebuild the furnaces and that always took a lot of time to  
5 rebuild the furnace.  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they end up having to rebuild the furnaces?  
8  
9 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah. They had to rebuild some.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** And didn't they stop using some of them, though, when they  
12 reopened?  
13  
14 **FRED KNIGHT:** Do what?  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Didn't they stop using some of the smaller furnaces when they  
17 reopened?  
18  
19 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. The, what we called, the little end or high grade end, they didn't  
20 use that. They used furnaces 10 through 16, I think. [clears throat]  
21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** And what were those furnaces producing?  
23  
24 **FRED KNIGHT:** Same thing. Zinc. Just different grades of it. That they, usually, what  
25 would happen was depending on what a manufacturer was, or a customer was asking for  
26 [coughing], they'd make, ah, the metal would go down into the holding well, cooling  
27 well, and ah sometimes we'd have to take like different types of additives and put in the  
28 cooling well like and usually it was in forms of slabs or something.  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Before they shut down in 1979, how much advanced notice did you  
31 have that the plant would close and you'd be out of work and did you have any sense that  
32 this was coming on?  
33  
34 **FRED KNIGHT:** You know what? Honestly, I cannot remember. I know that it didn't  
35 seem like there was too much of a notice. There was a lot of talk going on about it.  
36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** How would characterize the rapport between supervisors and work  
38 laborers at the plant?  
39  
40 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well you had your typical lot foremen and you had good foremen.  
41 And, usually, if you didn't, like I say; I only had, the whole time I worked there, I only  
42 had one nitwit, [laughter] to put it mildly. But other than that, they was all good. Treated  
43 me good. No problem. The biggest thing was if you did your job, if you come to work  
44 every day, did your job, you didn't have any problems. That's the easiest way to put it.  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of security was there getting in and out of the plant?

1  
2 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] Nothing. [laughter] They had, they had a guard there, but I  
3 mean.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they check ID when you came in everyday?  
6  
7 **FRED KNIGHT:** Ah, nope. [laughter] After a period of time, they got to know you, but  
8 you know, even if, say like at night if you wanted to walk in, you walk in. You know, if  
9 they didn't know you. I mean it got to a point at one time they, they had, they put up  
10 electronic gates and they was always closed at the main entrance, but there was other  
11 ways. You know, if somebody wanted to blow the place up, they could have docked a  
12 boat down in the river and walked up into the plant and blew the place up and...  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the entire plant surrounded by the electronic gate?  
15  
16 **FRED KNIGHT:** No. It, it in the, towards uh, they put the electronic gates up, electrical  
17 gates up at, uh, the main entrance and there was one other entrance that went into the, uh,  
18 where the old office was. The road that went into there, there was another guard there,  
19 but there was no gate there that I can recall right off hand. There might have been, but...  
20  
21 0:57:14  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you share your, your recollections of breaks in the cafeteria?  
24  
25 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter] That was good food there. Them women took good care of  
26 you. There was a woman called Bertie Graham. She didn't take nobody's guff. Absolutely  
27 nobody! But, ah, the food was good. Everything was good in there. And usually, that was  
28 one of the things that went on. If there, say, a couple guys were bettin' or something.  
29 Well, the bet always come down to the loser bought a ham-and-egger. That was the bet.  
30 There was no other. That was it. There was no money involved. It was, if you lose, you  
31 owe me a ham-and-egger.  
32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that the bestseller?  
34  
35 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah. Ham-and-egger, yeah. That was good.  
36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever stay on after hours to do things in the auditorium?  
38  
39 **FRED KNIGHT:** Not the... Well, not so much in the auditorium, ah, I didn't get  
40 involved in the volleyball or the basketball, but like I say, the only thing I did was, ah, I  
41 bowled over there.  
42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you on the bowling team?  
44  
45 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. It was just, it was what, like a couples... So. [clears throat]  
46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall any other employee benefits that the company  
2 provided? Activities? Health benefits? Disability?

3  
4 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well that came more so after the union come in and they pushed for it.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Let's talk a little bit more about the unions coming in, because that  
7 was a time when you were there for that transition.

8  
9 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Was that a conflict at all for the union to come in?

12  
13 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well at, at first, I mean, we were working... Before the union come  
14 in, we worked six days a week. So everybody was happy about the money. So,  
15 everything was going good. Well then, the company made the mistake [coughing] of  
16 bringing in time study people. So soon as the time study people come in then talk about  
17 the union started gettin' real strong and it finally, that's what happened. The company,  
18 you know, would have been further ahead if they had just left everything alone. You  
19 know, left you working six days a week and, you know, paid you a little bit more money  
20 and forgot about the time study people, but when the time study people come in then the  
21 union come in.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the connection between the time study people coming in  
24 and then the union? What was the time study?

25  
26 **FRED KNIGHT:** The time study, ah, originally, they had one of their own people doing  
27 a time study. I'm trying to think of his name. I can see him, but I can't think of him. But,  
28 then they, they had a, I don't know the name of the organization that they brought in, but  
29 they brought these people in and what was... I was working in maintenance in the sinter  
30 plant, and I worked with a super nice guy. Him and I worked up on what they called the  
31 Draco System. We had to, like those pipes that I told you about that got rid of the gas and  
32 everything [coughing], well, this Draco System had, ah, a collection system on it that had  
33 bags where these fumes would be filtered down through these bags and that would, the  
34 bag would shake periodically. This would get down into screw conveyors and the screw  
35 conveyors would move the load along and eventually it would wind up back over in the  
36 furnace plant. So, I was working with him and working up in the dust collect system was  
37 a nice job. I mean, you was clean all the time and during the winter, you wasn't always  
38 warm, but pretty much so. So, one day at quitting time, my boss called Jim and I in and  
39 he said, "You're going to have a time study man." They didn't call it time study,  
40 [inaudible] a time and motion analyst. "You're going have a time and motion analyst with  
41 you [laughter] tomorrow. So, just watch what you do." "Okay. No problem." This guy I  
42 worked with, he was sharp. So, after the boss was done talking to us, he said, him and I  
43 went back out and then, outside of the boss' office and he said "Tomorrow," he said,  
44 "This is what we are going to do" and he told me what we was going to do. I said "Oh,  
45 okay, no problem." So, the next morning the time and motion analyst man come up and  
46 Jim handed me the lists of jobs that had to be done and he took a list of jobs that had to be

1 done and instead of him and I working together, we worked separately. I went [laughter]  
2 down to this end of the collect system and he went to this end of the collect system. Well,  
3 depending on where you worked, usually, we worked up above. There was like a catwalk  
4 that come down through the place and [inaudible] and you could watch and see what,  
5 who was coming or whatever. So, I'd be up there working away and I could see the time  
6 motion analyst, like, coming so I'd really get into the job and so he was up there all day  
7 and he left before quittin' time, so come quittin' time, we went down the stairs and my  
8 boss called Jim and I in and he said "Close the door." So, Jim and I [laughter] was  
9 looking at one another like what'd we do? He closed the door and he said, "What the hell  
10 did you two guys do?" Jim says, "What are you talking about?" He said, "According to  
11 the gentleman that was up there with you, he said I have to give you a third man because  
12 you have so much work. What did you do?" Jim said we were just doing our job. The  
13 boss says "Bullshit! You did something" and he said, "you are not getting a third man."  
14 So that was cool. I mean that's how that worked out, and I mean there was ways of  
15 beatin'. And then the one guy that worked for St. Joe, he used to hide behind columns and  
16 watching you, sneak and watching you, but these other guys they didn't. They'd go right  
17 with you.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Well when the union did come in, did you get the third man?

20  
21 1:05:20

22  
23 **FRED KNIGHT:** Uh, no. [laughter] Nope.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the positive and negative effects of having a union in the  
26 plant?

27  
28 **FRED KNIGHT:** The, probably, the positive was we got better pay and worked less  
29 hours and the negative was there was [clears throat] uh, the company wasn't happy of  
30 course, but there was always like grumblings between [clears throat] the workers  
31 themselves as far as was the union official was doing everything that they could to  
32 improve conditions or something like that, but that was about it.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you think conditions improved with the union there?

35  
36 **FRED KNIGHT:** No. [laughter] I mean, there was the safety things improved, uh, like  
37 they, uh, they gave, you wound up with more safety equipment [clears throat]. They had  
38 more, like, testing you for, uh, lead in your blood or stuff like that, so that improved  
39 things, but then of course that brought more financial problems to the company  
40 themselves. Because [clears throat] if your blood lead got so high then they, the  
41 company, would have to take you out of the area you worked in into a clean area and that  
42 was the biggest thing they got. When I, that guy I worked with, with the sheet metal man,  
43 he did a lot of research on what happens to your system once lead gets into it and so  
44 when an opening come up down at the structural shop, then he went down there and he  
45 was fortunate enough he went into back into the sheet metal department down there and  
46 he was constantly after me to get out of the sinter plant. Every time he would see me he'd

1 tell me, he said, as soon as you can get out of the sinter plant, get out of the sinter plant.  
2 [Inaudible speaker in background] He said, he said from what I can understand, he said,  
3 when that, if that lead gets into your bones they don't know if it ever comes out, what  
4 effect it has on you, anything like that. So, he finally got to me and there was an opening  
5 come up down at the structural shop, so I went down there.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** How did the culture of the plant and employer/employee relations  
8 change when the smelter reopened after the 1979 shutdown?

9  
10 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well the guys were happy to come back to work. Uh, but in a way,  
11 they were kind of picky, shall we say, on who they hired back. Like, if you had caused  
12 any problems previously then they, you know, they weren't too enthused about bringing  
13 you back. Eventually, some of 'em got back, but it would be like later on.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if they hired people who hadn't worked there  
16 previously...

17  
18 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Before the shutdown?

21  
22 **FRED KNIGHT:** Yeah. Because there was a lot of guys. What happened was a lot of  
23 guys, when the plant shut down, ah, a number of guys went down to [tapping fingers on  
24 table] Ambridge and got a job down there working and they kind of liked it down there,  
25 so they, you know, they didn't come back when St. Joe called 'em right away. So then,  
26 they'd, you know, hire somebody else that was willing to come there and work.

27  
28 1:09:46

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** There were several changes in ownership of the company, umm,  
31 starting with the Fluor Corporation in 1981 and then in 1987 St. Joe Resources Company  
32 and New Jersey Zinc combined to form Zinc Corporation of America and that's owned by  
33 Horsehead Industries and then when that filed for bankruptcy, on and on and on. How did  
34 all these changes of ownership and management affect your job at the plant?

35  
36 **FRED KNIGHT:** Truthfully, really, it didn't affect it much at all. I mean, the only thing,  
37 when Fluor took over, they ended, at the time with St. Joe you had kinda like a pension  
38 plan and when, I think it was when Fluor took over, that ended. [cleared throat] So, we  
39 went through a, ah, process where if you had so many years you could start drawing on  
40 that pension. Well that kind of aggravated a lot of guys because, you know, they, they  
41 might be short like two, three or four years [coughing] so they'd have to wait that period  
42 of time before they could draw on their pension. I mean, the guys were working and still  
43 drawing on their pensions, so that didn't make everybody happy, but...

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever hear stories about women working at the plant? ...  
46

1 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh good heavens.

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** During World War II?

4

5 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh yeah. In fact, ah, when I first started there, they still had a woman  
6 welding bombs down in the structural shop. We had, what we called [laughter] pipe  
7 bombs and they'd take a, uh, a piece of pipe and they'd cut it to a certain length and they'd  
8 put a, like a pipe coupling on the end [clears throat] and they'd weld that one end, put the  
9 coupling on the one end and then they'd put that down in water. They'd fill it up with  
10 water and then what she did was, there'd be a little plug on the end of that and she'd weld  
11 that up and then these bombs were used down on what we called the Little End down in  
12 the furnace plant [coughing] where they made high grade zinc and every once in a while  
13 you'd have to, and that was one job I hated, you'd to have to what we called bomb the  
14 furnace and there was holes like little doors in the side of the furnace. I forget how many  
15 there was. There was maybe four of them around the furnace, but there is two of you  
16 who'd go up and you'd take these pipe bombs with ya and you'd put 'em on the end of a,  
17 like a ram, and one guy would open the door, you'd stick that bomb in there and then  
18 you'd drive that bomb as far as you could down into the furnace, [coughing] excuse me,  
19 and once it got so hot, the pipe bomb would explode because of the water in it turning to  
20 steam and what it did was break up the charge in the furnace. So you had to do that  
21 usually about once a shift and that was, that was one job I really didn't like doing, but  
22 that's what she did.

23

24 1:13:44

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember her name?

27

28 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh good heavens, no.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

31

32 **FRED KNIGHT:** Couldn't even begin to tell ya.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** Was it more than one woman who was doing this work?

35

36 **FRED KNIGHT:** There was only one doing it when I started there. Now there could  
37 have been more, but that was, I only seen the one.

38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you know of women working in any other positions other than in  
40 the cafeteria or clerical positions?

41

42 **FRED KNIGHT:** We had, well this was later on, where there was actually, I forget,  
43 they, in fact, that's when they had put the restrooms in, but they hired I can't remember  
44 how many women they hired in to do different jobs right in the plant, but then it got to a  
45 point, [coughing] excuse me, where they were worried about, ah, how the lead would

1 affect them as far as their reproductive organs or whatever and... But I never got too  
2 involved in that point of it.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Looking through company publications from the 1960s. It seems that  
5 there were very few African Americans on the St. Joe workforce. How would you  
6 characterize the racial mix during your years working there?

7  
8 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well, it's, it's like I say they originally, the easiest way to get hired  
9 was if you had a relative working there. [clears throat] Now at one point in time, I was  
10 working in the sinter plant maintenance. There was a black gentleman that got hired to  
11 work in production and a strange problem with that was his name was exactly the same as  
12 mine. So when, if they called Fred Knight on the PA system, like if my boss, well we'd  
13 both answer. We'd have to find out who was callin' us and one day at quittin' time, we  
14 was getting' ready to punch out and the, like, where we punched out was underneath that  
15 new office they had made for the sinter plant. A control room was what it was and one  
16 guy hollered down. He said "Freddy, you got a phone call up here." I said, "Oh, okay."  
17 So, I went up and answered the phone and I said "Hello." I didn't hear nothin'. I said  
18 "Hello?" and right away this woman started talking and I understood she wanted the other  
19 Fred Knight. [laughter] So I said you will have to wait a minute. We will have to get a  
20 hold of him. He is out somewhere in the plant, but oh, him and I joked around all the  
21 time.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if the company made any efforts to recruit African  
24 Americans?

25  
26 1:17:04

27  
28 **FRED KNIGHT:** That I could not tell you.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** How about veterans? Do you know of any efforts to hire veterans?

31  
32 **FRED KNIGHT:** I couldn't tell you about that either. I mean, there was a lot of guys that  
33 had been in the service that, ah, once they come out of service, if they had been,  
34 [coughing] excuse me, working there before they'd come back, but this was in the earlier  
35 part of the, of when St. Joe had it and when Fluor had it.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** In addition to providing employment to a lot of people over the years,  
38 how did St. Joe contribute to the larger Beaver Valley Community?

39  
40 **FRED KNIGHT:** Uh! I couldn't honestly tell you there. I never got involved in that. I  
41 mean, they always had display in their office of different products like what some of their  
42 products helped make, but other than that, as far as not to, shall we say, blow Shell up,  
43 but it, like Shell helping with that playground and stuff, St. Joe never did that or  
44 Horsehead didn't do that.

45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you ever aware of a radio program that the company  
2 broadcasted?

3  
4 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh no. [laughter] I wasn't aware of that.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Probably long before your time. Okay. Just a few questions to wrap  
7 up here. Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

8  
9 **FRED KNIGHT:** Money. [laughter] Good employment. It was steady. I enjoyed my job.  
10 Like, especially, after I went down to, when I transferred down to the structural shop, I  
11 enjoyed that. I mean [coughing] this was one big building and even during the winter I  
12 could walk around in a T-shirt if I wanted to. I did my job down there was, ah, welding  
13 things and so if I was welding then I'd have on my welding jacket and hood and stuff and  
14 gloves and stuff like that, but like if I wasn't welding, if we was going to lunch or  
15 something, if I had on a T-shirt, that's all I needed to wear, so that was great.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have a favorite memory or anecdote about your years  
18 working at the plant?

19  
20 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh [laughter] that was [laughter] ah, when, one time I was working,  
21 when I was working sinter plant maintenance. In fact, the guy I went to welding school  
22 with up at Community College, Dick McRoberts, him and I was changing these liners  
23 that I told you about in this one pan conveyor. [clears throat] Well there was three of us.  
24 Him and I was inside the pan conveyor and we'd take the... The guy on the outside would  
25 cut the nuts off. We'd take the old liner out and put the new liner up and stick the bolts in  
26 and he'd put the nut on 'em, tighten 'em up and we'd go on to the next one. Well, we was  
27 in this one time doing that and the second bolt went flying out. So we took, what at that  
28 time, we had what they called a bull-pin and this bull-pin started out from about the size  
29 of your finger and it would go up to about this size [demonstrates with his hand] at the  
30 end and that was the end you beat on. Well you'd take this bull-pin and drive it into the  
31 hole to get the hole lined up and then the guy on the outside would tighten the nut out.  
32 You'd take the bull-pin out and then the hole would be lined up and then you'd put the  
33 other bolt in. Well, this one time, ah, when we was doing this and on these bull-pins, you  
34 could always tell when it wasn't going to go any further because when you hit it, the  
35 sound changed on it. [clears throat] So, we was, Dick was driving it in and I said, "That's  
36 good. Let's try it." He said no. He said I will hit it a couple more times. Well when he, the  
37 next time he hit it, I said, "that's enough" because the sound had changed. "No one more  
38 time." [Inaudible] We had what they call 3-pound sledge hammers [coughing] and he hit  
39 this bull-pin and the 3-pound sledge come back and hit him right in the middle of the  
40 forehead. So I'm looking at him and I said, "Are you alright?" "Yeah, why?" I said, "You  
41 just got hit in the head with a 3-pound sledge hammer." "I'm alright." Well you could see  
42 the round spot on his head. I said "I'm going to tell you something" and I said "believe me  
43 when I tell you this." I said "you're too big for me to drag out of here" and at, where we  
44 was working, the pan conveyor went up a hill and it went over and dumped into the  
45 crusher rolls. Of course, nothing is running. I said, "I'm going to tell you something." I  
46 said "believe me." I said "if you pass out on me in here..." I said "I am going to run this

1 pan conveyor up" and I said "we'll haul you out when you hit the rolls." I said "it is as  
2 simple as that. Now why don't you go over and check with a nurse?" "I'm fine." I said "just  
3 remember what I told you." He was alright.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

6  
7 **FRED KNIGHT:** What do you mean?

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there something that could have been different about your job or  
10 your experience with the company that you would have liked working there even more?

11  
12 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well, if they hadn't hired the idiot as a CEO, the plant would probably  
13 still be there. 'Cause he knew absolutely, positively nothing about what we did at the  
14 plant. I always said that was, the plant down there when it was running was probably the  
15 largest hazardous material dumpsite in this part of the state. [coughing] They'd bring stuff  
16 in the East Secondary. They'd size it and separate everything, ship it down to the furnace  
17 plant. It would go in to the top of the furnaces, out the bottom would come metal. What  
18 more can you ask for? This idiot that is running the place now has no concept. He didn't  
19 like the, when he started, he had the office where the offices were. It was nice inside.  
20 There was nothing wrong with that place. Well, he didn't like looking at the plant, so he  
21 had trees planted all along the road going back to the office so he would not have to see  
22 that, so then I forget how long it took him and then he decided well, we will move up to  
23 where they are at up and around Pittsburgh now somewhere. So them offices down there  
24 just kinda went to pot. But he had really, everybody thought he had no concept then.  
25 [laughter] This is hilarious. Ah, he hired a guy by the name of, I can't think of his first  
26 name. His last name was Hagan. He hired him as a maintenance supervisor. Maintenance,  
27 maintenance engineer. This guy knew about as much as your bottle of water knows about  
28 maintenance. All he knew was safety and the, oh, one of the hilarious jokes about him  
29 was [clears throat] up at the garage where my brother worked, of course, the garage doors  
30 during the summer especially was always open and you weren't allowed to walk in  
31 through the garage door. You had to go through the man door because that garage door  
32 might fall down and hit you on the head. Like, really! [coughing] But this Hagan, he...  
33 any maintenance engineer or superintendent that worked there when I worked there,  
34 anytime I had to go down to see 'em, there were blueprints and papers everywhere. This  
35 guy when you walked in, there was nothing. Absolutely nothing! He didn't have a tablet  
36 on his desk. He didn't have nothing. There was nothing in that office except the desk and  
37 him. And it just, and when they started [laughter] the new plant down in North Carolina,  
38 Hagan and Hensler supposedly had worked together at one time. That's how Hagan got  
39 hired. So, when they started this new plant, we was told that Hagan asked Hensler, he  
40 said, "well what's my job going to be down at the new plant?" Hensler told him, "you  
41 don't have a job down there." [laughter]

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

44  
45 **FRED KNIGHT:** It was a good day! [laughter]

1 **INTERVIEWER:** [laughter]  
2  
3 **FRED KNIGHT:** I mean, you know, just went around and shook hands and hellos and  
4 goodbye, you know, all that good stuff.  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?  
7  
8 **FRED KNIGHT:** Well I think it's great. Absolutely.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Why?  
11  
12 **FRED KNIGHT:** I think it will work out perfect. The place looks different there  
13 [laughter]. It amazes me. I seen in the paper the other day and kinda, if you stop and think  
14 about it, it shouldn't be surprising, but it kinda is. They are going to have their own  
15 cement company down there and they are going to make their own cement, so that is  
16 probably going to blow a few cement companies around here blow their minds because  
17 they was probably figuring on getting' in on that, but you stop and think about it, that's  
18 the best way to go. Have your own cement company. Don't have all the trucks running all  
19 over the highways and everything. That was another one. You got time for this ?  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Go ahead. [laughter]  
22  
23 1:28:56  
24  
25 **FRED KNIGHT:** My buddy and I went to one of the seminars that Shell put on and they  
26 had this display of, uh, a miniature display of where the plant was going to be and  
27 everything, so my buddy and I are standing looking at this and asking questions. Well  
28 this one guy is standing there and he says to the guy that was from Shell, he says, [clears  
29 throat], he said "How much truck traffic is there going to be?" and that guy says "well,"  
30 he says "there is going to be amount of truck traffic, you know, because of what's going  
31 on and the changes they have to make and stuff" [coughing] What he said, "I was just  
32 interested." He said, "I go to the mall everyday and walk around in a mall" and the guy  
33 from Shell says, "Well, he said, you really shouldn't have any problems." And my buddy  
34 goes "Where do you live?" and he says "I live, what's that road that runs up out to where  
35 [inaudible]?"  
36  
37 **MRS. KNIGHT:** [Inaudible]  
38  
39 **FRED KNIGHT:** Broadhead Road. He says, "I live out Broadhead Road." And my  
40 buddy goes "For God's sake" he said, "there is not going to be any truck traffic up there."  
41 He said, "What are you an idiot?" The guy turned around and walked away. I mean it's  
42 just. People don't. It's like there is a certain few people in Beaver that was complaining  
43 about the lights and they was complaining about how they tore down, trees, and the only  
44 thing of it is, is a, what was it? The last three or four houses in the one block in Beaver  
45 that was doing all the complaining. Nobody else was complaining. They're worried about



1 the light. Big deal! No light. St. Joe had lights up. Always somebody complaining. But as  
2 far as I am concerned, I'm not going to get to see it, but it'll be good!

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, that concludes my questions for you. If there is something I  
5 haven't covered that you would like to add, this is an opportunity for you to do that.

6  
7 **FRED KNIGHT:** No, not really. We had, ah, of course the guys brought [coughing] we  
8 had a number of deaths down there but, you know, from accidents and stuff. We had  
9 most of that, there was, in fact, ah, ah, right after I got hired there. In fact, I think I was  
10 still working at the furnace plant. We had clocked out and we was going over to the  
11 change house to shower and go home and I seen the nurse and a number of other guys  
12 working right around this manhole cover [coughing]. And I found, come to find out, that  
13 two guys had died down in that manhole. One had, this was before safety [laughter], so.  
14 And then we lost two guys, one guy for sure, two maybe. Here again, they didn't follow  
15 safety, ah, guidelines and one guy passed away I know for sure and I am not sure about  
16 another one. But there was a couple other ones too that, I mean, every plant has 'em,  
17 but...

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** After an employee died tragically in these accidents, was there any  
20 effort by the company or the employees for a memorial service or somehow to  
21 acknowledge this loss to your community?

22  
23 **FRED KNIGHT:** Usually, ah, somebody would, ah, from the plant would, ah, you  
24 know, like go to the funeral service or something, you know, one of the higher-ups would  
25 go, that I'm aware of anyhow.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Well that concludes our interview on a sad note.

28  
29 **FRED KNIGHT:** [laughter]

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** But thank you very much for your time.

32  
33 **FRED KNIGHT:** Oh, no problem. Anytime.

34  
35 (END)

**Bruce Megill**  
**Interview @ September 30, 2016**

## **BRUCE MEGILL**

### **Summary**

The interview with Bruce Megill took place on September 30, 2016 in his home in Georgetown, Pennsylvania. His wife, Rita, was present during the interview. Bruce showed a family photo that included his father, Bill, who had also been a St. Joe employee. He shared various other visual and research materials, which he asked to be donated to the John Heinz History Center. Bruce is a de facto St. Joe historian and is also very knowledgeable about the County Home. He started his career at St. Joe as a summer employee in 1970 and joined the company fulltime in 1972. Bruce spent a year working in the sinter plant, then moved to the power plant, and then back to the sinter plant for six more years before Horsehead Corporation closed the smelter in 2014.

Bruce grew up on his family's farm, which was located where the East Secondary Department was eventually built on the north end of the St. Joe property in an area known as Bellowsville. He tells stories about Bellowsville and his father Bill's life there (before the smelter) and childhood experiences at the County Home. Bruce shares anecdotes from his own experiences growing up around the plant and County Home: the school on the property, the working farm that fed the residents, the doctor who cared for them, the clubhouse, and other interesting stories. He also talks about Lock 6, buildings that were associated with, and the wicker dam across the river.

Bruce's interview covers many of the plant amenities and company perks, with notable accounts of the traditional corn roast and the boat launch. He provides a unique profile of George F. Weaton, the original plant manager, and the decision to build the power plant.

Bruce explains the workings of the sinter plant and the experience of working there, including safety precautions. He talks about the aptitude test that screened people to work in the newly built power plant, his various job responsibilities as he advanced in the power plant from utility man to foreman, and environmental issues pertaining to the power plant. Bruce comments on the impact of the union, the 1979 shutdown and the selection of employees to hire back, as well as the experience of working under the various owners until the plant closed for good in 2014.

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**BRUCE MEGILL**  
**INTERVIEW - 9/30/2016**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
BRUCE MEGILL  
RITA MEGILL

**INTERVIEWER:** Today is September 30, 2016. This is an interview with Bruce Megill. Bruce, could you please state and spell your full name?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Um. Bruce Alan Megill. B-R-U-C-E. A-L-A-N. M-E-G-I-L-L.

**INTERVIEWER:** Your date of birth?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** [REDACTED].

**INTERVIEWER:** And your full address please.

**BRUCE MEGILL:** [REDACTED], Georgetown, PA 15043.

**INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year did you stop working for the company?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** I graduated from high school in, uh, May of 1970, and the first week of June, I started as a summer employee at St. Joe. They would hire students that were going to college over the summer to help, help the cost for their parents. You had to be an employee. And they had a special change house for the summer workers. I did that for two years and then in 1972 I, uh, I went full time. I dropped out of college one class short of a degree and, uh, I went to work there. I spent a year in the sinter plant up on the hill at the smelter and then, uh, a power plant job came up. I went down there as an attendant and then I worked my way up from that to control operator and a foreman.

**INTERVIEWER:** So could you talk a little bit more about your working there as a high school student?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah, uh, it was, it was strange. I got taken out of, uh, average American, it's 1960s neighborhood and thrown in an old mill. It was different. I learned a lot. I learned that people don't talk like they do out on the street in a mill and, uh, but I actually I enjoyed it. I had fun and I got paid for the first time. You know.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were your responsibilities when you were working there as a high school student?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** I, actually, I lucked out because a lot of the students were just given a broom and a shovel and they did clean up. Well, I got sent to the electrical department

1 as a helper. And that's what I did. I ran for parts and tools and stuff like that. It was an  
2 excellent job.

3  
4 0:02:30

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** And your second summer there?

7  
8 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Second summer there I, I worked in the furnace plant as a shipper.  
9 Bringing the zinc off of the machines out to the cooling area. They they'd stamp it and  
10 then it'd go out in trucks. So I, I'd bring the zinc in hot, they'd stamp it the next day, it  
11 would sit and cool for three days and then I loaded the, uh, semis that came in also. I  
12 enjoyed that too.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any kind of formal training that went with this high  
15 school program?

16  
17 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No. No. I just was with somebody for a couple of days and I did it.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I understand you're about as local as one can get to the plant  
20 location.

21  
22 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yes.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please talk about your family's farm on the property?

25  
26 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Sure. My dad was raised on a farm. It's out where 376 goes  
27 through the property, Shell property now. Over towards the woods and the mall, uh, not  
28 towards where the smelter was, I guess that would be north. Uh. But anyway, he, he was  
29 raised in a farmhouse there. Him, him, his sister and five brothers. And, uh, it was in,  
30 uh, the town, there used to be a town there and I had a map for it and I don't know what  
31 happened to it. Uh. Bellowsville was the name of the town there. And there was still a  
32 few, the original houses on the site. They used one for a scale house. Uh. It belonged to  
33 Bellowsville. And it went up through the hollow that goes up towards the mall and there  
34 was houses on both sides of the road and it went back down to the smelter, where the  
35 smelter is. [Coughs] My dad was born there in 1917 and, uh, he, he lived there until  
36 probably his teens. When he was sixteen, he was offered a job by George F. Weaton, the  
37 man that built all that and who the power plant was named for. Uh. He was hired at 16  
38 and he went into the mill and worked. Uh. But dad, since he was eight years old, he  
39 played a guitar and he was really good. And he was in a band and they travelled like to  
40 Ohio, New York, West Virginia. So he had to choose between if he wanted the mill or  
41 playing the guitar. Well, he took the guitar. So then he, he left probably a year later, a  
42 year or so. And to finish that part up, whenever World War II was over, he was in the  
43 service, he came back to St. Joe and they hired him again. And he was there until 1977.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what kind of farm was this?

1 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. They had chickens and some animals. It's, it wasn't acres of  
2 farm. I'd say maybe a, uh, gentleman's farm or something they call that. It was a small  
3 place. I mean it fed them most of the time. Uh. My grandfather. [Laughs] He was not a  
4 good person, and he abused the kids and, uh, some of the things he would do. When I,  
5 when, when my, my mom told me about it when I was young I cried cause I couldn't  
6 believe anybody could be that cruel. But he would. Even though he had a real good job  
7 on the railroad, he'd make them go to the Salvation Army Store for shoes. Even though  
8 he had. First thing they'd ask you if you had a job. My dad remembers sitting on the  
9 street over at Rochester crying cause he couldn't lie. He wouldn't go in and do it. He  
10 come home, he got beat. My grandfather made him climb the coal cars that went  
11 through, it was before the mill, before it went through the property. Him and, uh, the  
12 other five boys, his brothers, they made them throw coal off the cars as fast as they could  
13 and he gave 'em buckets and made 'em go back and pick up all the coal. And, uh, my  
14 dad, uh, from an early age until the day he died, had a hole on his forehead. It was pretty  
15 deep. You could put your finger in it. Because he wasn't fast enough to throw a log on  
16 the fire, my grandfather picked the log up and threw it at him. But, uh, there was a lot of  
17 other stuff but it's per. Anyway, he was an excellent father to us and my mom, um, mom  
18 one time said, "Do you know why he's so easy on you, you guys?" Because in our family  
19 there was three, and I was the baby. And he says, "Because he's said if he ever had a  
20 family he wouldn't, he would've never treat 'em the way he was treated."

21

22 0:07:03

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** What was your dad, your dad's name?

25

26 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Bill. But, uh, anyway, he lived there for those years and they did a  
27 lot of things. It was empty property before they built the smelter of course. All the way  
28 over to the Poor Farm. The old County Home. And what my dad would do, he'd do  
29 anything for, um, you know, money. He had a red wagon and he, he delivered  
30 newspapers to the Poor Farm. And he'd go in with his papers, maybe 30 or 40. He'd  
31 walk up and down the hall and stick his head in a room and a lot of the people would buy  
32 papers from him. And they knew that he didn't have anything. So they would save food  
33 for him off of trays and stuff like that and the cook at the County Home would bring him  
34 down. [Coughs] I'm sorry. And offer him soup, you know, the special of the day and, I  
35 mean, he loved those old people and they loved him and, uh, he said it was so hard when  
36 he'd stick his head in the door and somebody would be gone. And he'd say, "What  
37 happened to them?" "Well they died last night." It happened all the time. But, uh, he took  
38 me on a tour. I don't want to get into the Poor Farm, but if you want to talk about that  
39 afterwards cause there's a lot for that too. Um. But, uh, he spent his childhood there at  
40 the Poor Farm. He got invited to all their holiday picnics and parties and stuff like that.  
41 And, uh, so he lived there until he left at 16. And then, um, he got married in 1940. He  
42 married my mom before, that was of course before the war. Uh. He, he went to, um,  
43 Ambridge, PA. Ambridge Company. They built most of the bridges that are in this  
44 country and they switched over to LSTs. That's what they were building for the war  
45 effort.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What's an LST?

2

3 0:08:58

4

5 **BRUCE MEGILL:** That's a small sort of ship. Like a battleship. Like a. It's used as a  
6 landing craft. Stuff like that. That's odd because there was one went up the Ohio River.  
7 Rita, what was it a couple of years ago?

8

9 **RITA:** Yeah.

10

11 **BRUCE MEGILL:** They took it up to the point in Pittsburgh. So, so everybody could  
12 see, and it was built in Ambridge. I mean if you look on the Internet they'll show you  
13 exactly what they are. And, uh, that's what he built until 1943. [Clears Throat] And then  
14 when they had all they needed, uh, they drafted all the men. So he went, he went into the  
15 service and he got sent to Fort Knox and somehow they found out he, he could cook and  
16 they sent him to chef school and the diploma is here somewhere. And he passed and he,  
17 he ret. By the end of the war, he left the war as a C4 sergeant, and he was over that, over  
18 the whole, all the other chefs at Fort Knox. He didn't see any, any action. But he had a  
19 brother that died at D-day. Uh. The oldest boy, Warren. Uh. And I think after he died  
20 they protected the other four. They were all in the service. All five of 'em were in the  
21 war. I think after that they protected the other, the other brothers.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** When he came back from the war, did he go straight into St. Joe's  
24 for employment?

25

26 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah, yeah, he went, yeah. Uh. I got a brother and a sister, uh,  
27 Bill, who's named after my dad was, he was born in '43. And then, it was, that was right  
28 before he went in and then I had a sister born in '47. He started there in '47.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** And what position was he working in there?

31

32 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. He worked in the furnace plant. He worked there until the  
33 early '70s. He hurt his back and they allowed him to finish out his time as a security  
34 guard. And he loved that cause he got to see everybody going in and out of the gate.  
35 But, uh, he had a stroke in '77 and retired. He lived to be 80, 84 years old. So, he lived a  
36 long life. Uh. But he used to tell me stories about the property. [Coughs] Back when the  
37 sale was approaching, I had I bet you 30 people come to me and said, "You said your dad  
38 said there was a cemetery on this property. Do you know where it is?" I said he told me  
39 there was graves on that property, but I don't remember. I mean we weren't there at the  
40 time. And it's my fault for not trying to find out because I could've saved people a lot of  
41 digging and then I heard that they found some skulls. It was in the paper there. Uh. But  
42 he had told me there was a cemetery on that property.

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** Where the farm, where your family's farm was?

45

1 **BRUCE MEGILL:** In Bellowsville, I would say. I'm not sure which house cause where  
2 I think he, where it was, is, there was only a house probably a few hundred yards away.  
3 But back in those days they buried, a lot of people were buried in their yards. So, you  
4 never know.

5  
6 0:12:11

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** How far back was this land, your family's land?

9  
10 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. I couldn't tell you. Probably I don't know. Early 1900s I  
11 would say. Um. My dad almost died there. Uh. After they built the smelter and before  
12 he went there, the boys would all go swimming in the river cause it was like here, it's  
13 right here. And one day, my dad dove in and they all dove in and they all looked around  
14 and he didn't come back up, my dad. So they were all starting to panic. Here he got  
15 under the barge, come up underneath the barge. He didn't know which way to go. All he  
16 could feel was steel. He swam the length of the barge instead of going a few feet and up  
17 and out. He almost died and, or I wouldn't be here. And the one time that they, uh, they  
18 said they were down there swimming. They all start. Somebody hollered and, and a  
19 body washed up against 'em. It, it got hung up by the barge. Of course, they called the  
20 police. The police came down and here that was, he was a security guard up in  
21 Pittsburgh somewhere. And there was a robbery. He was shot and thrown in the river  
22 and that's where they found him right there.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** When did your family sell the property to St. Joe?

25  
26 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Probably after all the boys were gone and, and my aunt, I had one  
27 aunt, and, uh, that would probably have been late maybe '30s, early '40s.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** And what part, part of St. Joe ended up being built where your  
30 family's farm was?

31  
32 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. Where our east secondary department was out across the  
33 highway in Monaca. My dad said that their farmhouse sat right where the classification  
34 building was. That was the main building where everything was divided and separated.  
35 That's where their farm sat.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Could you describe your experiences growing up on the farm as  
38 a company kid? Some of your favorite anecdotes.

39  
40 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well I always had stories about each thing. About the County  
41 Home and, uh, some of the stories of why things were there. Like a lot of people want to  
42 know why there was a jail cell in the Poor Farm, and I asked my dad that. "Why's there a  
43 jail cell? I mean this is a retirement home." And he said, "Well a lot of the old guys were  
44 still in pretty good shape and they'd go out and sit outside. Some of them would take off  
45 for the bars in the area and they, they'd get a phone call from a bartender. They were  
46 down there trying to drink and they'd get out. And then whenever they started to really



1 watch 'em bad, moonshiners used to go to the edge of the woods and call 'em over and  
2 they sold 'em moonshine. So anytime they got drunk or drank moonshine, some of them  
3 would go wild and they would put him in a cell for a night to sleep it off."  
4

5 0:15:14  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall doing at the plant as a kid when your father  
8 worked there? What involvement with activities and things?  
9

10 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well at the retire. Uh. He, he hurt his leg real bad, ankle. I think he  
11 broke his ankle back about 1957, '58. I was about six. And, uh, so, so he didn't lose  
12 work, the County Home had just moved to Brighton Township. So the building was  
13 empty. And they decided they should have a guard down there for a while. Because  
14 there was a lot of civil defense. The civil defense department kept food in the basement.  
15 In fact, there was still some civil defense markers on the building as it was torn down.  
16 That was, you know, I mean, this was the '50s. There was going to be the big bomb  
17 drop. So we had to have food and that's where it was. It was in the basement of the  
18 County Home.  
19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Food, food for people...  
21

22 **BRUCE MEGILL:** For anybody that was still alive. They could eat it. I saw it. Well  
23 anyway, one day my dad said, uh, he, we'd work shift work down there. I think it was  
24 evening turn or night turn, and he asked me if, and I was off on vacation, holidays, and  
25 wanted to know if I wanted to go with him. And I did. I went down to the smelter with  
26 him. There was nobody. He just relieved some other guard. So we went in. I mean, we  
27 had a train and things set up and I'd walk with him to all the stations. He had to punch a  
28 key all around the County Home, which took about 20 minutes. Well, uh, this one time,  
29 he said, uh, to me, he said, "Um. Would you like to, to make a round for me?" I knew  
30 where all the keys were. I said, "I don't know." I was scared. There was a lot of dark  
31 rooms around there. So I said, "All right." And then he kind of laughed like I was afraid.  
32 Uh. Well I grabbed that clock and took off and I ran. They probably couldn't figure out  
33 and they looked at that why every one of them stamps was just a hair apart because I ran  
34 from station to station. And I made it back and I did it, but I'd look and I kept thinking  
35 somebody was gonna come walking out of those rooms cause my dad told me of all the  
36 people that died there. And it was thousands maybe. And then I had to go past the  
37 morgue. It was bricked up in recent years. But when I was there in '58, um, there was all  
38 these, probably the size of a wall like this, maybe twice as a high, with all the racks in it  
39 with the, with the drawers pulled out. You know, they held bodies. And it was  
40 refrigerated until somebody come in and got the body, they took 'em to the morgue. Uh.  
41 I really ran past that room. [Coughs] Excuse me. Um. But anyway, uh, I, I was off for  
42 two weeks. I, I went with him every night to work down there and, uh, I can remember  
43 that. I remember the, I had skates at the time. That was before the surfboards and stuff.  
44 And there was a lot of ramps in the place because of, uh, the old people in wheelchairs. I  
45 remember skating 90 miles an hour down those ramps all over that place. And I looked  
46 out, stepped out the door on the one side and I thought what's all that noise, and it was the

1 power plant. It was being built. I remember all that pink and blue. I thought what in the  
2 heck is that. I said to my dad, "What is that?" He said, "That's the power plant they're  
3 building. That's why they bought, they wanted all this property." So, and that was, it  
4 belonged to the County Home originally. And then all the surrounding area. I remember  
5 when they were full of corn. Cause it was, uh, like I said in the story of the Poor Farm it  
6 was self-sufficient. They had their own barns. Everybody talks about the barn down at  
7 Raccoon Creek that's still there. There was a barn at the power plant also that was there.  
8 Some of 'em might still be there. But when I went to the power plant it was still in '72, it  
9 was still in pretty good shape. And, I mean, they had their own pigs, their own beef, and  
10 I went back to part of this, this photograph here they had a smokehouse. It was brick  
11 made out of the same kind of brick that the, uh, building was made out of with no floor  
12 and the eaves were opened, and they'd build smoldering fires in on the dirt and hang all  
13 these hams in there. Smoker.

14

15 0:19:25

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** So when did those, the farm buildings that were part of the Poor  
18 Farm come down?

19

20 **BRUCE MEGILL:** It was all tore down when you guys come in. That smokehouse was  
21 still there. Nobody knew what it was cause they'd look at the dirt floor, nothing in there,  
22 but that's what it was. And, uh, something about the doctor in that place. This was  
23 interesting too. I wish I would've got more information on this. Uh. He liked the doctor.  
24 Uh. Usually in the County Home, even this County Home, the new one, they always  
25 have a doctor on staff because there's, there's so many elderly people. But the doctor that  
26 worked the Poor Farm, it's the only job he could get. He was in some kind of accident,  
27 where, I don't know if it was electrical or what, but his face was all disfigured. And it  
28 didn't bother my dad cause he got used to it like everybody wants, and then really a great  
29 guy. But there was no way he could go into a practice by himself. So they hired him as  
30 their doctor, and like I said he was in a severe accident. He got burned really bad in the  
31 face. As far as I know, he still could, he still could do his job.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you, uh, participate in some of the activities for families?

34

35 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Oh, yeah. We went to, they had these...

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were a child?

38

39 **BRUCE MEGILL:** They used to have, uh, uh, they used to go to amusement parks and  
40 they used to have corn roasts out at the plant and they...

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you, could you describe a corn roast?

43

44 **BRUCE MEGILL:** A corn roast is they'd come in with the whole pile of, uh, stainless  
45 steel pots. And they made 'em in the mill. You know, uh, what they'd do is they'd take  
46 stainless steel and they'd roll it. I mean we could build anything in our structural shop.

1 And anyway, they'd build fires out there and we'd get 'em steaming good and then they'd  
2 come in with a few truck fulls of corn. And everybody would husk 'em and throw 'em in  
3 those pots and then you'd bring other stuff too like baked beans and something to drink  
4 and, uh, I mean they were cheap to do and everybody enjoyed 'em.

5  
6 0:21:35

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did they hold the corn roasts when you were going to them?

9  
10 **BRUCE MEGILL:** It was right before you turned into the smelter there was, uh, like if  
11 you came our way, which would be heading north. There's a road that used to drop down  
12 and it was a depot later for, for PennDOT. They kept salt and everything down there. It  
13 was down in there. It was like a little hollow. [Coughs] And, uh, uh, also after we took  
14 over the Poor Farm, they set our carpenters down there and they, they built a, uh, picnic  
15 area attached to the County Home and it was, it was nice. The zinc was, the, the main  
16 counter was made out of zinc that was smelted there, and it was all made out of stone,  
17 stonework and each department would have picnics there in the summer. Like the power  
18 plant would have their picnic and then the furnace plant would have their picnic. And  
19 they paid for everything. A lot of stuff. I mean. Back in those days, they even bought  
20 beer and everything, which they stopped towards the end. But, uh, oh, we had fun. They,  
21 they had bocce courts there, volleyball courts. [Coughs] Um. I can't think of what else,  
22 but they'd play poker. They'd sit around and play cards. You know. They did the  
23 picnics.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** I heard, uh, one or two references that the bocce courts in that area  
26 was just for salaried people.

27  
28 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** No?

31  
32 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No. Everybody used. Everybody used those at picnics and anyone  
33 was able to reserve that if they wanted it. You know. It wasn't salaried. That. They got  
34 along excellently with the workforce, salaried. Some of it started to change after the  
35 union came in. It was more, uh, business than it was cause they took care of us. They  
36 had, they had all this at the Poor Farm. All those picnics. They had the auditorium that  
37 we all loved and enjoyed. They had a cafeteria to feed people. I mean they had, uh,  
38 picnics at outdoor park in Youngstown. And, I mean, they took, they took care of their  
39 men. And then towards the end, starting around the end of the '70s, it started changing.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, we'll get to some of that a little bit later. When people say  
42 Josephtown, how was that area defined to you and how long did you think of the area as  
43 being called Josephtown?

44  
45 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Josephtown is what they, they called the area of the smelter.  
46 Everything surrounding it. Like the Poor Farm, the mill, anything in that, within that,

1 they just nicknamed Josephtown. And where that name come from I'm not really sure.  
2 But, uh, I wrote a story. I have several here that I wrote and I could not find the one on  
3 George F. Weaton. And it was, maybe the best one. In the information. I don't know  
4 how much information you have on him, but he was a great man. And, uh...

5  
6 0:24:47

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** I think, I think I have a copy of that.

9  
10 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Do you?

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** I think I found a copy of that in the pile that Terry had and I made a  
13 copy of the, the typescript.

14  
15 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well that's good if you did cause that, I'll tell you exactly how that  
16 happened. Right. They were talking about. The first building they were talking about  
17 tearing down down there was the old main office. It was a building made out of formed  
18 cement. It was. They built it in the early '50s. And a lot of times when they moved out  
19 they didn't even take anything. They'd just leave. So everybody being there snooping  
20 around, t,he doors were opened. So this, this one evening, uh, I went up there. It was  
21 something. With a friend of mine and the door was open. We walked right in and we  
22 started looking around and we, we, when were in the basement water was leaking cause  
23 all the drains broke. They didn't drain any of the water pipe, pipes. And I saw these pile  
24 of papers and they weren't three inches away from water. They were just right there  
25 about to consume it. I started picking it up and it was all stuff about Weaton. Stuff about  
26 the smelter and how it got built. I couldn't believe nobody cared about that stuff. I mean  
27 it was this whole history. I built that, I wrote that whole story off that stuff I picked up  
28 off the floor in that main office.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you still have those things you picked up off the floor?

31  
32 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No. I gave 'em to, I told you, I gave 'em to somebody, and I gave  
33 'em to several people cause what they would do, they were like me. They were my age,  
34 and they'd say, "Boy, my dad would, uh, would love to see these." He was a retired dad  
35 like mine. And I'd say, "Okay, but I want 'em back." Well that happened so many times  
36 I, I never got 'em back and I don't know who the last person that had 'em. But I do have  
37 this on George F. Weaton and, uh, you can have that. You can have anything I have here.  
38 [Coughs] I made it for you.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you.

41  
42 **BRUCE MEGILL:** But he was a good person and what surprised me, I think it was in  
43 Cherry Hill, New York, maybe New Jersey. He worked with Thomas Edison. Worked  
44 under him. And, uh, I couldn't believe that. I never had been told that story or anything.  
45 And, you know, he helped out, uh, develop that, the furnaces we used. Uh. Him and a  
46 man named, uh, Najarian, that's who built the furnaces. And this guy was the kind of

1 people who built things. Think about it. He, he built that in the height of the Depression.  
2 He started in 1930 and the stock market collapsed in '29. But he was, uh, even though he,  
3 he was, he was highly respected and my dad knew him personally. And for some reason  
4 though he got the name of the Old Man. And that doesn't seem respectable to me, but  
5 that's what everybody called him and evidently it didn't bother him because he, he  
6 allowed it. Uh. But anyway, back in the '40s, right before the war, he built a cafeteria  
7 within the smelter and the food there was unbelievable. Right up the end. It closed in  
8 '79. And, uh, I mean all the truck drivers that drove in from all the plants, they hauled  
9 stuff in and, uh, would all go over there to eat. But he made the statement that if you give  
10 a man a good warm meal he'll give you a day's work. And that, that was so true. And,  
11 uh, he cared about people. He'd show up in the furnace plant basement, the worst  
12 possible area in that whole smelter. He'd go walking in and sit down and talk to those  
13 guys. And he, you know, the executives of, of today, they wouldn't care about those  
14 people or what any of that, uh, but that's what he did. And, uh, uh, my family's George F.  
15 Weaton story is, uh, they built the, the furnace plant was divided into two ends. The  
16 small end and the big end. The small end was built in '33. They built the big end later in,  
17 uh, the '50s. That was a lot higher, the furnaces were bigger. [Coughs] So, in the zinc  
18 process, you used a lot of electricity, really a lot. So this was probably 1955, '56, he had  
19 a meeting with Duquesne Light, our local power company, and he said if we plan on  
20 having these furnaces, how about a deal on the power? Here's what we're going to use.  
21 And whenever he saw the amount he got up and threw the thing on the table and he says,  
22 "To hell with you." He says, "I'll build my own power plant." And he went down there  
23 and he did it, and that's why our power plant was there in the first place is because  
24 George F. Weaton, and it was named for him.

25  
26 0:29:25

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Before that power plant was built, what was the power source for the  
29 plant?

30  
31 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. Duquesne Light.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** So, it was all purchased power?

34  
35 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yes. And we not only, he not only was wise, he, he saved that, that  
36 company would've closed in the early '70s if not for him, because with the power, the  
37 power plant always made money because anything extra we sold. Out on, uh, the grid.  
38 [Coughs] And it made money and, and many times it pulled the smelter out of bad times.  
39 And, uh, like I said, his name was over the door when you walked in. And we have a  
40 photograph, and I almost had it for you, a friend of mine finally got it and if I can leave it  
41 somewhere the next time you're up here give me a call and I'll meet you. It's a pretty  
42 good-sized photograph. George F. Weaton turning throttle valves on the new turbine. It  
43 hung in the, uh, foyer of the power plant ever since it was built. And then it disappeared  
44 towards the end, because I wanted to make sure that it wasn't lost or they just demolished  
45 it. And here I found out who took it, then I found out where it ended up, and I called the  
46 other day the guy and he said I could have it. So, you can have it whenever I get it.

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**INTERVIEWER:** All right. And he is turning the, the...

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. A throttle valve.

**INTERVIEWER:** A throttle valve.

**BRUCE MEGILL:** [Coughs] On a turbine, it's high-pressure steam, and you're letting steam go through the turbine that turns the turbine and turns the rotor, which makes the power. He was opening the throttle valve. They said it was the first one. The first time they put steam to the unit he was there to do that. It just looks like an old guy with a, you know, old shoes and no hair.

**INTERVIEWER:** Wow. That'd be, that'd be a great photo to have for this.

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah, it would be.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Um. I just want to backtrack a little bit.

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Sure.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember the school?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Oh, yeah. My dad went to that school.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you go to that school?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** No. No. Uh. There was two schools. Most people probably only remember the first one. I remember both of 'em. The first one was when you went in, you drove into what was the main entrance. It was where the scale house was to the left. There was a brick schoolhouse there and a house, and that house also belonged to Bellowsville that whole deal. A house and some pine trees and then you made the turn up towards the main gate. Well, right when you'd go straight, what they called the contractors' gate if you were going in the mill like a truck driver or something. Right when you were crossing the tracks towards the Ohio River on the right-hand side, there was a wooden schoolhouse. One-room schoolhouse. It sat there for years. My dad went to that school and, uh, a family actually, a family that they'd felt sorry for, I'm not sure the whole story. It was the Bowser family, uh, lived in that house for years. I don't know. I don't think they ever paid rent or anything. And then eventually that school it was converted to a house. Uh. But my dad went to school. My dad had a sense of humor. He was a funny guy. My dad says that [Coughs], he said he quit school in the eighth grade because his old man was in the ninth grade and he didn't want to pass him up. [Laughter] But it's amazing how these guys would drop out of school like that. My

1 dad, he had an eighth-grade education and if you talked to him, you wouldn't have  
2 known it, you know. That amazes me. How much he did learn and knew.

3  
4 0:33:01

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So why were there the two schools there?

7  
8 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well they, well, they needed more space, uh, I guess. And they,  
9 they built the brick school and then instead of tearing the original school down it went to,  
10 uh, uh, Bowser family and then eventually it was tore down when they moved out. I used  
11 to have photographs of that school. Cause that was the school my dad went to.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** How about the picnic grounds?

14  
15 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. At the County Home, at the Poor Farm? Yeah, that's what I  
16 was talking about where they built, they built that area. See in this photograph of the  
17 County Home this was all, used to all be corn. And what a lot of people don't know is  
18 the County Home, this, every photograph you ever saw was taken from the rear. This is  
19 the back of the building. The main building faced the river. That's the way they built  
20 things back then. It was built in 1905. Uh. The Historical Society of Beaver County  
21 come down towards the end and got some stuff. And they got that plaque out of there.  
22 But anyway [Coughs] the front, it was made up of three buildings. A main building and  
23 two small buildings on either side. The main building had columns that had to be 30 or  
24 40-feet high on the front porch of this and wrought iron railings. [Coughs] And it  
25 overlooked the river. Well, as the County Home needed to expand after '05, they added  
26 these rooms to the back here. These were all added on in the '30s and '40s, but it's  
27 actually the back of the County Home. Something that's interesting too, I thought, my  
28 dad told me about it. [Coughs] I don't know how familiar you are, but right across the  
29 river from where the power plant was there's Lock 6 and they're all not any higher than  
30 the river. There's one up there in the Georgetown that is still there I guess. But what they  
31 were, they were buildings. There was two main buildings and a pump house they called  
32 it. They're up in, right across from the park right there's only two because a woman was  
33 speeding there one day and went off the road because they were right by the road and hit  
34 the foundation and actually destroyed the building. They had to tear it down. So that's  
35 why there's only two instead of three. Well the two were houses. One was houses for the  
36 families that operated it. There used to be a wicker dam across there. It went from there  
37 across to the part where the power plant is. And I asked my dad, "What do you mean  
38 wicker?" [Coughs] And he says, "They, they'd laid cement on the floor of the river, which  
39 is still there, all the way to the other side, to the power plant side, and this pump house  
40 was right in line with it. And it had a big groove in the cement all the way over. They  
41 got these wicker panels." A pretty good size he said. You needed like a come along to  
42 get it. They'd sit the, a wicker panel in and there would be, uh, a piston that went all the  
43 way, way out and they would shove that wicker. This was in time of flood. Trying for  
44 control of floods. It's, they'd shove those wicker dam out, pull it back, put another one in  
45 and shove it out until they were almost clear across the river or, and surprisingly my dad  
46 said it would change the height of the river several feet even though a lot of the water

1 leaked through. It would slow it up. Well, he told me that once, and he told me, he said,  
2 "Next time the river is really low go look over there and look there and you'll see a ripple  
3 in the top of the water where the water got low and it was about six-foot, five or six-foot  
4 high, the cement. The water hits that and comes up and makes a line." One day I  
5 remember I was at the power plant. It was really low, the water. I got up on a boiler and  
6 I could see it. You could see that line going across.

7  
8 0:36:56

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Of, of the kids you grew up with what percent would you say had a  
11 family member employed by St. Joe Lead?

12  
13 **BRUCE MEGILL:** [Coughs] Um. When I was in elementary school, they'd go around  
14 the room and they'd say, "Where's your dad work?" And it would be J&L, J&L, J&L, St.  
15 Joe, J&L, J&L, J&L, St. Joe. So, I'd say one out of four probably.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. You mentioned that you had, um, other family members who  
18 worked at St. Joe?

19  
20 **BRUCE MEGILL:** My father-in-law, he worked there. My father-in-law, he drove a  
21 truck into there. That's how he knew about the place. And they lived right on the West  
22 Virginia-Maryland border down by Deep Creek Lake. I don't know if you know where  
23 that's at. But anyway, I don't know if you have ever been in Uniontown, PA? There's a  
24 mountain. That's where you really go up into the Appalachians. There's, there's a hill  
25 down there called Summit, Summit Mountain. It goes like four or five miles straight  
26 down. There's truck pull-offs. I don't know how many people have died on that hill, but  
27 they'll, if they make it to town then there's these huge trees. You can see the bark's all  
28 knocked off where they lost control, these trucks. [Coughs] He was driving a load up to  
29 St. Joe from here, from there, down there somewhere he got it and dropping something.  
30 And they'd always, it always had signs. It still does in other places. Stop your brakes,  
31 check your brakes before you start down this grade. Well, he started down that hill and  
32 he didn't have any brakes and he ran the hill, ran the semi into the hillside and he didn't,  
33 didn't get hurt. Well the next load he hauled in here he asked for an app. At St. Joe, he  
34 asked for an application. And they gave it to him and that's when all her uncles and  
35 everybody came up. An uncle came up and went to J&L.

36  
37 **RITA:** Uh-huh. And then down to St. Joe. Yeah.

38  
39 **BRUCE MEGILL:** And some of 'em went to St. Joe. My old, or youngest boy. He  
40 won't, when he got out of high school in 1998, '98, '99, he wanted to go down there. And  
41 I could've got him a job, but I said I'll be fortunate if I make it out of there. I don't want  
42 you to be in your 30s and lose your job and that's exactly what, what would've happened.  
43 He's 30, 36.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Did your brother work there as well?  
46



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2

3 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No. He's a schoolteacher. He went to, he, he went to the college  
4 and got his Master's Degree. He taught school at Monaca for a lot of years. He retired in  
5 the '90s.

6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did any women in your family ever work at the plant?

8

9 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No. But there was still some of 'em there when I went there. Uh.  
10 They, they sent 'em all to like the shops. Uh. Out in the shops where they welded and  
11 stuff. So they were out of the dirt and the pollution. Cause they found out that a lot of  
12 that zinc dust could make a woman sterile. So to avoid any lawsuits they got 'em all out  
13 of the mill.

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you know about women who were working there during  
16 World War II?

17

18 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Boy, I had the perfect guy who could've talked to you, but he's no  
19 longer with us. He used to talk about them all the time. He's...

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?

22

23 **BRUCE MEGILL:** He said they, he said they did their work. They, cause they were  
24 hard workers. There was no complaints with any of 'em. Stros, Dave Strosser. You  
25 know, he worked with 'em.

26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember any of the stories he told you about them?

28

29 **BRUCE MEGILL:** The only thing I remember is they didn't take anything off  
30 anybody. [Laughs] But as far as stories, boy, I wish I would've asked him more.

31

32 **RITA:** You could say they held their own.

33

34 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah.

35

36 **RITA:** I remember him saying that. The women held their own.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** And what happened when the guys came back from the war?

39

40 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I don't believe they were made to leave. I think they offered 'em all  
41 still jobs cause they still, still probably, uh, Nosker's aunt worked there. Sperry. But, uh,  
42 slowly they were gone 'til they got to one and then they were gone.

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** I read somewhere that the, they lowered the retirement age for  
45 women from 65 to 60.

46

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2

3 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Oh, yeah. I didn't know that.

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** So that might've been to encourage early retirement to open up jobs  
6 for the men.

7

8 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. Probably.

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

11

12 **BRUCE MEGILL:** On down below the power plant, out, up Raccoon Creek up where,  
13 uh, right after you make the turn at the, the bridge off Raccoon Creek there's, there's a  
14 boat club. St. Joe Boat Club for the last 40, 45 years. Well in the early '60s, my dad  
15 bought a boat and we used to launch it over at Rochester, PA, up by Monaca where we  
16 lived and it was really a bad dock. It would tear the boat up, tear the trailer. One day, my  
17 mother and my dad and me were riding up the Raccoon Creek really slow, and my, uh,  
18 mom said, "Who owns this land right here?" And my dad says, "We do." He said, she  
19 said, "Right there's a perfect spot for your boat club. It's right down on the water. It'd be  
20 easy to build a ramp." My dad went in the next day and talked to Chuck Henderson, who  
21 was the plant manager for years. And he told her idea and he said, "You know, Bill,  
22 that's a good idea." Within a week, they were working down there, and they built the boat  
23 club. Uh. Uh. The shelter is still there. A big shelter. [Coughs] And my dad was the  
24 president, until he died, of the boat club. And that was all, all because of, uh, a statement  
25 that that'd be a good place for a boat club.

26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. When you...

28

29 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Also, also down right in that same area, not to interrupt is, uh,  
30 where the road goes across the iron bridge, up towards where the boat club is there used  
31 to be a wooden bridge across and the piers are still there. You can still see the stone in  
32 the piers. Um. My mom, when she was young, her and her family used to go to  
33 Frankfort Springs, which is out the road here a ways, there was a springs, hot springs. It  
34 used to be really big around the turn of the century. They were going there one, one, one  
35 day and all of a sudden my grandfather was, her dad was driving and he barely got it  
36 stopped and he looked and the, uh, bridge was gone. It was laying in the creek. And  
37 later on before they replaced the bridge a guy went off it with a horse. I heard the horse  
38 and he, they both drowned. But it's on, it's like a, it's right by the boat club. If you go to  
39 the boat club and you can see it. Right there. That's where the road used to come across.  
40 That's in, I think that's in that story on Frankfort Road. Yeah.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** When you started working at the plant in 1972, after your two years  
43 of, two summers of working there as a high school student, what job were you hired for?

44

45 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I was hired as, uh, a cleanup man in the sinter plant. And it was,  
46 uh, it was a cultural shock from working with the electricians or being a shipper because I

1 was handed a broom and shovel and a wheelbarrow and said clean this up and that's what  
2 I did for the first year.

3  
4 0:44:17

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you describe the role of the sinter plant in the process of the  
7 smelter?

8  
9 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. They make the actual feed for the smelter or the furnaces.  
10 Uh. With, with the sinter, you got various things that you, what it is it cooks. It sends  
11 the, uh, this material and it looks like a piece of cinder, but a lot of people think it was a  
12 cinder plant, but it wasn't. Sinter. It just looks like slag. It's a mixture of everything you  
13 need for the feed for the furnaces. There's, uh, zinc ore used to be in there and stuff like  
14 that. And then it'd go through and it would, it would bake it. It went under a burner and  
15 it would be. See there was an old and a new sinter, plant. Uh. The old sinter, plant had,  
16 had these machines. They were only about six-foot wide and maybe this deep. The new  
17 one was one big machine. It was probably 20 feet across and it, it went for 100 feet and it  
18 would, it would make that sinter, hard and then it would go off the end and it would grind  
19 it up and it would go up to the furnace plant and into the furnaces.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** When was that new larger sinter machine put in?

22  
23 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Probably, uh, I'd say early '80s. I could be wrong though. It was  
24 either the early '80s or late '70s.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** So, could you describe your job responsibilities throughout your  
27 time working in the sinter and what kind of work schedule you had?

28  
29 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, when I worked in the sinter plant the first time, that first year,  
30 I was on the cleanup gang and that's all daylight. Like 5:30 to 2:30, 1:30. And, uh, dirty,  
31 very, very dirty job. [Clears Throat] And that was in the old sinter plant. Now, when I  
32 went, went back to the new sinter plant, I was a shift foreman because I had been a  
33 foreman at the power plant, which closed. And, uh, up there I just had to, you know, I  
34 mean, I had a whole new crew and everything of course, uh, to supervise, but...

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of safety precautions did you need to take for working in  
37 the sinter plant?

38  
39 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, you had to have the standard hardhat, glasses, safety glasses,  
40 steel-toed shoes. Uh. If you worked in the sinter plant, the second time, the new sinter  
41 plant, you had to wear greens and they were pants, jacket, green. They're, they're flame  
42 retardant because there's a lot of sparks and fire around. And you had to wear those and  
43 that's about it.

44  
45 0:46:56

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Any issues with what you were breathing in the sinter?  
2

3 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Oh, respirator all the time in the building because it's really, really.  
4 I mean there was danger signs in every doorway, you know.  
5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any kind of organized safety training, drills, uh emergency  
7 evacuation?  
8

9 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. Yes. Yeah, we had that. The shift foreman had a safety  
10 meeting, uh, once a month with his guys and, uh, I had about 12 I think. And then, uh, if  
11 there was anything special, we'd go to the personnel building and they'd hold it for like  
12 everybody, anything. I mean they did, they did strive on safety.  
13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did the company provide for you to work in  
15 the sinter plant and to move up in there?  
16

17 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Um. They didn't really, when I went back after the power plant, I,  
18 I, I didn't receive any because they knew that I already knew my job. I'd been sent to  
19 various classes and, and I had some schooling on being a foreman even before I was.  
20 And they knew that I, all I needed to learn was the new rules. That's about all. But, uh...  
21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you get before that then? You mentioned  
23 you got some training cause you were a foreman.  
24

25 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. They would hold classes. They would bring a sociologist or  
26 motivational speaker or something in from some of the local colleges. And some of those  
27 I had to go to school like every day for a week. It would be just like a classroom. You  
28 know. And they were, they were made up of foremen and foremen-to-be. See they, they  
29 used to have a relief foreman there, which I did that for a while. I was on payroll, but I, if  
30 my foreman should take off, I would replace him for that day or whatever. So, so we  
31 were invited to those too.  
32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** So how many years total did you spend in the sinter plant?  
34

35 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. I was there a year the first time and the second probably six  
36 years.  
37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you make the move from the sinter plant to the power  
39 plant?  
40

41 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. A bid came up. Uh. A job bid would be on all bulletin boards  
42 and it said must qualify on aptitude test. It'd scare a lot of people. I just got out of  
43 school. Out of college. It didn't bother me. Well they said whenever they, they built the  
44 plant in '57 that they went to the auditorium and it was full of employees. They were  
45 going to talk about the new power plant, who could go. And a few of the guys that were  
46 there told me they said to start off with, you have to pass aptitude test. Said half of the

1 people in there walked out. Because maybe they were like my dad, eighth-grade  
2 education or something. So anyway, they gave, so to go to the power plant, you had to  
3 take this test. So I, I bid on it. Forty-four people bid on, on that. There was two job  
4 openings down there as an attendant. And, uh, uh, so I, I went over. One day I come in  
5 early. I took the testing. It was, it was hard, but it wasn't, it didn't seem that hard to me.  
6 I guess. But anyway it's the same test they gave you to be an electrician. So, so anyway I  
7 come to find out that I got a phone call that I got the job and there was other people in  
8 my, that was working with me who also bid on it. Some of them were older than me.  
9 That doesn't matter. You go by. Well anyway, I, I said, I told some people there that I  
10 got the power plant job and he said well, if you got it, he got it. Well, he didn't get it. I  
11 was the only one that passed the test out of 44 people. Uh. They just hired 12 new  
12 people. They went up. They gave them the test and didn't even tell 'em why. Just gave  
13 'em the test. And they gave it to the one that scored the highest. He was a, a former  
14 schoolteacher and he was out of a job and couldn't find work. And he passed. So him  
15 and I, I didn't even know him, come right off the street. He went right to the power plant  
16 with me.

17

18 0:51:15

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was your initial job in the power plant?

21

22 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, I started out as a, a utility man. That's exactly what it says.  
23 Anything. Like I'd fill in on vacations in the summer. I'd learn these upper, upgrade  
24 jobs, you know, like the attendant and the boiler man, control operator. I'd learn these  
25 jobs and then I filled in in the summer. And then in the winter there wasn't very many  
26 vacations. Well, we would paint and do stuff like that. I felt like I was in the service.  
27 That's all I was doing. Painting. That's why I still refuse to paint. Ask her. I hate  
28 painting.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you receive any technical training for these various jobs within  
31 the power plant?

32

33 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Oh, yeah. You, you got a check-off list they called it. It was  
34 probably equal to maybe 20 sheets of paper and it was on there, every job you had to do  
35 and there was a stopping point for a check off. That's why they called it that. A foreman  
36 had to check you off. Say I did the first, the first one on feed pumps. I'd, I'd look it over.  
37 Okay. I know this. I'd give mine. Everybody had their name on theirs. I'd give mine to  
38 the foreman and he'd say let's go. We'd go down. Okay. Explain this. What's that?  
39 We'd go all over. If he thought I knew it, he'd autograph it and I could start working on  
40 the next group. And it wasn't that bad. I went right through those.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** How many people did it take to run the power plant and how many,  
43 what were the shifts?

44

45 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. Through the day, uh, you had millwrights out there,  
46 electricians, instrument men. They totaled probably in the 20s, maybe 25 or so. Then,

1 you had your coal handlers. There was two worked daylight and one worked evening  
2 turn, uh, to fill the bunkers, like we talked about. And, uh, then you had a few laborers, a  
3 janitor. Probably during the day there, there was probably 40 people including the shift.  
4 Now, each shift, there was only four people and a foreman, and it was a lot to be  
5 responsible for, for only four guys. A lot of times you would end up with new people and  
6 when something happened they didn't know what to do. It could've been scary. A few  
7 times it was. I didn't realize the stress that I worked under all those years until I went to  
8 the sinter plant. When I went up to the sinter plant, they said, "Okay, you got to  
9 supervise these guys. Here's the job," and I kept saying, "Well then what?" Cause I  
10 expected, I expected to be worried all the time or afraid the lights were going to go out.  
11 But it wasn't like that, much easier. Power plant foremen was always, cause we're all,  
12 used to be paid more than the other foremen too.

13

14 0:54:04

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Well from the position as a utility man in the power plant, then  
17 where did you go?

18

19 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah, I moved up to it. I move up to attendant. That was, that was  
20 a guy that was on the bottom floor. He was in charge of all the pumps and everything.  
21 We had all kind of water pumps. Every kind of pump. And, uh, that's where the bottom  
22 of the coal mill were all in his area. And then there was a boiler man, and every, every,  
23 what was it, about every six hours he'd take a set of readings. You'd take two a shift. So  
24 it must've been every four hours. You'd take a set of readings on the boiler, and it'd take  
25 maybe, take those readings in about 20 minutes. And the A-man, the downstairs guy, the  
26 a, the attendant. We called it an A-man, but it was an attendant. The B-man was a boiler  
27 man. He also had to take readings twice a shift. And then the foreman, he just went to  
28 all the areas to make sure everything got done. And, uh, if something was out of line,  
29 we'd call him and say, "Hey, this needs fixed."

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** So from the attendant, what was your next move?

32

33 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Then I moved up to control operator. That job scared me. When I  
34 first went down there, that board was probably twice as long as this room. In fact I got,  
35 there's photographs, I got photographs of it if you see 'em in there. I, well, I stepped in  
36 that room and saw two guys sitting there, and I thought these guys have to be brain  
37 surgeons to, to know what all that stuff is. There's a million things on that board. Well,  
38 I've had other people tell me that years later when I learned it. The same thing. And I  
39 said, "I thought the same thing, but I said you just block it off. A day at a time. You  
40 learn this part. Then you learn that. Learn this. Learn that. The next thing you know,  
41 you're, you know it all."

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Was this on the job training?

44

45 0:55:55

46

1 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah, you trained with a, you trained with a qualified control  
2 operator for probably, it used to only be two weeks. Towards the end there, it was six to  
3 eight cause these guys weren't as sharp as a lot of the older guys were.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** And after the, a control operator then where'd you go?

6  
7 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Then, that was it. That was the top job there. Or, uh, you could be  
8 a coal handler, but that, that was out of that line and it didn't pay near as much as the  
9 operation jobs cause they were shift work.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** So, where did you go from that position?

12  
13 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I, I went to shift foreman. They, they...

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Shift foreman at the power plant?

16  
17 **BRUCE MEGILL:** At the power plant, yes. My foreman went down and spoke up for  
18 me cause when I was his operator he spoke up for me. Uh. There was a retirement on  
19 the way and we knew it, and he spoke up and thought that I could do a good job. And so  
20 they interviewed me, and I did know my job, and, but I used to speak my mind a lot. And  
21 I wasn't a troublemaker, but if something was wrong I let people know. And I'd come  
22 home and I'd tell her, "You ought to see what they tried to pull." I stopped that or  
23 whatever it was, and when I, I swear to God as, when I come home that day and said they  
24 offered me a shift foreman's job. She burst into tears and says, "Don't take it. They just  
25 want to fire you." And I would go to my foreman. A lot of times they are my  
26 superintendent or assistant superintendent and most of the time they'd hear you out, but  
27 sometimes they didn't care. So when that happened, then I, I'd go a little further.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** What new technologies in the power plant, um, changed the way  
30 you did your job?

31  
32 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, they installed, um, it's the environment. That's why these  
33 power plants are closing everywhere. Cause you got to control NOx and sulfur dioxide  
34 emissions and, and they, uh, the government came in and they'd say okay. I'll just make  
35 up numbers. Say your output, you know, per minute or per hour has to be down under 20  
36 by the end of next year. And then the next year, it's already written out, next year you got  
37 to be down below 18. And then you got to below 16. And, you know, you can barely  
38 make it on the top end. There's no way you're going to take care of all that. It's just too,  
39 too expensive. Coal makes NOx and sulfur dioxide and other stuff that, that I mean, uh,  
40 they spent a lot on environmental issues down there. The power plant especially. They,  
41 uh, they blew the lime into the boiler. Lime would absorb a lot of the sulfur, but every  
42 problem, every time we'd come up with something to fix something there'd be another  
43 problem, and then it just got to the point environmentally, uh, it was closed down.

44  
45 0:59:00

1 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did you stay at the power plant?  
2  
3 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I was there probably 40, 40 or 39, 40 years and spent the rest of the  
4 time at the sinter plant.  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So at what point then was that that you went back to the sinter plant?  
7  
8 **BRUCE MEGILL:** That was after the power plant closed.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** So what, a rough year there?  
11  
12 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Eh, I'm trying, I'm not sure exactly how long that was, but I  
13 probably spent six year, five or six years in the sinter plant. I actually almost, whenever  
14 the power plant closed down I got sent to the storeroom for a while and they hung onto  
15 my wages. I never lost a dime on my wages. I thought they'd take 'em off me as soon as  
16 I changed jobs. They didn't. So then, uh, George McFarland, the guy that was the  
17 superintendent of the furnace plant or the sinter plant, he liked me. When, I answered the  
18 phone one day at the, at the storeroom and he said, "What in the hell are doing over  
19 there?" I said, "Oh, you didn't hear." I said, "I'm not at the power plant anymore." He  
20 said, "Well, how'd you like to work for me?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "Anything." Cause I  
21 wasn't. Not that. Even though I knew I was going into a situation that was more stress  
22 and dirtier, I could hang, I could hang onto my wage, you know, my pay, and then we  
23 did. I never lost anything.  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the power plant staff cut back at all with the smelter shutdown?  
26  
27 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Not really. You need so many people. They had talked about  
28 shortening the people, uh, back in the good days, but it never amounted to anything. I  
29 mean, you couldn't do a whole lot with what you already had with just the four people.  
30 There was no way you could've survived with any less.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** In, in late 1980 with the development of its own high-grade zinc  
33 mine, the company reopened the smelter.  
34  
35 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah, that's what they claimed.  
36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Embarked on a modernization program, that streamlined processes  
38 and created mini-mills. How did this change affect how the plant worked and maybe  
39 more specifically, the sinter plant too if that's your experience?  
40  
41 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well I think the reason that happened, that sounds nice, but I don't  
42 know if that's all that happened and that's true. Uh, I think what happened is they wanted,  
43 they had, there was bad management and bad employees. Not all of 'em. So what they  
44 did. I'll tell you what they did before they shut down. They had foremen doing in-depth  
45 report on every man that worked for you. I mean in-depth. Why would you do that for  
46 something you're never going to start up again or you're going to close down? Why



1 would you, why would we have to do that? Because they wanted to know who they  
2 could call back and who they weren't. And that's exactly what they did. Now a few, a  
3 few got hired that maybe shouldn't of. Uh, uh, um, but maybe they were a personal  
4 friend of somebody that had the authority to hire 'em. But they weeded out a lot of dead  
5 wood. People used to say it was to throw the union out. They never did throw the union  
6 out. The union was there all through the shutdown. It was there when the, when the  
7 plant closed just 2013. Same union. So that, that doesn't hold water. That's not true.

8  
9 1:02:13

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** How did the culture of the plant and employer/employee relations  
12 change after the 1979 shutdown and then the 1980 reopening?

13  
14 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, we made the same amount of zinc with the, with two-thirds  
15 less people. We went from like 1,700 employees down to, uh, about 500, and we made  
16 the same amount of zinc.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they increase your hours?

19  
20 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No. No. It just. I think you had, workers were more devoted.  
21 They did better jobs, and they were making a few improvements. Not a lot, but what they  
22 could. See they got all their money out of that smelter and you could even say the power  
23 plant. They bought up all kind of stuff with their profits from our smelter and then what's  
24 the first place they closed down? It was our smelter and that's why they're bankrupt now.  
25 Exactly why because they gave up their, their, uh, you know, the golden egg. And now  
26 everything they own is for sale, and their stock is, is in the tank. And, uh, that's what the  
27 problem was is you got, if you got a smelter and if you're going to make your money here  
28 you got to return money, and they never wanted to do that.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** There were a lot of changes in, in ownership of the company.

31  
32 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah, I worked for five different, uh, company names, and I never  
33 changed jobs.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Can you give a little more insight into what the experience was as an  
36 employee there as all these changes were going on in ownership?

37  
38 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. The changes weren't, never bothered any of us. Like I started  
39 out as St. Joe Lead. Then it was, uh, St. Joe Zinc, and then St. Joe Resources. Then, uh,  
40 is there another one in there?

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Zinc Corporation of America.

43  
44 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. Zinc. Yeah, ZCA.

45  
46 1:04:06

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** St. Joe Minerals Corporation.

3  
4 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Then, uh, but the one with Horsehead was the bad one. Uh. See  
5 Horsehead used to be, uh, New Jersey Zinc and they were are archenemy of St. Joe and  
6 Beaver or Monaca. And whenever they ended up buying us, I, I could put you on the  
7 phone with the guy that said it. He said, "George F. Weaton just turned in his grave and  
8 dug all the way to China." To think that New Jersey Zinc bought out his smelter and he  
9 probably would've. So, all these Horsehead people started showing up. More high  
10 management and stuff than, than low management. And I talked to a few of 'em at  
11 meetings I'd go to and you'd introduce yourself. He said, "Oh, you guys always had it  
12 easier than we did. Nicer than we did." He said, "They took care of you guys." He says,  
13 "St. Joe is a good company and we knew it." And then, the philosophy of New Jersey  
14 Zinc ended up in Monaca, and that was not good.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** What other changes in the operations of the plant did you see during  
17 the years there?

18  
19 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. Probably as time went on a, a, a point of frustration, maybe not  
20 caring as much because who cares. Why should I care? They don't care and that was sad  
21 to see. And I can honestly say I never did it, but that was a good workforce right up until  
22 the day they closed because we had a guy that was always on the stock. He, somehow  
23 he'd get on the Internet and he'd get the stockholders' meetings notes and stuff. And they  
24 never told us, but stockholders made statements at those, their meetings to please thank  
25 the people at Monaca for what they've done because they've known they were going to  
26 lose their job for two years and they, they did their job right to the end and we did.  
27 Nobody went out and destroyed stuff or stole stuff or, or went everywhere. We did our  
28 jobs that we were getting paid for, which is what I figured. I'm still getting paid. To the  
29 end, they come and they said, "We no longer need you at eight o'clock in the morning." I  
30 walked out just like the rest of 'em did. And somebody, I'm glad some of the  
31 stockholders saw that, because we made the same amount of zinc or more right up to the  
32 end and that could've fallen way off.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any severance pay?

35  
36 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. There was. I'm not sure what, what payroll had. We had, I  
37 was on salary. I had a severance pay. But I'd rather had my job. [Laughs]

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what system was in place for evaluating employees for  
40 promotions and raises?

41  
42 **BRUCE MEGILL:** They evaluated you once a year if you were on salary and if, uh, a  
43 salary job was about to open up the superintendent might ask you, uh, "Do you have any  
44 candidates, anybody you think can do this job?" And I had been asked that, and I'd say,  
45 "Yeah, I think this guy can do it." And then they decided who got the job.

1 1:07:24

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any incentive systems for merit bonuses based on  
4 production or?

5

6 **BRUCE MEGILL:** It was kind of hard at the power plant because our job was, uh, to  
7 make power and stay online. And that's what we did. And, uh, our average of online  
8 time was way ahead of any, any power plant that Duquesne Light owned. I mean we ran  
9 like 88 percent of the time, which is very high. You got to shut down some time to clean  
10 out ductwork and stuff like that. But we ran most of the time.

11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** So you started shortly before the union came?

13

14 **BRUCE MEGILL:** No. I started before the union came. Yeah. Yeah. The union came  
15 in and they voted it in in October of '73. It came in effect February of, uh, '74. I had gone  
16 to the power plant. I voted for it in the sinter plant and it took effect after I got to the  
17 power plant.

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** Why, why were you in favor of it?

20

21 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, my dad was payroll all his life, but he was anti-union. He,  
22 uh, well her dad was exactly opposite. He was always for the union. But they would  
23 talk. Back in the old days, according to my dad, if you'd start, there'd be talk of unions,  
24 guys wanted to come in and speak. They got on the railroad tracks cause that was a road  
25 and they couldn't keep 'em off of it and they wanted to talk about the, pass out fliers for  
26 the union, and they'd always say haven't you work, haven't you worked steady. When  
27 was, you know, St. Joe never had layoffs. We worked. And stuff like that. And they'd  
28 always be able to bribe the guys into not voting for the union. Well, my generation came  
29 along and they brought in. It's like they, you ask any one of those employees in those  
30 days and they'll say they almost asked for it, the union. It is everything is going fine and  
31 they bring in, in times study, and these are these young high school, not high school kids,  
32 college kids. They looked like high school kids and they give 'em a clipboard and watch  
33 this guy all day. Everything he does and record it. It's called time study. They spent  
34 \$230. There's a company that couldn't really afford to do it, but they spent \$240,000 on  
35 that time study back in 1973. And we all thought they'd divide that up into our paycheck  
36 and we, we won't vote on a union. But they didn't and they spent the money. It was all  
37 farce. It cost a lot more after it was over. They made out these reports. Okay. The next  
38 thing you know you go into work and they had you, hand you a piece of paper with a job  
39 that you'd been doing for ten years. Okay. Okay. When you drain that tank now it  
40 should only take eight minutes and when you're done with that when you go over here,  
41 this one over here is going to take twelve. And we had the log how much time we took  
42 for what we did. They did the paperwork for about six months and then it all went away,  
43 but in the meantime they had a union vote and they voted it in. So I ain't having someone  
44 hiding behind a beam watching me. So that's where I think they asked for it almost.

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46 1:10:39

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**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think were the positive and negative effects of having a union in the plant?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. Negative effect is they could've walked out at any time and had wildcat strike or something like that and I could be stuck locked up in there cause every contract came, the time came, remember they'd talk to us and says. "You're liable to get locked up in here so, you know, don't worry about food. We'll have enough food for you, but you'll have to, if you know anybody that has a camper or something bring it in." There was a few times they actually hauled the campers in. Sometimes it came within hours of a strike. But the positive side, depending on the department, the union I thought was fair. I thought they'd go along with the company on stuff. I mean they weren't like totally against them or anything. So that's my opinion. I think there was bad and good with the union.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you think it created any tension between management and, um, wage earners?

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. Uh. Probably. You know what, remember when I talked about the checkoff sheet where you did? This is what changed also and that's why some people voted for the union. Whenever the union came in, they threw that checkout sheet out. They said you can't judge people like that according to money. If he's doing the same job you're doing and you're doing you make the same money. So they took everybody at top rate on that job and threw the training program out. And that hurt us later cause we had people that weren't qualified on jobs because of that. Um. Uh. The company even said, [Coughs] "Why can't we have the checkoffs and we won't pay raises on it. We'll just have it, so these guys can learn this stuff." Nope. Can't do it. That hurt us.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I'm going to shift gears a little bit here. The building known as the clubhouse.

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** It's an old farmhouse that belonged to Raymond Jeffries, from whom St. Joe purchased the land in 1930.

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** And the clubhouse was used as a boardinghouse for unmarried management and clerical staff.

1:12:56

**BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What if anything do you recall about the clubhouse?  
2

3 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, I, uh, when you drove up to it, I mean, it was a big, uh,  
4 building. It needed painting when I seen it. It was white. It, uh, uh, it had a big goldfish  
5 pond right in the front yard. A big, you know, koi or whatever they were, were in it and,  
6 uh, it was nice. And summer students also stayed there, uh, because that man that went  
7 on to be the plant manager there, Jim Singleton, he stayed in it when he went to college.  
8 And, uh, it, it's, it would be buried underneath that, that expressway, that ramp. Once  
9 they put 60, it used to be 60, 376 was 60. And that ramp there, once they put it through,  
10 it would probably be under all that dirt now cause it was further up the hill, up towards  
11 the mall. That was just a single, two-lane road that was barely wide enough for two cars  
12 to pass. There was a gas station halfway up the hill. It belonged to a Scotsman. A guy  
13 came over from Scotland. They called him Scotty. And he just like out of a Mayberry  
14 RFD, he'd be leaned in his chair against, uh, well a little shack. And he had a collie dog  
15 that laid there. He'd get out and my dad would pull in, and he said, "What do you need,  
16 Bill?" And he says, "Give me some gas." Get up, pump the gas, and I remember being in  
17 the car cause we'd go down and pick up my dad's check or something like that. If you  
18 remember that gas station, you really remember.  
19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know when the clubhouse came down?  
21

22 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. Uh. I was a senior in high school. We were the first, like  
23 that built that bridge like it's secondary where 376 goes through. That bridge from there  
24 to Vanport we dedicated it. Our band did. I was in band. I was in high school when I  
25 was a senior. The governor was on the other side with the, the, uh, scaffolding and all the  
26 ceremonies and we come, there was a ribbon. He cut it and they went across it and then  
27 our, our band marched across it and then some other people came behind us. And that  
28 was in, uh, probably April or May of 1970. So, they would've tore that clubhouse down  
29 a year or two before that because it, once that ramp in that area that's where it was. So  
30 they began that probably in '69, '68 late.  
31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Looking through company publications from the 1960s it seems  
33 there were few if any African-Americans on the St. Joe workforce.  
34

35 **BRUCE MEGILL:** There was not.  
36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you characterize, characterize the racial and ethnic mix  
38 during your years there?  
39

40 **BRUCE MEGILL:** To be honest with you, I, we had, uh, all the years I was at the  
41 power plant we had one black man and he was a good guy. Well, he got along good. We  
42 liked him and they, there was, I don't, I don't understand. See the power plant, I don't  
43 know why, but actually in the smelter it was like that. And the, and they just, they were  
44 supposed to have a certain percentage of blacks in the plant and they never did. Never.  
45 The guy that did a lot of the hiring down there told me. He said if he, he said he got  
46 yelled at for not having more blacks there and he said for him to get two he has to hire

1 ten. And there was problems with attendance. You know, I mean they didn't mess  
2 around. I mean you were late three or four times, you called off three or four times didn't  
3 have, you were gone. You know. It's not like. I don't know what it's like really now, but  
4 there, it would be. But I seriously doubt you could still come and go when you want.  
5 But you had to have, you had to have perfect attendance. I don't know whether that had  
6 anything to do with it. And then there was just not as many, you know, blacks in, in the  
7 area right where we lived. I don't know. I'd like to see what the, the numbers were at  
8 J&L. To see if it'd be more towards the percentage that they were supposed to have. But  
9 the power plant, with the aptitude test, that's the reason you had to take it. For one thing,  
10 they wanted to make sure you were smart enough to do the work and you could handle  
11 stress. But the second thing was, is they were hunting for a different type of person. A  
12 person that could think, I think. Think on their feet especially, where up, up in the mill it  
13 wasn't quite the same. I mean, they'd hire people in and they didn't really care or they,  
14 you know, you didn't. It was a different type of people. And they used to think, the  
15 people in the mill used to think that we thought we were better than they were, and that  
16 was never the case with me. I know there were people down there that did. They thought  
17 they were all stupid and they, they, and that which is not true. I mean. But that caused a  
18 lot of problems from somebody who had no problems with the group on the hill to have  
19 any problems because of big mouths down there that, you know, were always bragging  
20 that they were at the power plant and you're not. [Coughs]

21

22 1:18:12

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there concerted efforts to hire veterans?

25

26 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I'm not really sure. Uh. The guy that, that did most of the hiring  
27 back when I got hired, Joe Nard, and he more or less. He would have a foreman in there  
28 from a department or two. Like when I got hired, Bill Myers was there, and he was a  
29 superintendent at the sinter plant where I ended up. And he says, "It's hard work over at  
30 the sinter plant, son. Do you think you can do it?" Yeah, I can do it. He says, "You're  
31 not very big there. You're kinda skinny." I can do it, and I did for year. But that's, I  
32 mean that was the interviews back then. They claimed now that they, back before they  
33 closed down they gave interviews. People would come in late, cancel and not even, not  
34 even call. That never happened back in my day. That I know of.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you know about the tank farm?

37

38 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Other than the fact that there's, there was three tanks there. They  
39 were put there in World War II to hold, uh, airplane fuel. Uh. And it was buried in the  
40 ground so they could hide it from the Germans and Japanese. Uh. Uh. Terrorists I  
41 guess. I don't know. They thought somebody might blow 'em up or bomb them. So they  
42 buried 'em and they planted corn over them. And each tank held at, at least a million  
43 gallons and the, that air, airplane fuel was supposed to be pumped from the tanks up  
44 Raccoon Creek to the railroad tracks, up the railroad tracks to the main entrances of St.  
45 Joe then there, then there was, uh, elevated walkways where you went up the tracks and  
46 you filled the tanker cars from fuel from those tanks. About four miles down the road.

1 They were about three or four miles away. And that was to, to show you that, to show  
2 any kind of spies that there was no tankers there on that site. Why would a fuel tanker be  
3 sitting in the middle of nowhere or a cornfield?  
4

5 1:20:23  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Were they actually filled?  
8

9 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. You know. I'm not really sure. But I do know back when we  
10 had our so-called gasoline crisis in '74, her dad was still there. He was a millwright. He  
11 was sent with the whole crew down there to check out the best tank of the three. One was  
12 in the best shape and fix it. They were going to buy fuel cause we needed fuel oil for our  
13 power plant too. Even though we had coal, we needed fuel oil. Up in the smelter, you  
14 needed fuel oil. They were going to find, fix the best one and put fuel oil in it, store it.  
15 So they didn't run out cause if they ran out they were done. [Clears Throat] So they did.  
16 He worked up there for about a month. They worked on one tank, got it in good shape  
17 and that was it. They never used it.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was the tank farm located vis-a-vis the plant?  
20

21 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Okay. Mowry Road is the road that, uh, comes, goes up, like if you  
22 go across Raccoon Creek and you make a left, go past the boat club. You go, follow the  
23 road about a mile or two. You can come to Mowry Road. It goes up over the hill into  
24 Potter Township. If you go right, it, it takes you to Gateway Rehabilitation, uh, Center  
25 up there up, up in Center Township, but it's right in that intersection. If you come down  
26 that hill from Mowry Road heading back the other way, there's a big field right to your  
27 right. Those, those tanks were in there.  
28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** And when did St. Joe acquire that property?  
30

31 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I, I think I heard in the '40s they bought it off of the county. They  
32 promised the county that they would use it for, for new industry, construction. They  
33 would use the property to make jobs. So that's what they sold it to 'em dirt cheap as and  
34 it wasn't ever happening. It wasn't ever used for anything like that.  
35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?  
37

38 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well, I liked my job. I actually liked my job in the sinter plant even  
39 though it was dirty. I loved the power plant job. That was like being here. The good  
40 times. Back in the power plant, when everybody used to say, we, uh, that working at the  
41 power plant was sort of like being a fireman. You know. A lot of times you don't do  
42 nothing, anything. Uh. Well when you got that fire, you better know what to do cause  
43 that's whenever you could do damage or hurt somebody. [Clears Throat] And I  
44 remember we had a new plant manager in the '70s. Dick Harmon was his name. [Clears  
45 Throat] He took a tour of the power plant. Two operators and a foreman were sitting  
46 there cause that's what you do. The control operator takes a set of readings every hour.

1 Well this, this new plant manager thought he knew everything and stepped in and said,  
2 "Looks like you guys got a lot of time on your hands." Then he walked out, which  
3 insulted 'em right away. They were doing their jobs. They were where they were. Well  
4 later on that day, some, somebody drove into a transmission line somewhere up the plant  
5 and they wiped it out. The power plant was dead. The power plant was dead. We're  
6 running. I can't tell you the excitement. It's like a fire in a movie house. Everybody's  
7 running around trying to get that back on and here comes our new manager that was just  
8 there this morning. He put his head in and, and Dave Strosser looked at him and said I  
9 bet you wish I was sitting on my ass now, which was great. Exactly the truth. When  
10 you're not doing nothing at the power plant, it's good times. But I've had a lot, I had a lot  
11 of the other too.

12

13 1:24:11

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** If you didn't, when you didn't have something to do at the power  
16 plant, what did you do to pass the time?

17

18 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I wrote stories. I wrote all this stuff down here. I, I baked. I  
19 cooked. I made chickens on a turbine.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they have a kitchen there in the power plant?

22

23 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Yeah. We had something that, it was like an oven. They used to  
24 heat up, uh, welding rods. I didn't use it. I knew exactly the hot spot on the turbine.  
25 Take it out and set it there like bread. I made bread, excellent bread from scratch. I'd  
26 take it out and I'd stick it on that spot and come back in two hours and it was right up  
27 perfect. But, uh, we had good times. We laughed a lot. We had fun. We enjoyed  
28 working. We honestly did. It's the first and last time I ever enjoyed working.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

31

32 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Well I think they. Okay. The zinc industry is always up and down.  
33 The price of zinc go from 33 cents where it's been a lot. It could go up over a dollar,  
34 which is bonanza. [Clears Throat] When it got low, the plant manager, most of 'em I  
35 respected, would say there isn't any money. No raises because the price of zinc is down.  
36 If it comes back, it's going to change, and I believed 'em and it did. Sometimes we got  
37 bonuses, you know, whenever the price of zinc came back. But the thing that I didn't like  
38 was when Horsehead took over. Uh. Jim Hensler, who, who took over as a plant  
39 manager and ran that place right into the ground, he would walk in, he was, the last job  
40 that he had, he got fired, fired by the union. He had problems with the union and they  
41 fired him. So they hired him at Horsehead. For some reason, he would not talk to  
42 salaried people. I was in a room one time. He come to talk to my union guys cause they  
43 were upset about something. Walked, walked through the control room right where I was  
44 sitting, right passed me, and he didn't even look at me. And he went in and he's gushing  
45 all over these guys. Here's what you need. You need to do this and that, and we're here  
46 for you. You know, we got your back and then turned around and walked right passed



1 me again. All he had to do was say hi. You know. And the thing that I used to complain  
2 about Horsehead more than anything is as soon as you'd start saying, you know to talk  
3 and you're not appreciated, most people would think money, which is nice. But [Clears  
4 Throat] a lot of times I'd start to say something and my boss would say, "Well times are  
5 bad," and, George, it doesn't cost anything to say thank you. And if they'd just say thank  
6 you once it would mean a lot to these people and to me. They never would. Never  
7 would. It was your job and do it. Shut up. And that was not the St. Joe that I went to  
8 work for, by the way.

9  
10 1:27:02

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

13  
14 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. I'd say dreading it. Knowing I probably wouldn't see any of  
15 those, those, those guys again. Guys that I helped and guys that helped me. And a lot of  
16 'em were friends, and I'd already experienced that at the power plant when it closed. And  
17 I had to do it again. And I remember going in. We knew the next that the 30th of April  
18 was it. We went in and we just kept waiting to see when they were going to drop the  
19 shoe. So everybody come in. We're all saying goodbye and I got a call from George  
20 McFarland at eight o'clock and he said, "We're releasing you at eight o'clock in the  
21 morning." We were on daylight. Should've worked till 2:00 or 2:30. He said, "Okay.  
22 You can release your men." I told 'em, you know, guys, thanks. Guys, you're free to go.  
23 And they got up and left. I was right behind 'em. That was hard, and almost all those  
24 guys I've never seen since then.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

27  
28 **BRUCE MEGILL:** I think. I think eventually it will be a great thing. It's not going to  
29 help us, you know my group, my age group especially. Uh. But a lot of those, those guys,  
30 uh, the younger guys they may find work there. I'm not saying they're not. But the  
31 majority of the people lost their jobs and probably won't. I, I told a few people. I  
32 bumped into a few guys I worked with, a real good friend of mine that worked down  
33 there. He worked in the furnace plant, east secondary and that. I told him and he said, "I  
34 wouldn't even talk to them people." He said, "They cost you your job." I said, "These  
35 people didn't cost me my job." And I said, "The situation. I said who cost me my job was  
36 Hensler and the former, uh, people that ran, uh, the plant, uh, Horsehead." That's who I  
37 have anger for. It's not you, you people. I, uh, in fact, I was honored to be able to bring  
38 up some of my dad's stories and stuff and, you know, have 'em be around. [Coughs]

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Well that's it for my prepared questions for you. Is there anything  
41 that I didn't cover that you'd like to add?

42  
43 1:29:34

44  
45 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Uh. I think we went over most of that. It's like, um, you can take  
46 this with you. I'm sorry. A few of 'em I had to make copies of cause I wanted to hang on

1 to at least one, but, uh, if you can't figure out this, this one guy here, where is he. Oh, this  
2 one in the back that's me. I used to be big. [Laughs]

3  
4 **RITA:** He did. [Laughs]

5  
6 **BRUCE MEGILL:** That was my shift. They took a photograph of each shift. And, and  
7 you, I mean, you can read these. They're close enough to read and that's the, the whole  
8 deal on the tank farm, which is fairly accurate. You can have that. When I get the  
9 photograph I'll get, of George F. Weaton. But I think if you research some of his stuff if  
10 it's still, if it was ever recorded, he was an amazing man. It was men like that built  
11 America. It don't seem like there's people like that anymore. I mean, you know with all  
12 he did and all he built and the building the power plant and that. He went out on a limb,  
13 you know many times. But how many people raised their families all those years since  
14 1933 up until '13 because of him? There's not too many people that can influence that  
15 many lives. I was just looking through here just to see if there was anything that I... It's  
16 like I told the story about the cafeteria. I loved that café cause it was real good food and  
17 that. [Coughs] When the holidays came, you'd go in and they'd have, you know, uh, cloth  
18 tablecloths on there with candles and all decorated. Holiday music playing, and  
19 everybody was in a good mood and we'd, we'd go in there and we really had a good time.  
20 It was really nice. And then after the, the plant shut down in '79 they closed it. And then  
21 when they started up it wasn't, it was gone, and people were gone. Everything was gone.  
22 And I can still remember this, it was right around the holidays, I drove over to where it  
23 was, where it was up at the smelter. Uh. The power plant was down over the hill. So the  
24 hill was the mill. The power plant was down over the hill. But I drove up and I stood in  
25 there, and they'd knocked a big hole in the wall so they could park equipment in there,  
26 and I just stood there and looked at that paint and I'm thinking. All I could see in my  
27 mind was, I mean, it was beautiful and here look at it. Look what happened. Look at  
28 this. And it was just one more big thing we lost, you know, as a workforce. The  
29 auditorium, that story, it's well enough. You can check enough stuff out of there. That  
30 was a great place. You could take a friend down and play basketball all night or go  
31 bowling or play volleyball. Anything. And it was all, all free. It was all a thank you to  
32 the men. Then they sold meal tickets. You could get one for five dollars or one for 10.  
33 There was tickets in there. One for five cents, 10 cents, 25, and 50. And as you went  
34 through, say it was a dollar. It was then you'd pull out the tickets and pay 'em. I think  
35 there was a dollar section too. But anyway, it got so hot-handed in the '70s that they had,  
36 wives kept calling because it was payroll deductible. Some guys would take. Say I, I  
37 needed a hundred dollars, I, I'd get 10 tickets, just turn 'em in and they'd give you a \$100.  
38 And these wives are at home getting their, opening their paychecks and back then it  
39 might've only been \$300 and there's a \$100 missing and they, they, so many of 'em called  
40 and complained that they allowed you to only take out three a pay period and that was  
41 more than enough.

42  
43 1:33:17

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much for your time and your story. Thank you.

46

1 **BRUCE MEGILL:** Okay. I'm glad to, to help out.  
2  
3 (END)

**Sam Mullin**  
**Interview @ November 12, 2016**

## **SAM MULLIN**

### **Summary**

The interview with Sam Mullin took place on November 12, 2016, in the living room of his home in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania; his wife, Sara, was present during the interview. Sam had on hand several objects pertaining to St. Joe. One was a sampling of nine substances that were either used to make products or were the products themselves. He also showed clothing commemorating company participation in river cleanup initiatives, a St. Joe Lead postcard and photograph, and a union labor agreement.

Sam worked at the Monaca plant from December 1974 to 2004, his employment having been terminated shortly after Horsehead Corporation acquired the company. He spent his career at St. Joe in the personnel or industrial relations department, rising to the position of industrial relations manager. In the interview, Sam describes the organization and responsibilities of the personnel department: safety, plant security, routine and emergency medical care, labor and workmen's compensation negotiations, the cafeteria, and employee communications.

Sam discusses in some detail the safety precautions taken with employee training and the use of protective clothing. He provides perspective on the unions and employee attitudes surrounding the 1979 shutdown and 1980 reopening and rehiring, as well as the role of the personnel department during that transitional period. Sam talks about protocols for handling fatalities, the roles of women working at the plant, and the Zinc Corporation of America's period of ownership. He also highlights company/employee involvement in the community, both volunteering in programs and supporting United Way campaigns.

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/12/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 SAMUEL MULLIN  
6 SARA MULLIN  
7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Sam Mullin. November 12, 2016. Sam, could you  
9 please state and spell your full name?  
10

11 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Samuel, S-A-M-U-E-L. Middle initial C. Last name Mullin, M-  
12 U-L-L-I-N.  
13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** Your date of birth and your full address please.  
15

16 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** [REDACTED]. And my address is [REDACTED], Ellwood  
17 City, Pennsylvania, 16117.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?  
20

21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Retired.  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area?  
24

25 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Part of Ellwood City is in Beaver County, but, but this part here is  
26 Lawrence County. But the, at the, uh, west end and the southern end of Ellwood City it  
27 becomes Beaver County.  
28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** And is this also where you grew up?  
30

31 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Essentially. I was born in Pittsburgh, and my father worked for  
32 the, what was then called National Tube Company. And they transferred him up here and  
33 it was about 1936. So I've lived here since 1936. Essentially, yes. I've lived here all my,  
34 all my life.  
35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any family members who worked at St. Joe Lead?  
37

38 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** My, I had two sons who worked in the summertime. They, they  
39 were just summer employees. When they, when they were off from college, they would  
40 work there as summer employees.  
41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of work did they do as summer employees?  
43

44 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Labor. They were shoveling and doing all kinds of dirty stuff.  
45 [Laughs]  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What education did you complete before working at St. Joe's?

2  
3 (0:01:58)

4  
5 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** I have a bachelor's degree, uh, in chemistry and biology from  
6 Theil College and then I went on to get some postgraduate although I did not get a  
7 master's degree from Geneva College. So I have, I took some other courses because my  
8 background was basically science and I had to get some administrative, uh, subjects like  
9 labor law and things like that.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** When did you complete your college degree?

12  
13 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** I come, 1952, I got my bachelor's degree, and then after that, uh,  
14 then I was in the Army for two years from '52 to '54 during the Korean War. Then when I  
15 got out of the Army I, I went to work for a chemical company. It was owned by Mine  
16 Safety Appliance Corporation. The name of the company was Callery Chemical  
17 Company, and I started out there as, as a lab technician in, in their chemical department.  
18 They were experiment, experimenting with boron. Boron, which is used in fuels, you  
19 know. And after I'd worked there for a while they needed, uh, an assistant in the, uh,  
20 personnel department, and they asked me if I would like to go there. So I, I went into that.  
21 Then after I worked there as the personnel assistant for a while, the, uh, personnel  
22 manager moved on and I became personnel manager there. And then that company shut  
23 down, uh, in 1964. And I went to work here in Ellwood City. We had a seamless tube  
24 mill. It was, it used to be called National Tube. It was the original name. But then later on  
25 U. S. Steel of course took it over and then they called it U. S. Steel Ellwood Works, and  
26 they made seamless tubes, which if, I don't, did you come down the main street in  
27 Ellwood City?

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** I think we did.

30  
31 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** All right. You'll see there's a, there's a plaque there that said,  
32 "This is where the first seamless tube was pierced here in Ellwood City in the United  
33 States." So, the mills gone now.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** What capacity were you working in there?

36  
37 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** There I was, I started out as the, in the safety department. I was a  
38 safety director. Then I became, uh, the, uh, assistant industrial relations manager.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** And this is with your, your college background in the sciences  
41 though, is that correct?

42  
43 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well mostly, yeah. Well my background in science helped, but it  
44 was more so than other, uh, subjects that I had taken at Geneva College helped me do the  
45 industrial relations work, labor law and things like that.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** So how did you end up at St. Joe and when did you start at St. Joe  
2 Lead?

3  
4 (0:04:55)

5  
6 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well the, uh, National Tube Company shut down, uh, in 1984. I  
7 think it was. Uh. Yeah, they shut down. So I applied to get a job. There was an opening  
8 down at St. Joe, and, uh, luckily I got it.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** So what year was it that you started working at St. Joe Lead?

11  
12 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Let's see. Uh. In '74 I started down there. Yeah. It was late in the  
13 year. It was almost '75. I mean it was like in December.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** What did you do to apply for a job with St. Joe?

16  
17 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, I, I had a reference. I was referred to the company from a  
18 friend of mine, who worked there.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?

21  
22 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Her name was Dottie McNutt. She's deceased now, and she  
23 worked in the personnel office. And she, she knew because we both belonged to a, a local  
24 theatre group. The Red Barn Theatre, Red Barn Players. And, uh, when she knew, knew I  
25 was out of work she says well they, they were advertising for someone. I hadn't even  
26 seen the advertisement. So I called and I had a resume prepared and went down for an  
27 interview and they made me an offer.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** What position was that that you were initially hired?

30  
31 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Assistant, assistant, uh, personnel manager.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Please describe how the personnel department was organized  
34 and staffed and how it fit into the plants management structure.

35  
36 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Okay. Uh. The personnel department then consisted of, uh, the  
37 industrial relations manager, who was also the personnel manager. And he, he had a staff.  
38 I was the assistant. He had a secretary, who was the department secretary. The, uh,  
39 industrial relations department was also responsible for the, uh, first aid station and there  
40 were nurses around the clock seven days a week when I started there. Uh. They, it was  
41 also responsible for the safety department and the safety department had three people in  
42 it. There was, uh, they had the cafeteria and the manager of the cafeteria also reported to  
43 my, uh, the personnel director or manager or whatever you want to call it.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?

46



1 (0:07:46)

2

3 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** The personnel director's name was Cliff Conklin, C-O-N-K-L-I-  
4 N. Clifford Conklin. And, uh, then in the, uh, they also, plant security was with the plant  
5 guards reported to, uh, the, uh, the director of safety. And, uh, he had two assistants and  
6 then, but they, you know, the, the company changed a lot over the years that I was there,  
7 you know, and it went, it got smaller.

8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** That's a, a large of range of responsibilities in, in one department.

10

11 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, just like the cafeteria. It was, it worked  
12 seven days a week.

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** When you started off as an assistant in, in the personnel  
15 department...

16

17 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-huh.

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of hours or schedule did you have?

20

21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Monday through Friday, and the hours were eight to five, but  
22 some, you know when you have a salary job it lasts longer and some days it was also, uh,  
23 there were things I had to do on Saturdays and Sundays. Some of them were, because the  
24 company was very involved in the community activities. I mean they, they did a lot. And  
25 anytime they asked for volunteers you could be sure there'd be somebody from St. Joe or  
26 Zinc Corporation involved. In fact, I have some of the things in here. I don't know. Like  
27 the Ohio River Sweep and we did that once a year after it was in the, in the spring after  
28 the winter. People would volunteer from the company and we'd go down and walk along  
29 the shore, uh, on which, the side on which St. Joe was located and pick up all the debris  
30 and stuff. There were all kind of rubber, uh, tires, and people threw all kind of stuff in the  
31 river. I mean it was, you wouldn't believe how much junk we got out of there. So there,  
32 there it is. You see. They, they gave us a t-shirt to wear.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** Can you open that up all the way?

35

36 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Sure.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you get a pretty large turnout from your...

39

40 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, you know what, it was mostly the salary people that did it.  
41 The laborer, the people in, in the, uh, labor, in the bargaining unit didn't really show up a  
42 lot for that.

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know when this program started, the river cleanup?

45

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** The river cleanup, what year. Oh, let's see. It would've been  
2 about, um, 19, in the '80s. Let's say in the early '80s it started. And so we, I did it as long  
3 as, you know, as long as they, they had that Ohio River Sweep, you know. And then they  
4 had other things that would go on too. Like, uh, here now. The company would also  
5 provide shirts for other activities that were community related. Now this one would've  
6 been for a, I think the United Way event, where we'd go and go down into the mall and  
7 have people there representing the company. So they, you can see they gave credit for  
8 Local 8183 too. And the company provided the t-shirt. And here, it was another thing that  
9 we did. Uh. This was, uh, this was a regatta. They had a regatta for people with, uh, their  
10 motorboats and things. Uh. It was located in Rochester. And what we'd do is go down  
11 and actually, uh, we had, uh, and Sara went up too. We had like a, a putting, little putting  
12 range and you paid to putt and win something. The company paid for it all and then the  
13 money would go to a, uh, charity in, in Beaver County. I think it was probably the United  
14 Way. I'm not sure who all got it. But, but it was a volunteer thing, and it was on a  
15 Saturday and you went.

16

17 (0:12:24)

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** So was the company a, a sponsor of the event?

20

21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** And did that, um, get participation from your union workers as well  
24 as your salaried workers?

25

26 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well they, they were included but they didn't, they didn't, they  
27 didn't make, not many came.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** They're on the shirt.

30

31 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah, it was on the shirt. Yeah. And they, all, and, uh, the  
32 company provided enough shirts for them for whom, how many volunteers they wanted  
33 to send and I don't recall any, any of the local union members participating in this  
34 anyway.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** How were these events and programs communicated to the  
37 employees so they, they knew to come out for them or at least knew they were  
38 happening?

39

40 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well we had, uh, of course, we had bulletin boards and we would  
41 put it on the bulletin boards and we communicated with the union a lot and we'd, we'd  
42 have meetings with the union, even those that weren't necessarily negotiations. It would  
43 be just a, sort of, uh, keep them abreast of what was going on with the company.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Were those done on a regular basis?

46

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.  
2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** How frequently?  
4  
5 (0:13:36)  
6  
7 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Not, not necessarily once a month but it would, uh, when it, when  
8 the management felt it was, uh, appropriate or even if the union asked to have a meeting,  
9 for some reason we'd meet together. And you know, they'd be non-negotiations.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Just going back a bit. Uh. Is there anything else that you'd like to add  
12 about the company's involvement in the community?  
13  
14 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well only that, you know, there was a, a big, a big member of the  
15 United Way. I mean that was one of the big things they did. But they would, uh, any, any  
16 charitable group or any, let me say, community movement that was done, St. Joe would  
17 take some part in it. So...  
18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the expectation for participation in United Way programs?  
20  
21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, it was all volunteer. Yeah. I mean, because I was part of the  
22 management and in the personnel department, it wasn't written down that I had to, but I, I  
23 felt compelled to do it. [Laughs] But I liked to do it too anyway. I mean, it was something  
24 good for the community and, and it made the company's name, got it out in the public and  
25 people knew who we all were.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you also get support from union workers in the United Way  
28 Campaign?  
29  
30 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. Yeah.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any pressure from the unions to participate?  
33  
34 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. No.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Any dissuasion?  
37  
38 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Pardon me?  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Any dissuasion from participating?  
41  
42 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No.  
43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Did you receive any, um, on the job training to be able to do  
45 your job in the personnel department?  
46

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No, I, I pretty much came with, with my experience with U. S.  
2 Steel and the steelworkers and what my experience had been with Callery Chemical  
3 Company. They kind of relied on that, you know. So I didn't get any special education  
4 only like the plant tour. When I first got there they had to show me around the plant of  
5 course, you know. And I, I'd get out into the plant a lot though. I, I was seen around a lot,  
6 in the, out in the operations, so people would know who I was.

7  
8 (0:16:11)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Having worked in personnel in various companies...

11  
12 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you compare St. Joe's personnel department, the  
15 policies, the involvement with the employees to other places that you worked?

16  
17 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, uh, Callery Chemical Company had no union at all. There  
18 was no organized, uh, union there. U. S. Steel, it was managed from Pittsburgh, and you  
19 know they pretty much sent down on the rules on how you did, conducted your business.  
20 At St. Joe, we were sort of left to our own devices. Cause they had, they had been in, they  
21 hadn't had a union, oh, until I think it was, their, their first union was about 1975. I mean  
22 they'd been nonunion for all those years.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What opportunities, oh, I'm going to backtrack one second. What do  
25 you recall about your first day on the job at St. Joe being a new person coming into the  
26 company?

27  
28 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Trying to remember everybody's name and learn the different  
29 places and who the people were and talk to the union. Now the union was really  
30 relatively new then. As a matter of fact, I hadn't even been there a year yet and they had  
31 sort of a wildcat strike because they had been nonunion for so many years and then when  
32 they got the contract, the labor agreement, they wanted to go back and do some of the  
33 things that they had, get some of the benefits that weren't in, in the agreement but were  
34 provided by the company when they were nonunion. And they, the company said, "No.  
35 You have a labor agreement now." So they, one day I came to work and they had all  
36 these workers standing outside and I hadn't even been there a year yet. So I had to go up  
37 to the, up to the mall and call down to say, "What's going on?" You know. And that, so it,  
38 we, we got together, had a meeting and agreed that, you know, that since there was a  
39 labor contract, a labor agreement both sides had to, you know, follow it. And so what  
40 happened was that the, we, we resolved it. But it was, uh, it was a walkout. You know.  
41 Now the people who were in the mill didn't come out. So they were there, after, they  
42 stayed in there while the, while the walkout occurred. And it was only for a few hours.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** What benefits did they lose that they were then holding the wild  
45 strike?

46

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** They were like some little independent agreements with, they'd  
2 have like with their department superintendent. Each department would maybe have a  
3 little thing that they did for the people in that department. But when they, when you get  
4 organized and you have a labor agreement, everybody is covered by the same rules. So  
5 things that were like little add, additions were gone.

6  
7 (0:19:37)

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Can you give me an example of what something additional may have  
10 been?

11  
12 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, I think, uh, time that would be spent maybe in the cafeteria,  
13 uh, instead of being out on the job people sometimes would stick, go in the cafeteria. It  
14 wasn't any kind of, uh, let me say, penalty for that. I mean they would, some of them  
15 were overlooked. Let me put it that way. So somebody said they wanted to have  
16 something or they needed to go somewhere and it was granted, you know, but after that,  
17 you know, you couldn't do that because it wouldn't be, well, it wasn't fair anyway  
18 because certain people got certain things and some didn't. So...

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** What opportunities did you have for advancement within the  
21 personnel department and what was that progression for you?

22  
23 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, uh, my, my only opportunity would be when my supervisor  
24 or manager retired, which he did do because there'd be, uh, the company had, it was  
25 reorganized, you know. It became Zinc Corporation of America and then, uh, then it was,  
26 uh, the, the plant manager was replaced. [Clears throat] And he was sent to the, uh, out  
27 into the headquarters in, in, uh, Missouri. St. Louis, you know, was St. Joe Lead  
28 Company was the owner of, uh, St. Joe Zinc or Zinc Corporation of America. And, uh, so  
29 then, the reorganization there was a reduction in the force and, uh, various members of  
30 the, uh, staff were retired and it was, uh, the plant was reduced somewhat in size. Then of  
31 course it was bought by New Jersey Zinc, you know, and I mean there's a series of other  
32 buying and sellings, but my only opportunity was just to advance to be the industrial  
33 relations manager at the zinc corporation.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Is industrial relations manager the same...

36  
37 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** As personnel.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** As personnel manager?

40  
41 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

44  
45 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** That would, yeah, it was sort of an interchangeable name.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you an assistant before?  
2  
3 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.  
4  
5 (0:22:25)  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** You started off as the assistant.  
8  
9 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** As the assistant. Yeah.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So Cliff Conklin was the director...  
12  
13 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** And your supervisor. What do your recall about, uh, him and, and  
16 working with him?  
17  
18 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Cliff was a very bright man, and he was very honest. And, uh,  
19 and, and he was fair. I'll say that. And, uh, I mean, I, I had great admiration for him.  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** How many people did you supervise as director of industrial  
22 relations?  
23  
24 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** When I became director, let's see.  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** What year did you become director?  
27  
28 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Let's see. What year was that? About 1984 I think. Yeah.  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the biggest challenges you faced during your time  
31 working in industrial relations at St. Joe?  
32  
33 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, um, the, the biggest thing was, was, uh, let me say  
34 administrating the labor agreement and, and negotiating new ones every three years. Uh.  
35 The other thing was, was the safety. We had several fatalities there because it was  
36 hazardous work, you know, and you're working with molten metal. You know. And high  
37 energy, uh, electrical energy and, and, uh, then carbon monoxide was a problem because  
38 it's, it was part of the process. It was produced, you know. It wasn't. Uh. We didn't  
39 produce it as a, as a product but it was just, it was something that happened, you know,  
40 as, in the smelting of zinc. So safety, uh, and the labor agreement and let me say probably  
41 maintaining a good relationship with the community would be another, not a big  
42 problem, but it was a, a certain heavy responsibility.  
43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the tensions between the community and the  
45 company?  
46

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well one thing is, of course, you have always when you have a  
2 manufacturing plant like that you have some problems with pollution. Now we weren't  
3 right downtown anywhere, but that big stack you see, smoke came out of that, you know.  
4 And sometimes stuff would come out that we didn't intend to come out. You know. So  
5 that would cause sometimes, and it didn't really get down into the community that much.  
6 But, uh, it wasn't so many problems with the community. It was mostly just helping out,  
7 you know, and participating.

8  
9 (0:25:45)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a public relations or external affairs component of your  
12 department or elsewhere in the company?

13  
14 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, we had a corporate, it wasn't, it wasn't community affairs or  
15 anything. It, it was, uh, from the main, main office they had some other relationships with  
16 other some of the plant managers of other big industry at that time down in the valley.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** As, as the director of the department, did you report directly to the  
19 plant manager?

20  
21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yes.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** And was that Charles Henderson during your time.

24  
25 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, no. He was gone. Well, no. He was gone then. See he, he  
26 left. Uh. Tom Johnston took over. And then he got, he went to, out to Missouri and then  
27 because of some other, uh, changes in the company Bob Sunderman took over. There was  
28 another, uh, fellow Dick Harmon was his name. He came in. Oh. He came in as the plant  
29 manager when Cliff Conklin was still there. And then he was there only for a short time  
30 and he was let go. Uh. Dick Harmon. And then that's when Tom Johnston took over.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** How did these changes in leadership at the top of the plant affect  
33 your job?

34  
35 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Not very much. I just kept doing what I was doing and, you  
36 know.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Any new policies that had to trickle down and, and change how you  
39 were doing your job? What your department needed to do?

40  
41 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. People were just so busy doing their own job. I think you'll  
42 see in this labor agreement the names of some of the people that signed when in 2000.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** That's right here. The labor agreement. Sam?

45  
46 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** That blue one.

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46

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. This?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** I have, I have another one.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh. Okay.

(0:28:00)

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Let's see. Let's see all the people who signed it. Okay. I'll tell you what. On page 68, it shows you all the, the, the different departments were there. Now, you talked to Joe Strupek. He later on became superintendent of the smelting department. Did he tell you that? I guess he did.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, he did. Uh-hmm.

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Okay. Then, then, on pages 66 and 67 are all the names of all the titles of the jobs that were there in 2000. Now, by that time, the cafeteria was gone. The ladies in the cafeteria also belonged to the Steelworker's Union, which is uncommon. But it happened there. Okay. Now on page 60, you'll see the, uh, the union officers and the people who signed the labor agreement in, in 2000.

**INTERVIEWER:** I recognize a name on there.

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Pardon me?

**INTERVIEWER:** I recognize a name on there.

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. Yeah. And John Brown, and he had an assistant then, John Bechtel. When, when, uh, when New Jersey Zinc took over, John Brown came from New Jersey and then he had, he hired John Bechtel, who was going to be, well because I think it was because of my age. Uh. In, in 2000, I'd have been 70 years old, and I didn't think they were planning to have me become the vice president of human resources, which was a component. And that's why, uh, they hired this John Bechtel. Well in between times, then, and then I was, uh, the labor relations director, which I still took care of the, well, we all worked on the labor contract. So...

**INTERVIEWER:** There's a lot of information in here.

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** When were computers or any other new technologies or systems introduced into your department?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** In our department, it would've been about when, when John Brown came, which would've been about, I guess, 1995 maybe. Up, up to that time,



1 we'd, there were, there were a number of people, who, who were sort of experts in the  
2 computer. Everybody didn't have. All the departments didn't have, weren't computerized  
3 then. They are now. Well, there's nothing left there now of course. But they would've  
4 been now if the company was still there.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the first priority for the computers when they were brought  
7 in? What were they brought in to be used for?

8  
9 (0:31:53)

10  
11 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh. Production and quality control. Being in, in the company.  
12 Yeah. In the labor relations department, it was, uh, labor agreements and safety.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Was payroll part of your department?

15  
16 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I'd like to talk a little bit more about safety and medical and  
19 security.

20  
21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** George F. Weaton, who was the first plant manager...

24  
25 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Started an annual safety banquet in 1933. What do you know about  
28 the company's history of safety programs?

29  
30 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, we had a, we had a banquet when I first started there. We  
31 had a safety award banquet every year. Uh. And, uh, we participated in, uh, in the  
32 community safety. They had, the companies, they had, uh, the companies all had their  
33 own safety programs. And, uh, we would, uh, participate with them. Even go to their  
34 plant, go on plant tours and things like that to see how their plants ran. We had them  
35 come to our plant too. And we'd have to take them around. And we'd have a, actually it  
36 was a, it was an employee award banquet and they, uh, had that every, every year and  
37 then, then we, after the union took over we sort of did away with those safety award  
38 banquets. And, and they always had a big picnic with all the people in the, in the plant. A  
39 matter of fact, they had a full gymnasium there with bowling alleys in the basement and  
40 they had teams in the community on the, and, and the teams from the community would  
41 come and bowl and we had basketball teams. We had volleyball teams.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** I understand you had a full time athletic director as well.

44  
45 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. We did for a while. Yes.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** When did that go?

2

3 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** That went shortly after I got there. Yeah. I hadn't been there for a  
4 while and, and they retired him.

5

6 (0:34:17)

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did they hold the safety banquets?

9

10 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh. In the, well they would go to a different, uh, I, uh, a club  
11 somewhere, a country club or a, uh, a social club where, with, with a big place that could  
12 serve banquets, you know.

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** And were they still going on when you started in 1974?

15

16 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. For, uh, just for a couple of years. And now, I'll tell you  
17 what. Shortly after the union, we negotiated the contract, the company started doing away  
18 with those things. So. Because it was just an added cost, you know.

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** How, how long did that process of negotiating the labor contract for  
21 the first labor contract take place?

22

23 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** It was about a week.

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, that's all.

26

27 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the decision to... Was the vote to go with the unions  
30 contentious among the employees?

31

32 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Not really. No. They, well, obviously you have to get a, a vote to,  
33 to vote on having a union and so it was, it was pretty, pretty unanimous. There were some  
34 people who didn't want to belong but not many. And it wasn't, uh, it wasn't like a lot of  
35 other labor agreements. There weren't any people pounding on desks and threatening and  
36 anything like that. It was sometimes voices would be raised of course, but it wasn't, uh, it  
37 wasn't. I, I say in, uh, generally speaking a, uh, generally civil event when we got  
38 together.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** What was management's perspective on having the union come in?

41

42 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well obviously it, they recognized it would cost more money and  
43 it would be more difficult to operate, you know. And they, they would've preferred not to  
44 be unionized. As a matter of fact and I don't know if this was a fact or not, but somebody  
45 told me that one of the reasons why the people, the, uh, the ladies that worked, uh, in the,  
46 in, out in the kitchen and, you know, in the dining hall, you know, they thought they were

1 all, would vote against the union. So they, they added, so that's why they kept them in to  
2 vote for, to see if the union, they were expecting they would vote against it. And they  
3 didn't. That's why they became members of the Steelworkers, which you usually things  
4 like that, those would be people who would belong to a separate union other than the  
5 Steelworkers, you know, or another Local of the Steelworkers. Not the one that  
6 represented the men in the mill.

7  
8 (0:37:23)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of safety training did new employees receive?

11  
12 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** They would, when they would first come in, uh, we would, they  
13 would meet with the director of safety. They'd have a meeting. You know. New hires  
14 would have a meeting with them together and then we just, they would get a general, uh,  
15 general training of the safety program as it was. And then when they would go to their  
16 departments, their departments would give the safety training for that particular  
17 department. So it was, uh, it was a combined thing. And they would be taken, before they  
18 went out into the mill, uh, they'd be taken on a tour around the plant to see where things  
19 were and then they'd get a safety talk, which was just general safety principles and  
20 company rules, you know. And then they'd, when they got in their own department, they  
21 had different things because there were different things like some areas you had to worry  
22 about carbon monoxide. You'd have to wear respirators and, uh, and some of the areas  
23 you had to wear flame resistant clothing, you know. So it depended on what department  
24 you were in.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** When a worker arrived at a plant for a shift, uh, would the first stop  
27 be going into the changing house?

28  
29 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. The change house. Uh-huh.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** And were all the clothes they worked in provided there by the  
32 company?

33  
34 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** The protective clothing was. Yes. And there was a green cloth  
35 you may have seen and it's flame retardant. Yeah. The company provided that. And then  
36 they'd wash it all. So.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Were they, were the workers able to go, go home in the clothes that  
39 they worked in? I mean, how dirty did they get?

40  
41 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. Well they. No. They were supposed to leave them there  
42 because, because of the contamination, you know. And I don't think anybody would take  
43 it home anyway.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they leave their work boots there?

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. They left them there. Yeah. They had, everybody had a  
2 locker, and they had a nice shower room. That's all torn down. I'll tell you what. In that  
3 little picture there, you can see where the shower room was. It was the, uh, uh, this, this  
4 building. Well, here this was the gymnasium over here. This was the gymnasium right  
5 there. This yellow building here was the, uh, uh, that was the locker room and in that  
6 other side was where the personnel offices were. But this end down here were all the  
7 showers and, uh, the locker room. And this is quality control over here. And the  
8 headquarters were down in the old, what was the old home.

9

10 (0:40:22)

11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** So they're, they're in the change house and they're coming off their  
13 shift and they have this green uniform that's covered with all kinds of...

14

15 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Hazardous materials. Does that go in their locker for the next day or  
18 does that go someplace else to be cleaned?

19

20 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Okay. It would be, it would be put it. No. They would, they  
21 would put it in, in a basket in somewhere and it would, then it would get, uh, taken care  
22 of.

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a laundry facility on the plant that took care of these kinds  
25 of things?

26

27 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. No. It would be, it was sent out.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** You must've gone through a lot of these uniforms in a given day.

30

31 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well it was. Yeah. Later on, though, people who were  
32 responsible, later on as the company got smaller, people were responsible for their own  
33 clothes, you know.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Even the hazardous...

36

37 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** Clothes.

40

41 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** And also getting them cleaned?

44

45 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, uh, they, let me say this. The hazard wasn't, the, the, there  
46 wasn't so much of a, of taking it home. It was just mostly dirt that went home. The, the

1 lead hazard was mainly in, in the air, you know, and it wasn't like, uh, lead poisoning  
2 through ingestion. You could, could get it by breathing in particles of lead that would be  
3 in, in the, uh, atmosphere, but it really didn't cling in your clothes that much, the lead.  
4 And the other stuff like carbon monoxide, but the other was mainly carbon, you know,  
5 products like from the sinter plant, you know, and things like that.

6  
7 (0:42:08)

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** So after a while the workers would start taking these clothes they  
10 wore in the plant home?

11  
12 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, yeah. They would take them home and wash them  
13 themselves. Yeah. Uh-hmm.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** And as far as, uh, respirators, helmets, were those provided by the  
16 company?

17  
18 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** The company provided them. Yeah. But the, the employee was  
19 responsible for taking care of his own respirator. You know what I mean.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** How...

22  
23 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** In fact I still have one down in the basement. [Laughs] Cause I,  
24 you had to wear one if you went out in the, in an area where the respirators were required  
25 even though I worked in an office most of the time. If I went out in, in the plant, I had to  
26 wear a hardhat. I had to have safety shoes on. I had to wear, and I didn't have to wear,  
27 well sometimes I had to put on a, a green coat. I didn't have to put the pants on too, but  
28 just a green jacket because everybody else had on flame retardant clothing is what it was.  
29 That was the big thing. Flame retardant.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** How were laborers involved in developing, um, or conducting safety  
32 programs?

33  
34 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** They would have a regular safety. Each department would have a  
35 regular safety department meeting once, once a month. And the, they had to make sure  
36 everybody at every shift got at least one meeting a month. And then, uh, of course  
37 everyday things that, as a supervisor would notice people performing their job would give  
38 them some advice, you know. And of course there was, uh, we had problems with some  
39 people. You weren't allowed to smoke out in the plant for instance. Occasionally people  
40 did. You weren't allowed to eat out in the department. You had to come in and wash your  
41 hands and eat in a special place. Uh. We had people who liked to chew tobacco. That was  
42 a no-no, but they did it, and then they'd get caught. Then they would, and of course they,  
43 were I had, I'd get grievances because they got warnings. That if you do it again, you are  
44 going to get time off. Cause it was a safety rule. It was a violation. Then we had guys  
45 even, okay, on a couple occasions we got people smoking illegal stuff.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** When, when the guys were coming into the cafeteria for their  
2 break...

3  
4 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-huh.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they leave their, those dirty clothes they were just wearing in the  
7 plant at the door or did they take...

8  
9 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they leave their helmets out in there?

12  
13 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. They, they would take off their jackets, you know. Uh. You  
14 didn't, I didn't see many people with, uh, protective clothing in, in the cafeteria because  
15 some of the people were restricted from going in there during working hours, you know,  
16 because of, of the contamination. But you know it was mostly dusty, dirty. That's what,  
17 what the big thing was. Now, people who like worked in the power plant they didn't, they  
18 didn't have to wear protective clothing because they weren't exposed to molten metal  
19 or... Uh. But, but then there were people who worked in the acid plant, they had special  
20 safety, uh, equipment that they wore, you know. It depended on where you were and  
21 there was a lot of hazardous things at, at, uh, St. Joe.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. What incentives if any were in place for departments operating  
24 without safety incidents?

25  
26 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** There was, maybe an award would be given. No. No. No financial  
27 awards. No. Just maybe a, uh, a pin or maybe a jacket. I, I have jackets we gave. I could  
28 show you one of those. Uh. I'll show you one before you go. I have a couple jackets that  
29 were provided and all the employees would get 'em, and they're nice jackets.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** The emergency response building was erected around 1950. What  
32 kind of emergency medical capabilities and staff was it equipped with?

33  
34 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well that was, yeah, that was where the nurses were located. Uh.  
35 We had, uh, respirators. We had, uh, we had, uh, uh, let's see what did we have? You  
36 could get, you get, uh, oxygen if you needed it. We had a place for oxygen. Uh. But also  
37 it included, uh, we'd give people a hearing test every year, and it was a hearing booth test,  
38 hearing in there too, which we did for people. Uh. We had a first aid station. We had a  
39 doctor who would come, uh, for, um, an hour a day Monday through Friday. Then we  
40 quit doing that too. In fact, we had in the, on the daylight shift we had a, a supervisor of  
41 nurses and a nurse along with her. And then every shift they had a nurse by, who ran the  
42 department by herself.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the, the purpose of having a doctor there for one hour a  
45 day?

46

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Just to check up on, if anything happened or any reports or any  
2 special injuries that occurred that he could, if he needed to give any kind of evaluation of  
3 maybe we're doing something wrong.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the nonemergency or routine responsibilities of the  
6 medical department?

7  
8 (0:48:25)

9  
10 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well if somebody came in and wanted, they weren't feeling well.  
11 We'd maybe give 'em a nonprescription, an aspirin or a cold tablet or something. Uh.  
12 Sometimes people would come in with maybe they'd have a skin irritation. It didn't  
13 necessarily happen at the plant but we took care of it.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** What about, uh, routine testing of blood levels?

16  
17 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. We did that with blood lead. Yeah. Uh-hmm.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** And did that, that took place on site here in this...

20  
21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. Uh-huh.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Medical room. Okay. And when were these medical services at  
24 the plant cut back?

25  
26 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** They were pretty much gone. We. Well for a while we just had  
27 one nurse on daylight hours only. That came sometime in the 1990s. I can't, I can't  
28 remember exactly when. Yeah.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** And what about somebody who had an incident...

31  
32 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well then if there was an incident...

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** On the night shift.

35  
36 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** We would call an ambulance service or in some cases if it was,  
37 was, if you didn't have to have an ambulance a supervisor would provide transportation  
38 to an emergency room. Uh. Otherwise, we'd call, uh, medical alert and they would come  
39 with their ambulance.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was the nearest hospital?

42  
43 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh. In, in, in Beaver. Yeah.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did it typically take for an ambulance to get to the plant?

46

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well it depended a lot on the weather and things, but it wasn't, let  
2 me say it would be less, less than 10 minutes. Cause those, those ambulances are out on  
3 the road all the time and of course they had radios and so like if they were nearby they  
4 could just pull right into the plant.

5  
6 (0:50:48)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you give employees so that they could  
9 function as, uh, a first responder?

10  
11 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** We, we had some for the foremen. After, after the nurses were  
12 gone, the foremen got some basic, huh, first aid. Yeah. That would've been given by the  
13 nurse who was in charge. And that was mostly for burns. They had first aid kits out there  
14 mostly for minor burns and things like stuff in the eye, dirt in the eye. Nothing sharp or  
15 anything like that. And some bandages for some minor lacerations. But anything major at  
16 all, they would go and, and even then, even if it was real major the nurse would call when  
17 she was there. But after she left, then it was up to the department superintendents to take  
18 care of the first aid and everything.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** I heard from one of our other interviews that you had some volunteer  
21 fire department firemen who were working at the plant.

22  
23 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yes.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** And people who had some trained medic experience whether it was  
26 in the military or...

27  
28 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Or something like, um, did they play a larger role in your safety  
31 program?

32  
33 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** They played some part, but nothing major. I wouldn't say major.  
34 No.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the most typical injuries and coming from what  
37 departments of the plant?

38  
39 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, burns were the most common one. Burns. Um. There were  
40 some occasionally exposure to toxic material and somebody would have to come in and  
41 put the, put the, uh, defibrillator on or something, you know. Uh. I would say strains, like  
42 muscle strains was a common thing because it was a, a hard. It was heavy work there.  
43 Lifting, shoveling. I mean it was not easy work. I mean the guys who worked there were  
44 pretty hard. It was a hearty group of guys. I'll tell you that.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** At, at what age did it just become too tough to do that kind of work?



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**SAMUEL MULLIN:** I would say it would be from starting in your middle 50s it would be almost, some jobs would be too hard for guys. Yeah.

(0:53:39)

**INTERVIEWER:** Was the company good about trying to find other work for the workers as they aged so they could continue to have a livelihood?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** What they, what they had, because we had a labor agreement, they would bid to those jobs. The other jobs as they came open. So I mean you just couldn't. Well, I'll tell you what we would do. If somebody were injured in their job and couldn't perform his regular job, we did provide light, light jobs, lighter jobs in their, in their own category. But they weren't expected. You'd have to bring somebody else in and this particular person while he was on light duty wasn't expected to do all the aspects of the job. Then of course if they became disabled you had, uh, insurance for that, you know.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there any additional help given to the families if a worker became disabled?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well they had, they had, uh, an insurance policy for nonindustrial, non-work related injuries. But not, those that were covered under Worker's Comp were under a separate policy that the, uh, the employee. Well at first it was all provided by the company and then later on there was employee participation. It, it isn't, uh. So then you could elect to carry that insurance.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was any help given to... Let's, let's say there was a fatality. Was there any help given to the family to put kids through school?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well we...

**INTERVIEWER:** Pay the rent?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** You know what. No. It was, uh, it was taken care of under the Worker's Compensation Laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do, do you know if before there was a union if the policy of how to help families in those tragic circumstances were any more generous?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** I really don't. I really don't know.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I have heard that there were some accidents at, at the plant that resulted in fatalities.

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. Fatalities. Yeah.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Was there a protocol for handling these tragedies with the families, somebody to reach out and break the bad news?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, first of all notification. I, I had to go to a number of those. The member of management and someone from the personnel department or industrial relations department would go along. It was me a lot of times.

(0:56:26)

**INTERVIEWER:** So was notification always done in person?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. Yeah. We, we didn't just call somebody up.

**INTERVIEWER:** And word hadn't already travelled by somebody who was working at the plant?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well sometimes it had. Well, yeah. Uh. Sometimes the news got out and before anybody from the plant could get there. That was really, those were bad days.

**INTERVIEWER:** All right. Could you talk a little bit about the security measures in place to protect the plant and its workforce? Access to the site, guards, gates?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. We had guards. We had, we had two entrances. When I first got there, we had two entrances into the plant with guards, uh, around the clock. Uh. One entrance had two guards there. Uh. They were not armed guards. Like at U. S. Steel when I was there they all carried side arms. Then later on U. S. Steel did away with that too. So, but we, there, there were some arms available if, if there had to be. But the guards didn't wear them.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the incidents that you're aware of where security really had to step up and do something out their ordinary routine?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well there were, there were occasions where people tried to steal things from the plant, and occasionally somebody would be caught and asked to step in and empty out their lunch bucket and things like that or take off their coat because they had something underneath their jacket, you know. That didn't happen very often though. I mean that was a rare event.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were those people automatically dismissed?

**SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, no, not automatically because you had to follow the union agreement. Yeah. And before you could discharge somebody you had to put 'em on five days pending discharge. That was. If you were going to discharge somebody you had to notify 'em they were on a five-day off pending discharge. And within that five-day

1 pending then you'd have a hearing to see, listen to the facts. Then you could convert to a  
2 longer time off or convert it to discharge.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was on the panel or the group that conducted the hearing?

5  
6 (0:59:02)

7  
8 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well it would be the, uh, the department superintendent of the  
9 person that was involved. It would be a foreman from the department involved with it.  
10 There'd be members from the industrial relations department, either both or more than  
11 one, and the plant manager sometimes would be involved.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** In 1979, the plant was shut down.

14  
15 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** How much notice did you have in your area, in the personnel  
18 department, to know that this was going to happen and how were you brought into the  
19 process of working with the, the employees and letting people go?

20  
21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, uh, our, our department was pretty much involved in the  
22 whole thing. Uh. Because there were certain, let me say, uh, certain jobs, you know, that  
23 had to, were going to stay, you know. And so there, there was, it was involved. Our  
24 department was involved in terms of how the, uh, how the company, uh, followed the  
25 rules, you know, of, of the labor agreement and of the, uh, uh, how, uh, the departments  
26 were going to, uh, what their, what their function was going to be afterwards. I mean it  
27 was, it involved the, the management, the top management. And our department was  
28 involved as much as any other department would be in terms of making sure the rules  
29 were being followed instead of just, uh, doing it off the cuff. Uh. Yeah. Off the top of  
30 your head. Certain rules had to be followed.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** How much notice were the employees given of the shutdown?

33  
34 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** As I recall, there wasn't much notice at all. I mean it wasn't any  
35 long-term thing. It was, it was going to happen right now almost, you know.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** So employees were really caught by surprise on this or were there  
38 rumor mills going around then?

39  
40 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well there had been. Yeah. But there was always rumors about it  
41 because of the, uh, well the, the lead industry. Let me say. The metal industry was having  
42 problems because of pollution, you know. And OSHA had made, made it more  
43 demanding, you know, for, uh, air pollution protection against pollution for, uh, metals  
44 and toxic materials, even nontoxic materials, you know. You just can't put all the smoke  
45 you want in the place even though it's not considered toxic. But some people, any smoke  
46 is considered as toxic. So we were involved the, the same as the operation departments.

1 Uh. To be precise and to be down to the nth degree I can't go into all the detail, it would  
2 take days to do that.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** I imagine there was a range of reactions...

5  
6 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, yeah.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** To the news, to the news of the shutdown.

9  
10 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

11  
12 (1:02:41)

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Can you talk about that a little bit?

15  
16 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well of course the main thing was that, uh, anybody who was  
17 going to be reduced from the plant, uh, they were advised, you know, to go to, to apply  
18 for unemployment compensation. And of course there were some people who had been  
19 there for a long time and they were sort of very depressed. Uh. There were some people  
20 who hadn't been there very long and some of them were, were glad because they didn't  
21 like the condition, work conditions because it was so dirty and hot and hard. And there  
22 was some people were glad to be gone. And there were people who had, you know, who  
23 had been there for their whole, uh, almost their whole work lifetime and they had  
24 relatives that had worked there, and they were, they were upset. And then, then of course  
25 there were people who didn't have any other skill. I mean they, they just were in the labor  
26 department and they did heavy, a lot of hard labor and they, what else were they going to  
27 do and where would they go? And at that time, the valley, the steel mills were beginning  
28 to reduce to. I mean it was just not a good place to be unemployed. And so that had an  
29 effect on people's feelings.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What efforts were made to help counsel employees about finding  
32 other work or more education?

33  
34 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, for the people out in the plant, there was, there really wasn't  
35 any work that, that could be done to help them out. I mean, you take it, uh, the big like  
36 J&L was shutting down in Aliquippa. I mean, mills that hired people that did that type of  
37 work were actually reducing their own staffs. There wasn't much you could do about  
38 that. There were some, some people were considered to go out to, uh, Missouri, you  
39 know, out to St. Joe. Uh. But there weren't that many jobs out there either. I mean, they  
40 were filled up with their own jobs. So there was not a big effort trying to, to put people,  
41 to place people in, uh, in other type of occupations.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** When the, when the plant reopened in 1980 and some people were  
44 hired back, did you sense any, any difference in the morale of the workforce pre and post-  
45 shutdown?

46

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. There were. Well, uh, let me say. The company was very  
2 selective in who they brought back, and those people were, let me say, very thankful that  
3 they, they were considered as an employee worth bringing back, and they were as a  
4 result, let me say, I, I think their attitude was superior to when we had the big workforce  
5 and had all kinds of people and these people knew. Well, they went through it. They  
6 knew what it was like to lose this job. Now they were getting back.

7  
8 (1:06:30)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Since the company was, was functioning with a much smaller  
11 workforce when it reopened, did they also pare down your department?

12  
13 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. That's when the nurses were reduced and, oh, yeah. And  
14 the safety department went to, uh, one person. Uh. Of course we got rid of the, uh, dining  
15 hall. All the, those people were gone. The guard force was reduced. Um. And the, uh,  
16 supervisory ranks were cut down too. I mean it was a general and, and, uh, that's when,  
17 uh, Cliff Conklin was gone. Well, he was replaced. The man that, uh, took over, Dick  
18 Harmon. Uh. I think that was his, part of what he was commissioned to do. But then  
19 something happened and I don't know, and they didn't get into it at all. But, uh, he was,  
20 he was let go too.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** These are plant manager positions?

23  
24 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** With the reduced, um, security, safety, medical, do you think there  
27 were any increased accidents or other bad outcomes because they had to make those  
28 kinds of cuts?

29  
30 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. No. I didn't think. No. Let me say, the supervisors that were  
31 left and the management people were aware of what it takes.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** In 1987, St. Joe Resources Company and the New Jersey Zinc  
34 Company had combined to form Zinc Corporation of America.

35  
36 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Owned by Horsehead Industries.

39  
40 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you compare working for St. Joe to working for ZCA?

43  
44 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh. Let me say. When I first went there, it was like, uh, more  
45 like, uh, a family organization. You know what I mean? People were less formal. When  
46 we became ZCA, we became more formal. Uh. People weren't. Let me say. They weren't

1 mean or anything, but they were, they weren't as friendly. Didn't have the same friendly  
2 attitude that we did when I first was there at St. Joe. And there was less programs. Like  
3 we didn't have, they, they shut down the gymnasium. They didn't have the basketball  
4 anymore. They didn't have the volleyball. Bowling alley was closed down. There was no  
5 cafeteria, of course. And, uh, and the other little, like the picnic, the yearly picnic was  
6 done away with and, and, uh, so there was just. The times changed. I mean, when I  
7 worked at, uh, Callery Chemical Company, we had a company picnic every year. Sara  
8 would come and help. She helped out at all those projects with me. And we had little kids  
9 then too.

10  
11 **SARA MULLIN:** Yeah.

12  
13 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** But...

14  
15 **SARA MULLIN:** We had good times.

16  
17 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** But you know then, U. S. Steel was just a big corporation and  
18 they had a management club, which would meet, would have dinners and have speakers  
19 occasionally. But nothing further for rank and file people. You know. They, they did,  
20 whatever they did that was on their own. And that was pretty much the way it happened  
21 at St. Joe after the union came in, the rank and file people conducted their own programs.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of flack did you get from the employees who had been  
24 accustomed to these kinds of programs and now they were gone?

25  
26 (1:10:47)

27  
28 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, a lot of them were disappointed, and they would say they  
29 wish we could go back to the good old days. Well, the good old days were gone, gone  
30 forever.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** In 2003, Horsehead Industries went bankrupt and Horsehead  
33 Corporation acquired its assets. In what ways did Horsehead running the plant impact the  
34 personnel department and your job in particular and the workforce?

35  
36 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** I was shortly there let go shortly thereafter, 2004. Yeah.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** So you missed most of those years.

39  
40 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. Uh-hmm. [Inaudible] I was, well I was 70. Let's see. 2003,  
41 I was 70, 73.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you familiar with stories about women working at St. Joe Lead  
44 during World War II?

45

1 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Just, I just heard that they, they were there. I mean they did at a  
2 lot of plants. They did at, at this U. S. Steel Plant that was here in Ellwood. But they only  
3 had certain jobs. They were excluded from going into some of the departments because  
4 of the, of the hazard, the lead hazard and things like that.

5  
6 (1:12:02)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** They were aware of that as early as the 1940s?

9  
10 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-huh. Yeah. Lead poisoning was well, huh, it wasn't  
11 uncommon for people to get lead poisoning. It was just, it was just a hazard of your job  
12 back in the good old days. I mean, I remember her, her dad was a bricklayer back in the  
13 good old days when they figured out when they go in the furnace to reline the furnace,  
14 they sent a canary in. And if the canary came out, then they could send men in. If the  
15 canary didn't come out, it was still too hot.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** That was the same thing they did with the coal mines.

18  
19 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. That's right. But that's what, that's what they called the  
20 good old days and her dad. He was only what 50?

21  
22 **SARA MULLIN:** Forty-eight.

23  
24 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Forty-eight when he died. And you know what, they didn't, they  
25 didn't test people. They didn't do x-rays for your lungs and stuff like that and, and they  
26 didn't wear respirators back when he worked. It'd been in the '20s and '30s. People. That  
27 was a hazard of your work. And if you got lung disease that was just too bad. I mean that  
28 was terrible, but it was, that's the way companies looked at it. Well, take your chance.  
29 You want to work here. That's what one of the risks.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What jobs did women hold at St. Joe's when you were working there  
32 and what efforts were made to recruit and train them?

33  
34 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well, they mainly when I got there, they were clerical. There  
35 were some professional jobs that there were some women who had a degree in  
36 engineering. Not many. And of course the cafeteria was all women. And the supervisor of  
37 the cafeteria was a woman. The, uh, the person that was in charge of the cafe, uh, of the  
38 whole operation of the, of the cafeteria was a man. Huh. But later on, one of the ladies  
39 that was my secretary got a job as a foreman out in the mill. Now they were limited to  
40 certain parts of the mill and, uh...

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** How did that go having men report to a woman?

43  
44 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** It was okay. I mean they, it was accepted. And she, she performed  
45 just like the guys did. She had to wear boots, a hard, uh, steel-toed shoes, safety glasses,  
46 hardhat.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** What department was this?  
3  
4 (1:14:28)  
5  
6 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** That would've been. Let's see. Mary.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** And what, what was her name?  
9  
10 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh. The department she went to I believe was because, uh, see.  
11 Uh. She was in the zinc oxide department. Part of the zinc oxide.  
12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall her name?  
14  
15 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Mary Rousseau.  
16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** R-U?  
18  
19 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** R-O-U-S-S-E-A-U. Mary Rousseau.  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you happen to know if she's still around?  
22  
23 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Pardon me?  
24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if she's still around?  
26  
27 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** I think she still lives in the valley. Yeah.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** And what years was this that she was working there?  
30  
31 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Well she went out there. I think it was shortly after Horsehead  
32 took over. When, when New Jersey Zinc took over. Because then they moved my office  
33 from the building where I was down to the old home, you know, old people's home that  
34 used to be there. And they moved my office down there and I reported to John Brown  
35 then. And so I, uh, before that Mary worked directly from, for me just outside of my  
36 office. Then when that happened, then she got offered the job as a, uh, uh, a supervisor.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** In the oxide department?  
39  
40 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** I think it was the oxide department. I'm not. Let me.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** So she had been working with you in, in...  
43  
44 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** It was. Um. Let me. Let me say it was, uh, yeah, I think it was  
45 zinc oxide. Yeah.  
46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** So she went from working in personnel to zinc oxide.  
2  
3 (1:16:26)  
4  
5 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. No. She was in. She was a supervisor on the, on the floor. I  
6 mean she actually supervised the men in the mill. And I don't know what kind of training  
7 they gave her. [Laughs] But she had to learn some things about, she was a very bright  
8 girl.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** So before she became a supervisor in the zinc oxide department,  
11 where was she before that?  
12  
13 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** She was my secretary.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, okay. So she went from being your secretary to being a  
16 supervisor?  
17  
18 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Uh-hmm.  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I'll see if I can track her down perhaps.  
21  
22 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Yeah. She's, uh, what's her husband's first name? But she was a  
23 good worker. Yeah. I liked Mary. But anyway, uh, there was another female that was  
24 promoted to or given a supervisory job out in the plant and I can't remember who it was.  
25 But there weren't many.  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make to recruit minorities and how  
28 successful were they?  
29  
30 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh. We, uh, we made, uh, efforts to, through advertisement, you  
31 know, and, uh, we contacted various minority organizations and, uh, you know, we got,  
32 we had a number of people come. A lot of the minorities who would come in didn't really  
33 particularly like the work. We had one was a, uh, supervisor. One was a foreman. One...  
34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?  
36  
37 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, what was his name? But he was, there was only one. Hmm. I  
38 can't think. It doesn't come to me right now.  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. That's, that's fine.  
41  
42 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Okay.  
43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make to support veterans?  
45  
46 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** There wasn't any, no special effort made for veterans. No.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Any hiring preferences?

3  
4 (1:19:06)

5  
6 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** I can't say there was a hiring preference. Although let me say this.  
7 If somebody announced they were a veteran, we, we did give them special, oh not  
8 special, we gave them some extra consideration because we knew they were veterans.  
9 Yeah. But it wasn't. We didn't go out and say we're trying to get all veterans here. No.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. Just a few more questions.

12  
13 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Okay.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** To wrap this up. What was the best part about working at St. Joe  
16 Lead?

17  
18 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** The best part was my relationship I had with all the people there.  
19 Yeah. And we did, you know. Now let me say the salary people did have some  
20 organization. Like we had a golf league, which I belonged to. Uh. They had a bowling  
21 league, uh, in, in the community. But then when they shut down the, uh, the gymnasium  
22 the, uh, the St. Joe bowling league I think folded up. Uh. We, we participated in, and  
23 again, as in the United Way. I would go to their meetings and represent the company and,  
24 uh, and also any other special community meetings that they had I would represent the  
25 company until we became, uh, Zinc, Zinc Corporation, I mean, uh, New Jersey Zinc and  
26 Horsehead. I was kind of put out of that. Now, I, I also would do, uh, I had one of my  
27 other jobs I would do, which ended after we, uh, Horsehead took over. Pennsylvania  
28 Worker's Compensation Law has a, uh, special part of facial scars from burns and things.  
29 So if you got a burn and it left a little mark on your face you could get compensated for  
30 it. And so what they do, they hired an attorney, who would represent the people, and what  
31 I would do, I would get a department superintendent and there would be people there who  
32 were saying they had a disfiguring scar. So we'd negotiate how many weeks they'd get at  
33 the rate of the, of the Worker's Compensation, you know, and so, uh, uh, theoretically an  
34 inch scar that you could still see was worth 10 weeks of compensation. And so the, the  
35 attorney for the, the union would say, uh, at first they could say 20 weeks and I'd say, ah.  
36 So we, we'd go down and we'd negotiate back and forth. They would settle. And we  
37 settled so many scar agreements. But after they got the, uh, they, they took me off that  
38 job because, uh, Horsehead hired attorneys to represent them for Worker's Compensation.  
39 So that was one of the jobs I didn't have any more.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

42  
43 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** It would've been better if the zinc market would've stayed up. I  
44 mean, if, if the market for metals would've stayed up and the company could've  
45 continued on as a zinc smelter. That, that would've been better. Nothing much. There  
46 wasn't anything more that the company could do for me than, I mean, I just liked the

1 challenges of the work and I liked the work there. I liked the people I was with. So other  
2 than the fact that we went through, uh, a staff reduction and finally the buildings are ever  
3 gone now. That, that's, that was sad to see St. Joe leave the area. Yeah. I felt bad about  
4 that. I still feel bad about it.

5  
6 (1:23:16)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

9  
10 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Shell? I think it's good. I think it's wonderful. Really. That's what  
11 we need. We need nice industries that are going to hire people. And from what I read and  
12 from what I understand, they're going to be well paid jobs and they're, they're going to be  
13 very, uh, going to be technical jobs and it's going to take some good, uh, sense and good  
14 knowledge to do, do the work. So I think it's wonderful. I think it's really a good thing  
15 that's happened to the valley. I didn't think it would happen and I was really concerned  
16 for a long time. I didn't think they would come. And now that they're here and now that  
17 they're committed, I'm delighted.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there anything else you'd like to add that we haven't covered?

20  
21 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** No. I don't think there is. I think you've covered it pretty well and  
22 other than the, you know, just the, I'm, I'm glad to be retired now. At first, I wasn't, but  
23 now I am. I've adjusted, you know. Back, uh, I learned that years ago when I was in  
24 college. Now it's hard to imagine me, but I played football in college and the guys  
25 weren't as big then as they are now. I mean if you had a guy that weighed 230 pounds, he  
26 was huge back then. I played on a team in 1950 at Thiel College. And our coach, an old  
27 time coach, a good coach, Stoeber. He had a philosophy about everything. [Laughs]  
28 Football was one of them. And he said to us, he'd say it often to the team. "Boys, you're  
29 going to learn to make the adjustment. No matter what you're doing. You got to adjust."  
30 And I've stuck with it and it's, you know, been with me for years. But it was good advice.  
31 [Laughs] Oh, dear. Coach Stoeber. So anyway, I'll tell you what. Do you have one of  
32 these? I have one, I have, this is my last one. I'll give you that one.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I can send it back to you.

35  
36 **SAMUEL MULLIN:** Oh, okay. If you want. I don't. Unless you want to keep it.

37  
38 (END)

**John Murtha**  
**Interview @ September 29, 2016**

## **JOHN MURTHA**

### **Summary**

The interview with John Murtha took place on September 29, 2016 in his home in Sebring, Ohio. John has since relocated to Enon Valley, Pennsylvania. Among the many things that stand out about the interview with John is that his history as an employee, going back to 1948, is the oldest of all the people interviewed. After a brief start in the labor pool (yard), he was assigned to the tin shop. John's drafting experience in the military came to bear on his opportunities at St. Joe; after eight or nine years he moved into engineering, where he held a number of positions: draftsman, surveyor, and field engineer. John worked for St. Joe until the 1979 shutdown. John generously handed over a large number of St. Joe employee newsletters and anniversary program brochures to be donated to the Senator John Heinz History Center.

In his interview, John describes his experience finding a job after returning from World War II, and how it took a few applications to St. Joe before being hired. He elaborates upon several aspects of working in the tin shop, which was responsible for piping jobs throughout the plant, in particular, ductwork for dust collection. He also refers to other shops that fell within the maintenance department.

John talks about working as a draftsman in the engineering department and the challenges of designing pipes and ductwork throughout the smelter. He explains the role of a surveyor at the plant and the types of projects he worked on, including laying out the auditorium, and his responsibilities as a field engineer in charge of new construction.

Of interest is a story about government-sponsored research at the St. Joe power plant to recover sulfur from the burning of coal as a pollution control measure. An outside firm, Morrison-Knudsen, did that work and John worked with them as a consultant at the power plant following the 1979 shutdown. John talks about subsequent contract work with St. Joe to assist with fly ash ponds (fine coal dust left over from burned coal) and surveying.

John reminisces about social activities both before and after construction of the auditorium, his grandfather whom he visited at the County Home, gas pumps for employee use, and a number of coworkers. He refers to a brief strike in the '70s after the union was voted into the plant.

1 **JOHN MURTHA**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 09/29/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 JOHN MURTHA

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Today is September 29, 2016. This is an interview with John Murtha  
8 and, uh, could you please state and spell your full name?

9  
10 **JOHN MURTHA:** Uh. John. J-O-H-N. R, middle initial. M-U-R-T-H-A.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Thank you and what's your date of birth?

13  
14 **JOHN MURTHA:** [REDACTED].

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** And your current address please.

17  
18 **JOHN MURTHA:** It's [REDACTED], Sebring, Ohio.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area?

21  
22 **JOHN MURTHA:** I'm from Rochester. I was born and raised in Rochester.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead, and in what year  
25 did you stop working for the company?

26  
27 **JOHN MURTHA:** In '48. So 1948 I started and, uh, I, I took retirement in, uh, '80.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** 1980?

30  
31 **JOHN MURTHA:** I think that's when they closed down the first time. Of course, they  
32 started up again, but, uh, I didn't get involved. I did go down to the power plant and  
33 worked for Morrison-Knudsen at that time.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you say that name again?

36  
37 **JOHN MURTHA:** Morrison-Knudsen. Uh. They were from, uh, Boise, Boise, Idaho  
38 and, uh, they're a big company. They were called MK National at that time, at that part  
39 of it. And, uh, of course, we worked on the, uh, citrate, uh, process where they was  
40 trying to recover the, uh, the acid and what else was in the, in the coal. But, uh, I can't  
41 quite remember this part. We were pulling out of the coal anyhow to make the coal so it  
42 wouldn't be pollution. They were taking sulphur out of the coal.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Polluting?

45  
46 **JOHN MURTHA:** Polluting the countryside.

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**INTERVIEWER:** So this is at the plant in Monaca?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Yes, [Inaudible]. The power plant, which is, I was asked to work for. Before it was down in the valley, where the Raccoon Creek come, comes, enters the property. And, uh... Raccoon Creek flows through the property to the Ohio River.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you just clarify Morrison and Knudsen and what that company is?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Morrison. Morrison-Knudsen is a worldwide company and they're mostly, uh, build railroads, uh, railroad equipment. But, uh, we were, we had this process. Uh. I'm trying to remember the darn name. I can't. I'll think about it, you know what I mean. But, uh, we were recovering. It was a government project. Paid for by the government. So we, we were working for the government at, at that time.

**INTERVIEWER:** But at the, at the St. Joe power plant?

**JOHN MURTHA:** At the St Joe power plant. They, they were trying to recover the acid because of, uh, uh, the acid and hmm. Oh dear. I think it was...Sulfur.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sulfur?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Recovered the sulfur and we finally got it working and it was doing. Well, I don't know how efficient was, but they had the company working and that's when they pulled that. The government stopped and I think the government was stopping it. About everybody heard that. And it was, uh, the early '80s.

**INTERVIEWER:** The early '80ss.

**JOHN MURTHA:** That's when everything started to go down.

**INTERVIEWER:** But you retired before that?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Well I retired at St. Joe, from St. Joe. Uh, I was working down there as, uh, engineer at the private...

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**JOHN MURTHA:** And of course I did, I was instrumental in, uh, measuring the fly ash dumps. The ponds. We called them fly ash ponds. I mainly measured the volume that they was putting in those ponds.

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**INTERVIEWER:** What were those ponds called?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Fly ash ponds.

**INTERVIEWER:** Fly, fly ash?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Fly ash.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what were they?

**JOHN MURTHA:** That's the, the little dust that comes out of the coal when it's burned. Well they recovered that, uh, with, uh...That's another name I forget. But that was recovered anyhow by the coal plant and they had to dispose of that, and that, that's a big problem today, you know, in the coal fired power plants is getting rid of the fly ash. It's a real fine powder and they, they, of course, they, they, uh, add water to it to keep it and it's a slurry and it's pumped into these fly, uh, ponds. And then they have to contract somebody to take it out. Now, there's a, there's...

**INTERVIEWER:** You have company.

**JOHN MURTHA:** Oh that's probably. Um.

[Inaudible - People talking in background]

**INTERVIEWER:** I'm going, I'm going to take you back a little ways to the 1940s. How did you, uh, find out about job opportunities at St. Joe and how did you apply for a job?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Well after the war, uh, it was tough getting a job. I, I wanted to apply, but, uh, I couldn't get in or find jobs because enough, a lot of 'em...I stayed in 'til '46 after, a year after I stayed in Japan. And I flew the fighters over there during that time. [Inaudible] various, uh, missions that they had until, uh, around August of '46. And at that time, actually that first job was selling pots and pans and I didn't sell any of 'em. So, then I became an insurance man. I did make a living out of that until, I kept applying to St. Joe and finally got in. Now, at that time, St. Joe was, uh, almost a family place. Uh. I mean everybody was related or knew each other. They were good friends you know, and in fact, it was my aunt who worked in the kitchen.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was her name?

0:07:32

**JOHN MURTHA:** Uh. Aunt Katie. Katie Bish, uh, Katie Bishop. Katie Bishop. She worked in, uh, in the kitchen and, uh, or the cafeteria we called it. And that was a, a great place. I mean full of family meals. You, you didn't hate to go for lunch. You went.



1 That was the main meal when you, uh, worked there. It was mine anyhow. I got home  
2 and I'd eat late and there was, uh, my wife would make, make meals, but, but, uh, that,  
3 uh, was a very great, like I said, great place. Uh. There are so many, uh, things they had  
4 going.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Did you continue to, you mentioned you continued to apply for  
7 a job there?

8  
9 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yes. For about, probably, I placed my name in and finally I got a  
10 call. Six months from when I first put my name in until I received a job.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And what happened on your first day on the job? What do  
13 you remember about that?

14  
15 **JOHN MURTHA:** Uh. They put me in the labor pool. It seemed like I was working on  
16 the railroad doing cleanup work or whatever. But that only lasted a few days and I was  
17 pulled into the tin shop and I became a tinner. [Laughs] Everyday as a laborer I was  
18 assigned a different task, for example, helping or cleaning up after carpenters or tinner.  
19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** What went on in the tin shop?

21  
22 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well everything. All the big piping jobs and just about everything.  
23 The shields that, uh, for the, around the furnaces. Uh. And we did all the dust pipe, the  
24 dust collectors on the furnaces and on the, on the sinter plant and the roasting plant, uh,  
25 all the ductwork that they had. And of course in the rest of the plant you had big  
26 ductwork that went all the way to the, uh, all the way into where they made the zinc or  
27 they made, uh, the powdered zinc and also ducts to the furnace plant and, uh, stacks.  
28 They had stacks on the, uh, south side of the furnace plant all along that, uh, took out the  
29 heat and the dust of the furnaces or wherever they could collect it and that was blown out  
30 into the atmosphere at that time.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you receive to be able to do your job in the  
33 tin shop?

34  
35 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, you learned it, on the job. You just learned it and, uh, first,  
36 probably the first thing was I assisted the first class people and then you worked your  
37 way up.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what specific skills were you taught or did you learn on the  
40 job to work in the shop?

41  
42 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, you learned... Oh, yeah. You learned your layout was, was  
43 very important and I, I got pulled into that because I had, uh, drafting experience. I had  
44 experience in the, in the military. So I started with more or less laying out, laying out,  
45 uh, the patterns to cut out the sheet metal and some of it's heavy sheet metal. So it's...  
46 Mostly just tin shop, uh, worked up into a tin gauge. That's the thickness of the metal.

1 Uh. And, uh, so being it's a job. I ended learning to weld, to fit, and, uh, basically all the  
2 jobs in the, in the tinnery. And I, I was going, going up pretty good in the tinnery. I think  
3 I became a gang, what they called a gang leader. That was right before I, I applied for a  
4 job in engineering.

5  
6 0:12:12

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** So, um, how many years were you in the tin shop?

9  
10 **JOHN MURTHA:** I come in. I, I started in '48 or was it in '50. I don't know. There's,  
11 uh, one of them books. There's a little bit of history there. That tells when I joined. It  
12 had a thing in the booklets that tells about the people. When I came, and I noticed and I  
13 didn't even remember it would be in there, but I was peeking through there and, uh, I  
14 noticed it. Uh, uh. I think it was, I was in the tin shop about eight or nine years and then  
15 I went up in the engineering as a draftsman.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of safety precautions did you need to take working in the  
18 tin shop?

19  
20 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, there was, uh, just about all the safety precautions that was, uh,  
21 safety glasses, uh, uh, masks that controlled the dust and of course we had to wear the  
22 proper clothes. I mean it was clothes like this, but you had to have the proper shoes. We  
23 used to have to take shoes with steel toes. Uh. And of course you had a lot of rules.  
24 Probably a lot more today, but, uh, we had a lot of rules that there was a lot of gases  
25 which you could, had to know about it. Uh. And of course, uh, careful of the furnaces.  
26 You get into the, uh, flames and coal dumped on you. And, uh, around the metal, the  
27 metal you had casting to cast, uh, molten metal where they put it in the slabs. And there  
28 was a lot of times we, I had to make some little protective shields or something that got  
29 broke and wore out and you were building stuff like that right up close, you know, to the  
30 metals.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** So were you doing the installation of these pieces that you were  
33 making?

34  
35 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yeah. We did all of it.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** So, you went from design to building?

38  
39 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yes.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** And installed?

42  
43 **JOHN MURTHA:** Uh-hmm. Yeah. They made just about everything between the tin  
44 shop and, uh, of course they had a blacksmith shop and, and, uh, uh...

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**INTERVIEWER:** Did all these shops fall within one department?

**JOHN MURTHA:** They, they came under a head of one, uh, one department.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what was that department?

**JOHN MURTHA:** And, uh. I don't know. I just remember Bob Mitchell. But he was under the, the machine shop and, uh, and the tin shop and, uh, the pipe shop. They had all the kind of different shops and they all came under the construction. Boss of the machine shop, tin shop and the pipe shop. Then each of these had foremen, then gang leaders in charge of three or four to do a job. Sometimes two gangs would go on a job.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were they part of maintenance or?

**JOHN MURTHA:** What?

**INTERVIEWER:** Were they part of maintenance or engineering?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Yes. This was all a part of maintenance and, uh, a lot of it come under engineering. I mean, uh, I, uh, not as, uh, I don't think that engineering had any people that were actually with them, but the engineers was able to go into the, into the plants and, uh, resolve any of the problems and troubles and things like that. Uh-huh.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of hours did you work and shifts in the tin shop?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Mostly, uh, the shops worked daylight, and that was, we started at seven o'clock and we worked eight hours, and we did work Saturdays and that was always time and a half. So we worked six days a week.

**INTERVIEWER:** And there was no rotating of schedules in, in the shop?

**JOHN MURTHA:** No. Occasionally you worked, uh, if they got, you'd work an extra shift or if they would put down a shop like if emergency. Stuff that had to be out in a hurry, so a breakdown or things like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there any coverage on Sundays?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. It never shut down. There was, uh, but now the shops didn't work.

**INTERVIEWER:** That's, that's what I mean is the tin shop.

0:17:16

1 **JOHN MURTHA:** But, uh, yeah. The, the machine shop it shut down through the  
2 weekend. And, uh...

3

4 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Where did you go after the tin shop?

5

6 **JOHN MURTHA:** I went to engineering.

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** And when was that? Do you recall? Roughly what year?

9

10 **JOHN MURTHA:** I started in '48. I think '57. I think. In 1957, I went up in, uh,  
11 engineering as a draftsman.

12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** How were you able to make that switch into the engineering  
14 department?

15

16 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, I, I applied to the engineering department for it and, uh, I, uh,  
17 turned in, uh, my resume of what, what I did. I had, uh, drafting and, and my military  
18 experience and, uh, I was, I was a test pilot in, in from the P38 in the military. After the  
19 war, I, I was stationed in Japan. So I had a lot of mechanical, uh, experience along with  
20 being a pilot. So I was able to do go up there as a draftsman. My draftsman experience  
21 before this was from high school. It was a class that was taken. It was an entire year  
22 drafting. It was something I chose as an elective.

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** So was your first position in the engineering department as a  
25 draftsman?

26

27 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yes.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** And did they give you any additional training for that job?

30

31 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, yes. You, you learned. You had, uh, the chief draftsman  
32 would come and give you hints and they put you on the drawing board and with simpler  
33 things. And I was laying out in, in the tin shop. So that gave me experience there. Uh.  
34 But I knew how to, to lay out some of these things and, we, we actually did some of them  
35 layouts. I started out before on paper so that, with all the dimensions. See. Now, in the  
36 tin shop as you were doing the layouts you made patterns right there full size. A lot of  
37 patterns was made out of real light metal [Inaudible] almost. Well today, we use  
38 probably use aluminum. But we used real thin tin at the time then.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall, uh, one of your more challenging projects as a  
41 draftsman that you worked on within the engineering department?

42

43 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, there is, there is some. And I did work on the department. I  
44 did do a lot of layout, or drawings for the tin shop, uh, and that was drawing, drawn up.  
45 They wanted to go from here to there with pipes and maybe around a stack or this and  
46 that and you made layouts of that, all that, and, uh, you actually had to go out in the field

1 and measure up a lot of the stuff. And so there's, there's a lot of fieldwork involved too.  
2 So, some of them were pretty challenging and, uh, those pipes you had to do a lot of  
3 trigonometry with them and, uh... Measuring tools used: ruler, measuring tape, transit.  
4

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6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you already have the trig from being a pilot?  
8

9 **JOHN MURTHA:** I had trig in high school and I picked it back up pretty good.  
10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. While you were in the engineering department, um, did you  
12 move onto another position other than draftsman or did you advance into more  
13 complicated draftsmanship?  
14

15 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yeah. Yeah. I, uh, I, I come into, went up into, uh, surveying and  
16 so I by, by the work and, uh, and experience and learning, uh, I become a registered  
17 surveyor. So and, so that is finally what I [Inaudible] the engineering department as, as a  
18 surveyor and I worked under Sterling Lewis, who was the chief surveyor, and he was a  
19 registered surveyor. And then when he retired, I, I took his place as the field engineer.  
20 So from then on I, I worked in the field. Of course, I worked out of the engine,  
21 engineering department.  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the role of a surveyor at the plant?  
24

25 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well you'd laid out just about everything. [Laughs] We did a little  
26 bit of everything. No actual work. I mean physical work. But we laid out anything they  
27 wanted laid out. We did do physical work too. That's hard to say. Like if we had, they  
28 wanted to paint lines around some, uh, some of the machinery or the furnaces or  
29 something. And we laid out lines. We laid out plots for, uh, all the buildings, the new  
30 buildings like let's say the auditorium, which they built, and, uh, of course all the base,  
31 the basic layout of new furnaces, uh, any new construction. We, we laid them out, uh,  
32 but laid out the found, where the foundation should go and we did a lot of concrete work.  
33 Uh. Watching how the concrete was poured to make sure that it was poured right and we  
34 tested the [REDACTED] We made tests. Uh. When the, when the barges  
35 came in with, uh, with, uh, coal on 'em, we had to what we called gauge the barge and  
36 that's by gauge. We measured, uh, the draft on 'em, uh, all around the barge. We  
37 measured that to the bottom back down to the water and then we calculated how, how  
38 much, what the volume was, how much, uh, how much coal was in 'em. And then when  
39 they were empty we measured them again, then drafted, then calculated exactly what was  
40 in that part. So there, there was just things going on all the time. I mean so many  
41 different things. Whenever the engineering was called they wanted something measured  
42 that people in the field construction, they had construction to and they would call to  
43 measure something. The height of wires. Uh. This and that. Anything.  
44

1 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm going to want to talk more about your career, but you just  
2 triggered a question to me. You said you were involved with, with surveying for the  
3 auditorium.

4

5 0:25:10

6

7 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yeah. We, we laid out the auditorium and what was the other  
8 one, the other building along there. Well there was the, the last big office they built, that  
9 they built.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall the Crane Building?

12

13 **JOHN MURTHA:** The what?

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** The Crane Building. I can show you on a map.

16

17 **JOHN MURTHA:** Where they kept the cranes?

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** No, it was called, it was called the Crane Building.

20

21 **JOHN MURTHA:** No, I don't remember that.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. All right. We will have to look at the map later. So for those  
24 few years before the auditorium was built, what kinds of activities were going on,  
25 athletic, social, recreational?

26

27 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, I, I can't tell you the dates, but they had all kinds of things that  
28 we did. Golf. Uh. Golf, uh, team or golf. They didn't have the golf course, but they had  
29 the golf, everybody, the golf club there. I never joined that till later when I, when I was  
30 in engineering. In the golf club and they, after and well before, they had, uh, picnics.  
31 Always had picnics. The corn roast and you'll see some in the thing. I, I don't remember  
32 what year they built the auditorium. I would say...

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** That was, it was '51.

35

36 **JOHN MURTHA:** Huh?

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** '51, 1951.

39

40 **JOHN MURTHA:** Was it that early? I didn't realize it was then. Yeah. But prior to  
41 that there was a lot of activity. Like I said, the biggest was the corn roast. Always had  
42 parties. Uh. They had safety parties and there was always a month of safeties for a  
43 period. I forget was it a month, I think, it was a month. They'd throw a big old party.  
44 And, that was [Inaudible]. I'm trying to think. [Laughs] Volleyball team. I know they had  
45 a, er, a good volleyball team. In fact, they, I think they came very close to playing in  
46 the... I'm sorry. I kind of lose words. And, uh, of course I'm only 93, so... [Laughs] I'll

1 be, I'll be, uh... Somebody says you got an excuse for that. But, uh, in the Olympics.  
2 The, they come, I think they applied for, they were very good in volleyball. And like I  
3 said, the golf team, the volleyball team. The volleyball team almost made the Olympics.  
4 It was non-union so they had lots of things to keep people happy.

5  
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8 **INTERVIEWER:** Which things did you participate in?

9  
10 **JOHN MURTHA:** Uh. The golf was probably the only thing. Oh, I'm sure I did some  
11 of the games they had or the, but, uh, I did play golf. I never, never did much good at  
12 golf, but I played, uh, I played it up until my wife [Inaudible]. Up until a few years ago.  
13 Like I said, it's full of golf equipment out there, which I got to get rid of, but nobody  
14 wants. They're old, too old. [Laughs]. That's about all of what I can remember right  
15 now. Bocce, dances (auditorium, had a local band, food).

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Let's go back to your, your work path. Uh. You were in the  
18 engineering department.

19  
20 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yeah.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Doing draftsmanship and then surveying.

23  
24 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yes.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** What, where did you move to after that?

27  
28 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, uh, I became the, the field engineer. I was in charge of all the  
29 new construction and stuff as far as, uh, laying out and that kind of thing or various  
30 things that went on I was called into to look into if, uh, I knew anything about. But a lot  
31 of things we had field books and everything we did every day, and I don't know whatever  
32 happened to those field books.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** What was in the field books?

35  
36 **JOHN MURTHA:** What we did every day.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Like, uh, like a journal of...

39  
40 **JOHN MURTHA:** We laid this out and laid this out, and then we did this and we  
41 jumped on this. Uh-huh. And, uh, of course we had a lot of calculations when we would  
42 go out and measure up for a foundation or anything. It was all in field books and we had  
43 to do that every day.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did you stay in the engineering department?  
46

1 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well until the, actually till I was, even when I was surveying that  
2 was the engineering department. I stayed with them until the plant closed. That was in  
3 about '79 or '80?

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7 **INTERVIEWER:** '79. So when did you switch over to the power plant?

8  
9 **JOHN MURTHA:** At that time, uh, I, I applied down there with Morrison-Knudsen and  
10 I got the job. I think we was laid off. I was laid off probably a month.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** So you're talking about 1979?

13  
14 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yeah.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please explain Morrison and Knudsen, they bought the St.  
17 Joe power plant?

18  
19 **JOHN MURTHA:** No, the power plant, the government was searching for a way to  
20 burn coal without the emissions and, uh, like I said we was building a system onto the  
21 power plant that would recover the, uh, sulfur that was the main complaint was sulfur,  
22 which is sulfuric, sulfur, sulfuric acid too. And, uh, some of it because they had an acid  
23 plant, which is tied in. I think that is why the government picked the things there. It was  
24 a little power plant and it was burning coal to power the plant. And so the government  
25 hired Morrison-Knudsen. I come in on the tail end of it. I mean, they had been there for  
26 a couple of years working on this and they needed another engineer down there. So I  
27 went down there and worked.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Where, where was the Morrison and Knudsen plant?

30  
31 **JOHN MURTHA:** They were in Boise, Idaho. Uh, they're, they're worldwide.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** So were you working for them in, in Idaho?

34  
35 **JOHN MURTHA:** No. No. I worked for them down at the power plant.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Did St. Joe sell the power plant?

38  
39 **JOHN MURTHA:** Not then, but, uh, when they shut down St. Joe, it went on the grid  
40 and they were selling power to the grid. I think was always tied to it. That's what the  
41 power plant is involved I, I don't know. You might, you must have a plot plan that can  
42 show the power plant. If you don't, I do. Oh this is a nice little town. The little town is  
43 quiet. Nobody does, nothing happens here. Except the water, that's become public here.  
44 Right after the Michigan, uh, the Michigan deal. St. Joe's power plant was separate from  
45 the Morrison-Knudson power plant. The Morrison-Knudson was on the St. Joe property,  
46 but was built by the government for their purposes.



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**INTERVIEWER:** Oh, Flint.

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**JOHN MURTHA:** I know St. Joe became pretty well, uh, Sebring became public here cause they found lead in the water. Well the water, the water company here is run by the town. It has good water, but of course they measured it out of the spigots in the houses, some of the old houses like this one is over 100 years old and some of them had lead pipe and stuff like that. So that's where they get the lead there. They made a big deal about that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Let's return to where we were, but 1979 the plant shut down.

**JOHN MURTHA:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** You were laid off and retired.

**JOHN MURTHA:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** But then you worked at the power plant with Morrison...

**JOHN MURTHA:** Knud, MK National that was who it was, who was a part of Morrison-Knudsen. [Laughs] Sorry.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was any, any ongoing relationship you had working at St. Joe's, not necessarily as an employee, but as a contractor or consultant?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Well, well I, I, that's another thing then. I still was involved or paid by St. Joe. I was a contractor with the fly ash dumps measuring the volume of the fly ash dumps. I was involved in that and they paid me. I was, uh, a paid contractor. Uh. And I did that on my Saturdays or whenever. And it was the summertime in the evenings. But, it's [Inaudible] worked with Morrison-Knudsen and then after I left Morrison-Knudsen I was called in numerous times. I've got, still got notes on, uh, a few of the log, log books. Uh, cause, see, I was still a registered surveyor and they had to have a registered surveyor to do that job. So, uh, that's you know all that was the only involvement then was, uh, that but just as far as personal of course we still got involved with, uh, MK National Morrison-Knudsen. Uh. We, we didn't go to the, the, like the tin shop or if we did need some various fittings or things like that we would have them do it and of course they in turn would probably bill, in fact, this I seen it in those letters that had the bill, billing on it.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you working at the plant in your early years, do you remember it being referred to as Josephtown.

**JOHN MURTHA:** The what?

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**INTERVIEWER:** The plant.

**JOHN MURTHA:** Josephtown.

**INTERVIEWER:** Josephtown.

**JOHN MURTHA:** Yes. Uh-huh. There was homes there along the, well there was old 18. It was very, a lot of, those, those people were probably, when first St. Joe started I'm sure the homes were built by St. Joe. It was all inside their property up there. And, uh, in fact those were a secondary if you're familiar with the term east secondary. It'd be on that, but the farm. Oh well that's where these people had the cemetery. That's where I knew about the cemetery. And, uh, so there was a farm there. It was a working farm. Of course, now along the same thing, St. Joe had a farm, uh, back on out the, the [Inaudible] out along Raccoon Creek Road, out back there was a, there was a farm. Out there by the, the tank farm and they had a farm there that they supplied all the meats and they had corn. That is where they got the corn roast was started. They had the corn roast from the corn they produced out there at the farm.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever go to the farm?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yes. Uh. I mean we had various things to do at, sometimes, to do at the farm. And I, I can't remember why we went there, but as the surveyor I know we mapped the farm a couple of times. Uh-hmm. It was just [Inaudible].

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you, do you remember a boardinghouse for, um, unmarried management men to live in?

**JOHN MURTHA:** No. No. No.

**INTERVIEWER:** It was one of the old farmhouses.

**JOHN MURTHA:** It was probably one of the farmhouses.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**JOHN MURTHA:** And, uh, like I said there was numerous farms there, but I only remember the one at the time I got there. So I know there was more because well there, the people were buried in the cemetery there on the hillside. Uh-huh.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about the County Home?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Honey, I remember a lot about that.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah?

2

3 0:37:34

4

5 **JOHN MURTHA:** I had a grandfather that died down there. So...

6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you used to visit him there?

8

9 **JOHN MURTHA:** Huh?

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you used to visit him there?

12

13 **JOHN MURTHA:** No. I'm sure I was probably more of a baby, but I knew he was  
14 down there. And, uh, now he come out of there before he died. But, uh, whether... I  
15 don't. I, I really don't remember it. I remember about the time he died. I remember, I  
16 remember only, well I'd meet him on the streets. That was the Depression, and I think he  
17 lost everything during the Depression. It was the reason he... And I don't even know  
18 where he lived until he went to the... I hear when he got sick they took him into the  
19 County Home. Uh-huh.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were working at St. Joe's did you have to do any work  
22 over by the County Home?

23

24 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yeah.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of work were you doing there?

27

28 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, well it was mostly surveying, locating, and, uh, to the plant.  
29 Uh. There was at that time they built a bocce court down there. We laid that out. That  
30 was one, one of the, that was one of the salary, that was for salary personnel at that time.  
31 So, they had a picnic every year. Now, the bocce court was used by other people during  
32 the plant. They had parties there too. But I, I remember the parties we had down there.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you involved with any of the, the work to renovate the County  
35 Home to make it usable for St. Joe?

36

37 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, the surveying part. We would do various, measure up. Uh. I  
38 remember we measured up, uh, the old sewer system and we tore some of that out and the  
39 guys were looking for the coins. We found all kinds of old coins that was in the sewer  
40 system. I remember that, remember that. And, uh... The the only involvement we had is  
41 when they needed something [Phone ringing] measured. [Phone ringing] Sorry about  
42 that. I think I got it. [Laughs]. Sorry. Yeah, that's, uh, that's about the only thing I  
43 remember. I remember it was pretty nice when they fixed it up. But it laid there for quite  
44 a while before it become, uh, who used that, it was chemical people that used that.

45

46 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of renovations did St. Joe do to the County Home?

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**JOHN MURTHA:** Well they run, main offices. Uh-huh. I think it was probably still, the offices were still there when, uh, Shell took it over, but, but there was pretty plush offices in it. Research center. That's, that's who took over. That's what. They did a lot of research. St. Joe did, uh. They, they made paint. They had paint, uh, a paint shop where they made a lot of paint, and the reason they made that paint was, uh, trying to develop the paint with, uh, zinc oxide and, uh, they, they, they made all this paint. I don't know why they made so much of it. They used it all over the plant and you could buy it just for the cost of making it and so it wasn't really much, \$2 or \$3 a gallon at that time. Everybody bought St. Joe paint. I mean many a homes in Rochester and Monaca and Beaver was painted with St. Joe paint.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was, was the, uh, the gas pump there for employees?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** During your time as well?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where was that located?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Even the old one you can, uh, the original, uh, but basically when they built the new, the new, uh, gate and, uh, the garage, shop and all that area that, oh, that was, uh, uh, there was a big shower room. [Laughs] I don't remember what I was going to say. Where the gymnasium type thing and, and, uh, the shower rooms, but, but a lot of the employees were, that was their shower room. Uh-huh. And that was the [Inaudible] that was the guardroom and then they had the gas pumps out there. All day long it was a pretty busy little gas station. The gas pumps were by the guardroom.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So you came to St. Joe's right, pretty soon after the war.

**JOHN MURTHA:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you know about St. Joe's activity during the war? What might've been manufactured, uh, bringing in women workers?

**JOHN MURTHA:** Yeah. Well it's still. I could tell you, uh, some of the things that the guys talked about and there was basically the same as I described. It was, uh, family run, more or less family, uh, not this upper class, but, uh, the higher ups, but pretty all the, all the workers and people had somebody that they was related to or, or very good friends or something like that and at that time...A couple of those books will tell you some of that stuff. But I'm trying to. I think there was a couple in the '40s or early '50s. Well that was right after. But I know there was some men that would talk about some of the boys

1 that left for the war. There might be a little file of some of that type of information in  
2 that.

3

4 0:46:31

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6 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I'll look through that.

7

8 **JOHN MURTHA:** And, uh...

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** So I have a few more questions for you.

11

12 **JOHN MURTHA:** Do you?

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

15

16 **JOHN MURTHA:** I guess I liked it. I mean I liked the people and I was basically going  
17 up the ladder making, you know, uh, increased pay, uh, pay. I know, I know I had a  
18 enough, I got enough pay out of 'em that I bought an airplane. I flew an airplane for a  
19 while until the, uh, price of the hangar rent got too high and I, and I sold that. [Laughs]

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did you keep your airplane?

22

23 **JOHN MURTHA:** Up in Chippewa. Up in. Uh-huh. Number One, Number One  
24 Hangar. Well their probably texting me now. So... [Laughs]

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Who were some of your most memorable work colleagues?

27

28 **JOHN MURTHA:** Work fellas?

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Work colleagues. Who were some of the, the people you worked  
31 with that you think were the most memorable?

32

33 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh well now, the boss was, uh... names. Oh, I don't remember  
34 them all, but, uh, I remember, remember the boss.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember George Weaton?

37

38 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, yes. I knew George Weaton very well. George Weaton was...

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about him?

41

42 **JOHN MURTHA:** He was just a nice fella. Nice old man then. [Laughs] Uh. At that  
43 time, I was pretty skinny like I still am. I never gained anything. I remember him talking  
44 to me and saying, "I don't know how, what a skinny person like you can do in this plant."  
45 And, I, at the time I was doing whatever required. And, uh, Paul Gahagen. He was an  
46 assistant, uh, engineer, uh, assistant chief engineer, Paul Gahagen, and I got along with

1 him very well. Most, most people hated him. He was pretty tough on, on people. You  
2 better do your job. But, I mean, they didn't hate him, but you know, but I got along with  
3 him. Let's see. Go down the ladder. There was Bill Steele. He was an old engineer.  
4 Let's see. He just recently passed away. Uh. Of course, Tom O'Neil was, uh, he was a  
5 surveyor and professional engineer (PE) up in engineering. He was also PE, which I  
6 became later in life. Uh. But I worked with him a lot of times and we even partied  
7 together a couple times, but after the parties and some of the things. But. I remember  
8 him very well. In fact, he was having a heart attack and I got him. I said, "Tom, we gotta  
9 go to the hospital." I mean, he was hurting here. I said, "We gotta hurry." I finally talked  
10 him in and jumped him in, into the car and drove him into Rochester Hospital. Well they  
11 examined him all over and they wanted to keep him. Uh. No way. He wouldn't stay.  
12 So I brought him back to work and actually the nurse. Uh. They had a nurse, there was a  
13 nurse all the time in there, Edith Haskins Kerr. She took, uh, checked Tom. She got his  
14 blood pressure and everything and she said it was too high. He better go to the hospital.  
15 Well that's when she contacted me because she knew I, he and I were together a lot. So  
16 that. I probably wouldn't have become surveyor unless I started with him. And, uh,  
17 anyhow that night Tom passed away. That, uh, that was quite an experience. Uh. I had a  
18 lot of good friends, but, uh, Jim Baldwin. Uh. He, had, uh, was in, uh, a soldier in the  
19 Korean War and was very badly wounded. Shot in the, in his back wasn't it, somewhere  
20 and he had a lot of, uh, surgery and stuff like that. He was a draftsman and he and I were,  
21 of course I knew him when I was a kid. Well he was a lot younger, but he played with  
22 my brothers so that's how I knew him. I was the oldest and then my dad always said, "I  
23 have five sons and each one of 'em has a sister," but we only had one sister. But they are  
24 all passed away now except one, Ronnie. My brother, Ronnie, now he, he worked at St.  
25 Joe and, uh, he was a college student. In the summers, he worked in the machine shop.  
26 They, they gave him a job. That was a nice thing. I told him, you know, I got him a job  
27 down there. They hired, uh, kids and stuff like that, to help them to get through college  
28 and, uh, it was just, uh, a, a nice place. There was a, there was a, it wasn't a bad place to  
29 work. Everybody was pretty nice though. Yeah. They tell me I got COPD and, uh,  
30 wondered, asked me how I ever got asbestos in my lung. Well that's where I got it,  
31 because I worked in the tin shop. There was, there was asbestos everywhere. But they  
32 used it on the pipes, for the heat, and on the furnaces they used it to stop up, uh, any  
33 leakage they had and everything like that. They used to plaster it on the furnaces. The  
34 guys used to throw it on each other joking around.

35

36 0:54:00

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job at St. Joe in 1979?

39

40 **JOHN MURTHA:** The last day, I don't know. It was mostly running around and  
41 saying goodbye to everybody and I remember an instance when I was walking out and  
42 the newspaper stopped me. Uh. No. No. It wasn't then. That was when they was on  
43 the strike.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** When?

46

1 **JOHN MURTHA:** When there was a strike before. I don't know. It was early '79 or  
2 did it happen... But I just don't remember the date of the strike. I'm sure you people  
3 have that if you have any of the history when they had... See after, after all this right to  
4 work [Inaudible] and everything come in St. Joe then was forced to hire people off the  
5 street or various people. Then before long why, they, they, they got a union and then  
6 they went on strike. Well there was things I never wanted to see time, but that's what  
7 happened. [Laughs] My time. There were things I never wanted to see in my time during  
8 the strike. I worked in the factory during the strike to help out because I was in  
9 management.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

12  
13 0:55:26

14  
15 **JOHN MURTHA:** Oh, I think it will be a great company. It should be. It should  
16 provide, uh, a lot of work for a lot of people. Uh. I'm for it. I see they're doing a lot,  
17 they did a lot of work over there. I mean millions of dollars all ready. [Laughs] Uh. I  
18 think it will be a boom to the, for the area. Cause I know it hurt the area when St. Joe  
19 went down. And all that surrounding area right there around the river communities.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Well that concludes the questions that I have for you, but is there  
22 anything else that you would like to add about your experiences at St. Joe that we didn't  
23 cover?

24  
25 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well, I had a lot of experiences I'm sure. Uh. So. Uh. I remember  
26 the one was, uh, the mall up at the, you know, on the hill, uh, the area there, their  
27 drainage was coming right down on St. Joe's fly ash dumps, the fly ash ponds. That,  
28 that... St. Joe had fly ash ponds. There was a lot of fly ash down there on the riverbank.  
29 I don't know. Did Shell ever run into that? I'm sure they would, but, uh, anyhow it was  
30 down that hill it started to wash out the fly ash dump or part of it made it like a niche  
31 through the fly ash there, and I, I discovered that right around. It was on a weekend. I  
32 don't know why I was working on that weekend, but that was another part of my job was  
33 when I did just, I'd just drive around and see things, you know, if anything was going on  
34 around the plant property back around there. I called the contractor to come up  
35 immediately, which I was not allowed to do, but there was nobody there. So I called the  
36 contractor. He got out right away and we started to plug this up. Uh. So it wouldn't go  
37 into the river. Well I was commended for that. I received the salary person of the month.  
38 So I got recommendations for that, and, uh, I earned. But they had, we had, uh... There  
39 was a salary, the salaried people, the salaried person of the year. I don't think they  
40 named it that, but I remember it, or of the month, I, I got that one, uh, one time. Well that  
41 is one that tied in with that. That was one of the reasons I got that and they, they had that  
42 I don't know how many years and I went to, uh, I wanted to go to a Steeler's football  
43 game, so they got me tickets to a Steeler's football game and, and up on the hill in  
44 Pittsburgh right down there. Up on the hill there was real plush restaurants. I had a  
45 beautiful dinner up at, my wife and I. So, things like that. Uh. Oh, I, uh, there are so  
46 many things I remember. I remember a lot of that stuff. Uh. But, it was a good place to

1 work. Oh, I did, I do remember the strike. I got into the plant for people. The people  
2 they had the gates guarded and everything. But I got into the plant. I did it. I helped in  
3 the furnace plant. I helped run the...

4  
5 0:59:31

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** When was the strike?

8  
9 **JOHN MURTHA:** Uh. It was in the '70s, mid-'70s.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** After the union came in?

12  
13 **JOHN MURTHA:** After what?

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** After the union came in?

16  
17 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yes. Uh-huh.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Well that was '74. So if...

20  
21 **JOHN MURTHA:** '74. It was after that.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** That's when the union came in.

24  
25 **JOHN MURTHA:** That's what I said. It was like '70.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

28  
29 **JOHN MURTHA:** Yeah. Yeah, I remember that. I was, I come in down from the river  
30 and come in and... [Laughs] I had to sneak in so I walked down along the river. No one  
31 was down there.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did it last?

34  
35 **JOHN MURTHA:** A couple of days. Uh-huh. Yeah. All the salaried people were  
36 keeping their, trying, keeping the furnaces from freezing up. That was they, they weren't  
37 worried about making any metal. It was just to keep them from freezing up. So I think  
38 they did most of 'em. We lost a couple probably. I just think of things like that I could  
39 think of, I could probably think about. The bad things I forgot about. [Laughs] I  
40 remember so many good things.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** May as well.

43  
44 **JOHN MURTHA:** Well that's what they say. People remember the good things but  
45 forget the bad. I think that's true.

46



1 1:01:03

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, thank you very much for your time and your information and  
4 your stories.

5

6 **JOHN MURTHA:** Listened to me or whatever. I don't know how you come about for  
7 myself, but I'm afraid there's not too many people living. We're the old timers. Uh. I'm  
8 lucky. I am. I still got pretty good health. I'm still...

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Well thank you very much for your time.

11

12 **JOHN MURTHA:** You're very welcome.

13

14 (END)

**John Pusateri**  
**Interview @ November 15, 2016**

## **JOHN PUSATERI**

### **Summary**

The interview with John Pusateri took place on November 15, 2016, in the conference room of Horsehead Corporation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he currently works as director of technology. John's affiliation with the St. Joe zinc plant started in 1971 as a college co-op student in the lab and research department. After four years of co-op rotations he joined the company fulltime in July 1975 as a research engineer. Unlike most employees who were laid off or terminated with the 1979 and/or 2014 shutdowns, John's story is atypical in that he weathered both these transitions. This was possible due to the ways in which research support functioned within St. Joe and its successors.

John outlines the early organization of the research department into process development, product development, and materials lab, and the disbanding of the research groups in the mid-'80s and mid-'90s. He describes the technical service arm of research to support sales, marketing and customer service and his part in the technical group in the smelter starting in the mid-'90s. John discusses factors driving research, including economic and environmental concerns, and significant research initiatives such as pilot plants at Monaca, most notably, one for the flame reactor.

John references ZCA and the Horsehead Divisions, Waelz kilns, the Beaumont Plant and Palmerton facility. He discusses the lead up to the 2014 shutdown and the development of Horsehead's North Carolina plant. John describes the use of the County Home for laboratories, the technical library and the librarian who oversaw it. He provides some historical context about Carlton Long, the legacy of paint and rubber labs, and some of the company's biggest technological innovations prior to 1975.

John had on hand a photo of the team that worked on the flame reactor and several company brochures and newspaper/magazine articles.

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**JOHN PUSATERI**  
**INTERVIEW - 11/15/2016**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
JOHN PUSATERI

**INTERVIEWER:** Interview with John Pusateri, November 15, 2016. Could you please state and spell your full name?

**JOHN PUSATERI:** John F. Pusateri. P-U-S-A-T-E-R-I.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Please state your date of birth and your full address.

**JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh. [REDACTED] and, uh, the address is [REDACTED], Beaver, Pennsylvania.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are, are you currently working or retired, and if working, where and doing what?

**JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. I'm working, uh, as Director of Technology for Horsehead Corporation.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area or did you come here because of employment opportunity at St. Joe.

**JOHN PUSATERI:** I, uh, I grew up in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. Uh. My father worked for United States Steel in the Mon Valley and, uh, I found out about St. Joe, uh, when I was first introduced to them as a, as a co-op engineer.

**INTERVIEWER:** When was that?

**JOHN PUSATERI:** That was in 1971. Uh. I guess it would've been the summer of 1971 as, uh, I went to Drexel University and they had a co-op engineering program. So one of the opportunities that they, they offered was in the, uh, in the analytical lab at St. Joe.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So what year during your college experience did you come here for the co-op?

**JOHN PUSATERI:** It would've been my, the beginning of my sophomore year.

**INTERVIEWER:** And did you do one co-op rotation here?

**JOHN PUSATERI:** I did four co-op rotations. Uh. There were three three-month and one six-month and that spanned, uh, you know, 1971 to late 1974 I guess it would've

1 been because I graduated in 1975. And I started out in the lab and then I went to research,  
2 worked three of the four in research. I had one term in, in the lab.

3  
4 (0:02:22)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of supervision did you have in the co-op program?

7  
8 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh. Well it was, uh, it was handled through the personnel  
9 department at St. Joe, um, and they recruited us and we had, uh, papers to write about our  
10 experience and, you know, we had, uh, day to day supervision with the, uh, the folks at,  
11 at the lab or the research department, wherever we were, and they gave us assignments,  
12 um, of things to do. And then, um, the, um, Bob Redelfs, who I think, uh, Terri Belczyk  
13 might've mentioned was the, uh, coordinator of the co-op program at that time and so he  
14 would check up on us, uh, every once in a while through the term.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. How many co-op students were there typically at any given  
17 time?

18  
19 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, well, uh, I think there were times when I was the only one, but  
20 I was recalling, uh, a summer and I think it was 1973 when between summer engineers  
21 and co-ops and children of employees that were sort of interning for the summer, we had  
22 18, 18, uh, students. And, uh, we actually had enough to have, uh, two softball teams and  
23 played softball during the summer. It was kind of a nice memory. So.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** When you didn't have such a large group of students in the summer,  
26 did the co-op students meld into the plant community or did you kind of keep to  
27 yourselves?

28  
29 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Um. I had kind of both experiences. I had, uh, I think the first  
30 summer I actually drove from home every day. So I, you know, I got to know some  
31 people at work, but not, not that well. I wasn't part of the community. And then, because  
32 that was, uh, about an hour's drive from my home in the South Hills. I think the second  
33 time I was there I lived in, uh, I just rented a room in Beaver and so I was by myself, but  
34 several families would invite me to dinner and, uh, so I did get to know some people  
35 more personally. And there were, uh, a couple of, uh, other students. I think there were a  
36 couple of other co-ops at the time that we would do things together. So, so I did get to,  
37 uh, to know some of the kids that way. Then, I roomed with a, uh, a family, who took in  
38 co-op students on a regular basis and it was through that family that I met my wife  
39 actually in, uh, Brighton Township. So, I guess eventually I got integrated into the  
40 community there, but you know people were very warm and gracious and inclusive, you  
41 know, inviting me to dinner. You know, we, uh, uh, they had a golf league and I was able  
42 to participate in that. Um. So and they had, you know, most of the people were easy to  
43 get to know. So it was a good place to get started for sure.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** At what point in your four rotations here as a co-op student did you,  
46 um, decide this is the place where you wanted to end up working?

1  
2 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well, part of it had to do with, uh, starting to date the girl who  
3 eventually became my wife, but that was, you know, a reason to consider it to stay. But  
4 then the company made me a very nice offer and I had been interviewing for other  
5 positions as part of that run up to graduation and, uh, it was by far the, the best offer just  
6 in terms of the kinds of things they were going to be doing, that, that I was going to be  
7 doing were very interesting, developmental, uh, challenging, whereas a lot of other  
8 positions were, you know, you start out working as a shift foreman in a steel plant and,  
9 you know, I felt like that was, uh, the St. Joe opportunity was the best one among the  
10 offers that I had.

11  
12 (0:07:02)

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** So in what year did you start working for St. Joe as a fulltime  
15 employee?

16  
17 **JOHN PUSATERI:** 1975. July 1975.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was that first position you were hired for?

20  
21 **JOHN PUSATERI:** I was, uh, a research engineer. And at that time I think they had a  
22 couple of different levels of research engineer in terms of depending how much  
23 experience you had and, uh, so, you know, I was pretty, pretty much entry level.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Could you please outline the organizational structure of the  
26 research department and describe the divisions or groups within it?

27  
28 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh. So at the time, this is, you know, as much as I can remember,  
29 uh, we had, uh, about a hundred employees in, in research at that time. And it was  
30 divided into, uh, process development and product development. And I was on the  
31 process development side and there was, uh, a, uh, Director of Research, at the time, was  
32 Bob Lund, who was a real, you know, mentor to me for sure. Uh. And just an excellent  
33 person, you know, knew his stuff technically and, but was a real people person, uh, very  
34 positive and encouraging. And, uh, so I was part of, uh, a subgroup in the process group  
35 in pyrometallurgy, and so I was going to work on high temperature furnace type, uh,  
36 processes. We had a smaller hydrometallurgy group within the process group and then in  
37 product develop, and so there was a, uh, manager over process development. And I want  
38 to remember who, I, I believe the, the guy who was in that position when I started was,  
39 uh, a fellow by the name of Doug Zunkel. I don't know if you've heard his name along  
40 the way.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** How do you spell that?

43  
44 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Z-U-N-K-E-L.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** So he was head of process engineering?

1  
2 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. He was, he was head of the process group within research,  
3 process research I guess it was called.

4  
5 (0:09:37)

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And Bob Lund was the Director of the Department of  
8 Research.

9  
10 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** The overall department.

13  
14 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

17  
18 **JOHN PUSATERI:** And then the product development I, uh, you know, they did things  
19 like new applications for zinc, zinc oxide, uh, and in each case we each had, uh, you  
20 know, test equipment, bench scale, testing that we could do and then eventually we built  
21 pilot plants, uh, to do larger scale process development or product development. We had  
22 both and at that time it was, oh, just, you know. We had projects growing everywhere,  
23 um, in lead, in zinc, zinc oxide both on the process side looking at new processes to  
24 succeed the ones that we were operating at the time and then new products. Trying to  
25 take advantage of new markets. Um. And then, uh, I will say in addition to those two  
26 departments, we had a, uh, I don't know, it was a laboratory that did, um, materials  
27 studies of structure of materials and physical properties of materials, corrosion. We had  
28 scanning electron microscopes to characterize materials and, um, we also had a, uh, kind  
29 of a process control group within the process group that did automation instrumentation,  
30 uh, worked both in research as well as in the smelter. Um. So those were all part of the  
31 Research Department.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did the idea for research projects come from?

34  
35 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well, they, they did have a, a method for, um, documenting ideas  
36 and then running those up the management chain for funding and, uh, so we, we did that.  
37 Um. My first direct supervisor was, uh, a guy by the name of David Rice. And, uh, the,  
38 uh, this whole idea of what eventually became the flame reactor actually started, uh, with  
39 him, um, contacting, looking at this idea of high temperature flash smelting, more  
40 efficient, um, simpler raw, um, fuels than what we were using in the smelter. He  
41 contacted an engineering group in Germany that, uh, looked like they were developing  
42 something we could adapt. And, uh, so that's kind of how that got started and then as, you  
43 know, we would do the, um, calculations, uh, feasibility study of what the economics  
44 would look like if we were to develop something like this and we were able to get  
45 funding to, uh, you know, um, do test work. Uh. One of my first assignments was to go to  
46 Germany to run tests in a pilot plant, uh, in Germany on residues from our furnace to try

1 to recover more zinc from them. And, uh, that eventually developed into what became  
2 our own pilot plant at Monaca and we eventually commercialized that process. But, you  
3 know, it started with these feasibility studies and then approval to run larger scales tests.  
4 Uh. Eventually we built a small, uh, test unit, uh, with a company in Tennessee, uh,  
5 which then used that information to build our own pilot plant. So just in the case of that  
6 one process, that is kind of how we stepped through the development.

7  
8 (0:13:53)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there ever any outside funding for the kind of research that you  
11 were doing there?

12  
13 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. Yes.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** By whom?

16  
17 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh. We got, we had two sources of funding. In the case of the  
18 flame reactor, uh, flash smelting unit, we had funding from a group called The Center for  
19 Metals Production, which was part of Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and they were  
20 funded by a consortium of about 25 steel companies, and they were looking into new, at  
21 that time, new methods of processing electric arc furnaces tests from electric steel plants.  
22 And, uh, they ended up funding two processes. Ours was one of them and paid for a large  
23 portion of the test costs for, I don't know, a year's worth of pilot testing. We also got  
24 funding from the Bureau of Mines, U. S. Bureau of Mines at the time. This would've  
25 been in the mid-'80s time frame. And that was more along the lines of new energy  
26 efficient processes that would use carbon, uh, coal or coke and the Bureau was trying to  
27 encourage development of those kinds of things. Um. Uh. We also got funding from Gas  
28 Research Institute. So after the Bureau of Mines work was done, we adapted our, the  
29 burner on our furnace to natural gas and so the gas industry was willing to, uh, provide  
30 some funds to help with that development. So and there were other projects like it that,  
31 um, like we had a whole process for, uh, hydrometallurgically recovering lead from lead  
32 concentrates to replace the smelter in Missouri. That had funding from the Department of  
33 Energy, uh, the Bureau of Mines. Uh. There was another, uh, research, maybe it was the,  
34 I, I can't remember. There was another research group, industry research group that they  
35 got funding from, but, you know, that, that kind of thing was available.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Who took the lead on getting projects funded and were there, did you  
38 have a grant writer? Um. How did that work?

39  
40 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Not that I recall. I think we, um, uh, you know, that kind of started  
41 with contacts from the upper management of research, you know, the managers and the  
42 director, would make those initial contacts and then, you know, by the time it got to  
43 writing the, the, uh, proposals, you know, the engineers ended up doing the bulk of that  
44 work. Uh. But then, you know, it got endorsed or, uh, recommended by the management  
45 to the, the group we were seeking funding from. So.



1 **INTERVIEWER:** I think we jumped a little ahead in getting into the flame reactor, but  
2 since we're there. Could you please describe for a layperson what that technology was  
3 that you were trying to develop and the significance of going in that direction at that  
4 particular point in time?

5  
6 (0:17:30)

7  
8 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** And, you know, compared to what the plant was doing, what were  
11 you trying to replace and why?

12  
13 **JOHN PUSATERI:** So initially it started out that we were trying to replace or develop a  
14 process that would succeed the electrothermic furnace process. And so, and the idea was  
15 you'd be able to, uh, take waste type of materials or feeds that were lower cost and, uh,  
16 process them directly. We wouldn't have to sinter go through the sinter plant or through  
17 the furnace with the expensive metallurgical coke that was required and the hope was the  
18 energy, uh, requirement would be lower. And, uh, so we would do this in what's  
19 essentially a burner sitting on top of a water cooled cylindrical open furnace that you  
20 blow the, the solids that you're trying to process into the hot flame inside this furnace,  
21 and things react rapidly. So the furnace is pretty small compared to, uh, the  
22 electrothermic furnaces. And, uh, it's a rapid process, uh, and again, you can use a fine  
23 dry, cheaper raw materials and, uh, and in the beginning the one kind of missing link was  
24 what we did in Monaca was we condensed zinc vapor that was generated as a metal, as a  
25 liquid metal. This process was going to make it, the, the new process was going to make  
26 it a little more difficult to condense the zinc and, uh, so we did work on developing a, a  
27 zinc condenser that would be much different from the one in Monaca. Uh. We eventually  
28 gave up that pursuit when it was apparent it was going to be too difficult to do or too  
29 expensive or maybe not possible. And, uh, we settled for, um, re-oxidizing the zinc,  
30 collecting it in the baghouse as a crude, raw material, but more concentrated in zinc than  
31 the raw material that we started with so that we could then put that into, either back into  
32 the Monaca smelter or sell it to a conventional hydrometallurgical zinc smelter as a raw  
33 material. So what ended up happening with that process was, uh, we eventually focused  
34 on electric arc furnace dust from steel plants with about 20% zinc in it and then use that  
35 furnace to concentrate the zinc up to about 60% to then feed a, uh, a smelter of some  
36 kind. So.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** So was that instead of the flame reactor?

39  
40 **JOHN PUSATERI:** No. That was the flame reactor, but now instead of the, you know,  
41 the initial goal was to completely replace the electrothermic furnace.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Why?

1 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Because we saw that in the long term it was going, there could be  
2 something more efficient, uh, use cheaper energy, um, and have a lower capital cost,  
3 lower foot, smaller footprint and wouldn't be as labor intensive or maintenance intensive.  
4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you, are you talking about an environmental footprint?  
6

7 (0:21:16)  
8

9 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh. No. It's just in terms of the size of the equipment. Uh. So that  
10 you could build them in, in more locations, cheaper, and, uh, closer to where the raw  
11 materials were.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** Were environmental issues any part of the reason to go in this  
14 direction?  
15

16 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Um. That became more of a, of a motivation, um, because we were  
17 having issues with emissions and each level that the regulations got to be tighter and  
18 tighter the, the costs became greater and part of it was just the size of the equipment that  
19 we were operating, the number of units and, and, uh, it became more difficult to control  
20 the emissions and this, you know, these new, newer processes had the opportunity any  
21 way of, of a smaller volume of gasses to deal with or fewer materials that we'd have to  
22 worry about controlling.  
23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** So what year was it that you started working, that St. Joe started  
25 working on the flame reactor?  
26

27 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well we actually, when I first started...  
28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** We're talking '75.  
30

31 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh. 1975. Dave Rice had made the initial contact with the Germans  
32 about using this flash furnace that they had to run tests and so it really started then. And  
33 then we didn't have our own pilot plant until 1983 and then that took another dozen years  
34 or so to develop or 10 years or so to develop to the point where we could build the  
35 commercial plant in Beaumont, Texas. So.  
36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** Was this a patented, um, process? And did St. Joe?  
38

39 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. At one point, we, we had...  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Filed for the patent.  
42

43 **JOHN PUSATERI:** On, uh, on the flame reactor process. Yeah. Three patents and I  
44 think they ran from, uh, I want to say 1995-2012, 1987-2004, and 1982 to '98, something  
45 like that.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did taking something like sinter out of the process with the flame  
2 reactor, um, impact employment at the plant?

3  
4 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well, it, it would have if we would've, like I said, we eventually  
5 did not, were not able to apply it to the same raw materials that Monaca was able to  
6 process. Remember they, they started out processing concentrates from mined ore and so  
7 we, we could not duplicate that in this flash furnace. So we ended up having to drop back  
8 to residues, baghouse dusts, you know, uh, waste materials more or less and recover the  
9 zinc from those rather than from the, the mined concentrates.

10  
11 (0:24:04)

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Why couldn't it reduce from the mine concentrates?

14  
15 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well for two reasons, one is that we would've, we would've still  
16 had to run a roaster to eliminate sulfur. There wasn't a good way to smelt the sulfide  
17 directly and then this, this part that I said we had a problem with developing a condenser  
18 to directly condense zinc metal. So we didn't have a good way of recovering the zinc  
19 once we, uh, extracted it from the raw material directly to metal. We had to go to an  
20 interim concentrate, uh, some, you know, like an oxide, a dirty oxide and then send that  
21 to a smelter to make the final zinc product. So we couldn't, we ended up not being able to  
22 duplicate what Monaca did.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** And how was this technology then used at the Beaumont plant?

25  
26 **JOHN PUSATERI:** So it was, uh, we built the, the flame reactor on a steel plant site  
27 next to the melt shop and they, so, it, it, uh, instead of what we do now for the most part  
28 is steel mills bring their dust to our, our Waelz kiln, rotator kiln plants and there are four  
29 of those around the United States. Well, you can imagine the cost of transportation. Uh. It  
30 gets to be a, a pretty big number. So we were able to build that plant right next to the melt  
31 shop, and they brought the dust over on a daily basis in a truck and, uh, blew it into our  
32 bins and then we processed it directly. And, uh, eventually, uh, we brought dust from two  
33 or three other local surrounding, uh, melt shops and that plant operated, uh, taking in  
34 about 30,000 tons a year of, uh, electric arc furnace dust and producing about 10,000 tons  
35 a year of this concentrated, what we called crude zinc oxide. And, uh, then that was  
36 shipped to, uh, this gets complicated, but that was shipped to Palmerton, uh, and, and  
37 through another kiln they eliminated chlorine and lead, which were a problem for  
38 Monaca to handle and eventually, uh, that second kiln calcine became part of the feed to  
39 Monaca.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Whose plant was the Beaumont plant?

42  
43 **JOHN PUSATERI:** That belonged to us. We owned and operated it. But, but the  
44 Beaumont, uh, melt shop was at that time was North Star Steel. They've since been  
45 bought by, uh, Gerdau, who's a, you know, they own I don't know 10 or 12 mini mills  
46 around the United States. I think they're a Brazilian-based company.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** When you say us, which ownership of the company are we at at the  
3 point that this is going on?  
4

5 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay. At that time. So by then, by the time we built the Beaumont  
6 plant we were, we had merged with New Jersey Zinc and we were Horsehead.  
7

8 (0:27:23)  
9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** So this is when you're ZCA?  
11

12 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well, so then, as Horsehead where they had two divisions. They  
13 had ZCA, which was the smelter and the mine, and then they had what they called  
14 Horsehead Resource Development, HRD, which operated the four, uh, Waelz kiln plants  
15 and then the Beaumont, uh, plant. And we also had the, the, uh, the old zinc plant in  
16 Bartlesville that processed, uh, processed some of the lead fume from Palmerton. That  
17 was also part of HRD at the time.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** So did you technically work for ZCA or HRD?  
20

21 **JOHN PUSATERI:** I worked for HRD at that, at that point. So we have kind of jumped  
22 in head, ahead in history cause I've had probably five or six different entities that I  
23 worked for. So.  
24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** And HRD stands for?  
26

27 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Horsehead Resource Development. And that was just the division  
28 within Horsehead LL, uh, I forget what they were called. Horsehead Corporation, I guess,  
29 at the time.  
30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Well while we're going there. [Laughter] What happens after  
32 HRD? What's, what's the next?  
33

34 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes.  
35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Entity?  
37

38 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. So when, um, so I think HRD and ZCA go away, uh, in the  
39 2002 bankruptcy and becomes one, you know, Horsehead Corporation then afterward  
40 when Sun Capital buys the company and kind of re, re-capitalizes and, and, uh, you know  
41 we, there were a few changes. You know. They had to, to, uh, eliminate some functions  
42 and that's when, uh, they decided not to have a separate, uh, HRD group running the  
43 flame reactor things. We actually had a, um, we were running the pilot plant there in  
44 Monaca. And, uh, uh, of course that, that had gone by the wayside. We're all in the  
45 smelter by 2002. Any of the folks that had survived research. Uh. So I guess in 2002 we,  
46 we had an HRD group up until that time, which was still doing its own kind of process

1 development work, uh, at the plants more or less, at the plants. And then after the  
2 bankruptcy then we, we all became part of, uh, the smelter.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Working in the same facility?

5  
6 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. Yeah.

7  
8 (0:30:11)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was the pilot plant actually located at Monaca?

11  
12 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well it was, uh, I don't know if you've seen pictures of the research  
13 building which became the, the admin building for Horsehead and to the, it would've  
14 been to the west of that toward the power plant was where the flame reactor building was  
15 located.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** I have a map here.

18  
19 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh. Do you have one? What year was this then?

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** I don't know, but this is, this is a working...

22  
23 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Map to understand where things are. So...

26  
27 **JOHN PUSATERI:** So, okay. [Inaudible] So you have the research building or the  
28 office building and then, uh, prior to, uh, the, huh, which eventually this became a, uh,  
29 lead strip pilot plant to make, um, lead acid battery grids. And this would've been the  
30 flame reactor plant. That's the pilot plant.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** So this building here that's marked Research Development Lab, is  
33 that incorrect?

34  
35 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Um. No, it's, it was called various things. Yeah. We had little, um,  
36 we had furnaces and, you know, bench-scale experimental, uh, equipment there and then  
37 this was a storage building, but eventually became a, a pilot plant for, uh, we called it the  
38 lead strip building because they developed the maintenance free lead acid battery, uh,  
39 alloys and actually did the first, uh, prototype production in that building.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** And this smaller building right here?

42  
43 **JOHN PUSATERI:** I'm not sure what that, what that was.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

46

1 **JOHN PUSATERI:** That might've just been, if it was drawn in, this might've been the,  
2 uh, the cooling towers for the flame reactor pilot plant.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

5  
6 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Cause we had recirculating cooling water.

7  
8 (0:32:17)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** And then what part of this building, which was the former County  
11 Home, were the research labs located?

12  
13 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well we had offices in really the whole front, front of the building,  
14 which was the newest part and then there were in the basement, uh, we had the, um, uh,  
15 the metallurgical test labs, uh, the, uh, corrosion lab was there. We had a creep lab and  
16 we had, um, a little press for making, um, uh, zinc, uh, metallic parts, uh, for automotive  
17 applications. Uh. I worked on some of that. But most of that was either in the basement of  
18 the newer section or at most, uh, we had I think about half of the, the main wing of the  
19 old County Home. Uh. In the basement, we had some, some laboratories.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you hear any good County Home stories?

22  
23 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Huh. Well of course we were aware of the, the jail cells in the  
24 bottom in the basement and, uh, you know, we would roam the, the, uh, building every  
25 once in a while, but I didn't hear that many stories.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** No ghosts rattling in the corridors?

28  
29 **JOHN PUSATERI:** No. I don't think so.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Going back to just the structure of the research department  
32 itself and how it operated, um, what days and hours did the research department operate,  
33 uh, even though the plant was running 24/7 365 days a year?

34  
35 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. It was pretty much, uh, you know, a five-day-a-week  
36 operation. Uh. You know, 7:30 to 5:00 or something like that nominally. Except if we  
37 had pilot plants operating. And there were also folks in the research group that gave, uh,  
38 support to the smelter. And so there were times when and I did this too, we would, you  
39 know, be running a test in the smelter and work shifts or, uh, weekends depending on  
40 what the need was. Uh. I am remembering that, uh, I'm trying to think of, uh, there was a  
41 lot of, uh, five and a half day weeks. People would work a half a day on Saturday and that  
42 was part of, you know, what was expected. I can't remember if that was all of us in  
43 research or just on occasion, you know, if we were finishing a project or had a deadline to  
44 meet. You know, we would occasionally work on the weekends. And, um, so some of the  
45 technicians actually got paid overtime if you had to bring them in to finish a test on the  
46 weekend or overtime. Uh. There was some of that.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you salary from the start?

3  
4 **JOHN PUSATERI:** I was salary. Yeah.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you work on more than one research project at a time?

7  
8 (0:35:36)

9  
10 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. Yeah. We usually had I don't know a half a dozen, but you  
11 know you might have one big project and then be doing, uh, calculations on a couple of  
12 others and literature search or, um, you know, contacting a vendor to try to get a, a piece  
13 of equipment or an outside lab to run a test. And, uh, so, you know, different projects  
14 were at different, uh, stages, uh, of development. But yeah, we were, we were always,  
15 always had multiple projects.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have a technical library on site with you?

18  
19 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. Quite an extensive one. Um. We used it a lot. Um. And it was  
20 everything from, you know, current periodicals and journals to, um, you know, basic  
21 data, books on thermodynamics, on phase, uh, uh, metal phase diagrams, um, and then,  
22 uh, symposium proceedings that were relevant to the work we did. The library would buy  
23 those. Um. Books on, you know, zinc and lead and, uh, monographs. Uh. We also had,  
24 uh, chemical engineering process, uh, encyclopedia. You know. There were a number of  
25 things like that. That, uh, uh, we would refer to and then there were metal statistics  
26 published every year. There was, uh, a whole group of books called *Metals Handbook*  
27 that was, uh, just sort of a basic, uh, materials and how they were developed and what  
28 their properties were and, uh. So you know, it was quite a, quite an extensive, uh,  
29 reference library.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a designated librarian to maintain it?

32  
33 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. Yeah. We, we had a librarian and I want to say it was up until  
34 the, uh, the research group disbanded, which was about 1995. And, uh, so I think even  
35 through, even through the year that the smelter was shut down we still had the library  
36 going because research was still, still functioning. Um. And so there was, and, and I, you  
37 know, still today know the fulltime, the lady who was the fulltime librarian.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?

40  
41 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Linda Spence, who married one of the engineers, Mike Helms, and  
42 still lives in Beaver and she's still a librarian.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** You just mentioned the, um, the research department disbanded in,  
45 the research group disbanded in '85?

1 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Product development was disbanded in 1985. Process development  
2 continued to about 1995.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** So what happened to those people?

5  
6 (0:38:52)  
7

8 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well, there was a pretty extensive layoff. And then those folks  
9 either went, you know, to the plants or there was a, a couple of the product development  
10 people that became part of the sales technical service group. Um. The process people  
11 ended up either at the, the plants, um, in a technical role or, or left the company. So, um,  
12 and I think I have that right. I just, um, I remember 1985 being kind of a, uh, a landmark  
13 time for that happening.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** What was your fate at that time?

16  
17 **JOHN PUSATERI:** I was able to remain in a technical role, uh, in the smelter, as well  
18 as uh, you know, maybe I should, I should back up because I'm now putting together the,  
19 the. When we merged with New Jersey Zinc in 1987, we still had research people. So it  
20 must have been the 1985. I think what happened was the product side was the one that  
21 was most, uh, reduced in size. And then the, uh, the process group remained, you know,  
22 in a smaller size until the late '80s and then eventually those, we all got reabsorbed into  
23 the smelter or some other plant site.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the scale of St. Joe's Research Department and the scope of its  
26 activities typical of similar industries at that time?

27  
28 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. I remember, um, when they would, you'd read an annual  
29 report or they'd give a, you know, an annual synopsis of how the company was doing,  
30 the, uh, research expenditures as a percent of, I don't know, sales revenue or, yeah, I  
31 think it was sales revenue was always benchmarked against the rest of the industry. So  
32 that we were compared to copper companies or other zinc companies. That, that was, you  
33 know, the way companies showed that they were trying to keep up with technology and,  
34 and, uh, stay current to stay competitive. So.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you permitted or encouraged to initiate research projects?

37  
38 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. Yes. And so, you know, either by analogy with something we  
39 would read in the technical literature that somebody else was doing in another industry  
40 or, uh, something that we thought might apply to some aspect of zinc production or lead  
41 production. And then, yeah. We were encouraged to, you know, do the groundwork, do  
42 the calculations, uh, check the feasibility. Maybe do some small scale lab work. Uh. Go  
43 visit, you know, somebody else who was operating a, a different technology that we  
44 might be able to use. So yeah. There was a lot of encouragement to do that.

45  
46 (0:42:49)



1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** We talked at some length about the flame reactor as being a big  
3 research project, um, that came to fruition that started in '83 and it ran until '92. What  
4 were some of the other key research efforts in the '70s and '80s?  
5

6 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay. One was, uh, a technology called lead chloride, which was  
7 not, not zinc related obviously. It was to replace the smelter in Herculaneum, the lead  
8 smelter. And we ran a pilot plant, uh, in Monaca at about the same time, um, early/mid  
9 '80s. I think it ran for about five years. And it was technology that came I think it actually  
10 came out of the Bureau of Mines. And, uh, so it was hydrometallurgical. So you dissolve  
11 the lead concentrate and eventually plate it out, uh, lead metal and, uh, uh, we had, you  
12 know, the whole flow sheet in a, in a pilot plant there at Monaca. And the fellow, uh, the  
13 main engineer on that project was, uh, Steve James, who, uh, eventually, uh, went to the  
14 zinc plant in Bartlesville, left the company. He's been in the zinc, still in the zinc business  
15 today. And, uh, so that was a big one. Um. The, uh, citrate process for scrubbing sulfur  
16 dioxide from, uh, power plant and smelter off gasses. That was somewhat developed in  
17 house and was, uh, the commercial scale demonstration, again, I think was through the  
18 Bureau of Mines. It might have been them and the Department of Energy. It was, uh,  
19 built at the power plant at Monaca. And, uh, that, that took a lot of manpower. Uh. I  
20 mentioned the, the lead, lead acid battery grid project that, uh, we eventually, we  
21 developed the alloys in house and, uh, eventually did the prototype production there at  
22 Monaca. So we built that, that pilot plant. That was, you know, early '80s, uh, as well.  
23 Um. Those are the ones that come most to mind. I'm sure there are others, but the, the  
24 things that were of that scale where we actually built a multimillion dollar pilot plant. Uh.  
25 Oh, there was, there was one other that, uh, proceeded my coming and it was, uh, uh,  
26 trying to eliminate sintering by pelletizing the feed instead of sintering. And, uh, it was a  
27 pellet pilot plant built, uh, in the smelter and, uh, the main engineer on that one was a  
28 fellow that, uh, was kind of mentor to me, Don Freshcorn. You might've heard his name  
29 of historians in the company. Uh. Did you talk with Don?  
30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** I did. I'm trying to remember how that went. Some people were not  
32 interested in participating in an interview.  
33

34 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.  
35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Some people never returned my phone calls and, and I spoke to  
37 about 50 people.  
38

39 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, boy.  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** So it's a little bit hard for me to remember what his response was, but  
42 I did reach out to him.  
43

44 (0:46:47)  
45

1 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay. Anyway he ran that pellet pilot plant and they, you know,  
2 did a very good job of proving they could make pellets, but eventually, uh, found that the,  
3 uh, the way the pellets reacted in the furnace was not as efficient as sinter and so they  
4 eventually abandoned that. But that's another project that, uh, the company spent a fair  
5 amount of money on. So those are...

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What were some of the factors, whether they were consumer  
8 driven, commercial, industrial, economic, environmental that were driving your research  
9 efforts?

10  
11 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well, like I said with the flame reactor as an example, um, it  
12 seemed like the company always wanted to be looking for the next generation of process  
13 technology both from the standpoint of, um, more efficiently using cheaper, raw  
14 materials and reducing energy costs. Well, and, and really thirdly, uh, improving  
15 environmental control. And those were driving forces on, on all the projects we worked  
16 on that were, you know, looking for the next generation of processing technology. So,  
17 um, and like what drove us to do what we did here recently with the, you know,  
18 abandoning the smelter and building a plant in North Carolina. It was very similar, uh,  
19 that, you know, cost of metallurgical coke was very high and it was driving our  
20 conversion costs up. We were having difficulty meeting the next level of environmental  
21 controls, uh, and, uh, the high maintenance costs of the processes that we were operating,  
22 which was making it difficult to be competitive.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. My next questions pertains more to product development  
25 than process research. To what extent was the research department developing products  
26 that consumers came to you for versus developing products with the idea that you could  
27 then market them to customers?

28  
29 **JOHN PUSATERI:** So, uh, yeah. I don't know that we ever got to the point of the  
30 direct connection with consumer if that's, that's your question. Um. You know. We didn't  
31 make a, a package of zinc oxide for sunscreen to hand to the market ourselves. But we,  
32 like in the case of the high area of zinc oxide, um, we were approached by the cosmetic  
33 industry to develop our zinc oxide so that it could used and we developed a process for  
34 that. That was actually part of, uh, uh, New Jersey Zinc and then they eventually moved  
35 that, uh, prototype plant to Monaca. Um. But that's one example and, and that, that was  
36 the kind of product development we got into was, uh, making the zinc or zinc oxide  
37 amenable for the, the, uh, producer of the end product. Not directly dealing with the  
38 consumer. Um. What else can I think of? Um. Well I mean, like with, with, um, zinc  
39 metal for galvanizing we did an awful lot of work on making the zinc more suitable for,  
40 uh, galvanizing applications of all kinds. And, uh, and so, uh, we would improve the  
41 alloys and the additives to the zinc so that the galvanizer could more efficiently use the  
42 zinc or, uh, you know, products would last longer, uh, you know, we could, they could  
43 use it more applications. Um. But that's the kind of product development that we did.  
44 Um. We did, uh, we did make one attempt and it's just because I ended up working on it  
45 for a while as a co-op, uh, a material called superplastic zinc. So we found out that if you  
46 heated zinc to a certain temperature, I think it was 350 centigrade or something and put it

1 in a press, that you could make, uh, pretty detailed shapes out of it and things like, um,  
2 wheel rims for automobiles, um, panels for, you know, automobiles, uh, control systems  
3 and things like that could be, could be made with zinc, uh, very thin, um, sheets. And so  
4 we pursued that market for a while and, uh, we actually had a separate division about 20  
5 miles from here or 10 miles from here that for a while produced superplastic zinc with the  
6 idea of marketing that to, uh, the automotive, primarily the automotive industry. And  
7 eventually it got, um, uh, pushed out by, uh, magnesium alloys and aluminum alloys that  
8 were cheaper and easier to, to produce. So. Um. We did a lot of corrosion studies. I'm  
9 trying to think of what other products that I was familiar with. But, you know, again,  
10 that's the kind of thing that we did was just improve the properties of the primary  
11 products that we made, zinc oxide or zinc metal. So that they could be used in the, the  
12 next level of consumer product.

13

14 (0:53:24)

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** To what extent did the research department interface with the sales  
17 marketing component of the company?

18

19 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. We actually had a very, uh, rather large for our industry, uh,  
20 technical service arm of research that were the primary people that the sales and  
21 marketing came to, to, um, ask, answer customer complaints about product that wasn't  
22 operating or behaving the way it should or if they had then like a galvanizer had sent out  
23 some of his product to an end user and was having problems then we actually got  
24 involved in that second level. And, uh, Barry Dugan for instance, who used to be here, I  
25 don't know if you talked with him at all. Uh.

26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** No. But, um, Terry just gave me his name in a previous interview.

28

29 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. I didn't think of mentioning him. I just saw him the other  
30 day. Um. He was our connection to the galvanizing industry and became kind of the, um,  
31 sort of the authority on zinc galvanizing. And, uh, so he, he would be in the field the  
32 majority of the time working with galvanizers, you know, being the face of the company  
33 to the, the users of zinc. So we had pretty extensive commitment to technical service both  
34 on zinc oxide and, and zinc metal. So.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you assess the resources and facilities you had for  
37 accomplishing your research objectives? Um. For example, did you have state-of-the-art  
38 technology to work with?

39

40 **JOHN PUSATERI:** I think we did for, you know, the period that, you know, probably  
41 from the time, at least that I'm familiar with, the time that I started as a co-op until the  
42 late '80s when we started to, you know, disband, um, the research group more. And, you  
43 know, uh, we did not continue to support, didn't have the funds or resources to support,  
44 uh, pilot plants and, you know, doing our own, uh, in-house even bench scale work. We  
45 would have to go to a third party, uh, to do that. And that's still, still the case today. But at  
46 the time that we had, you know, the lead chloride process going, the lead strip mill, the

1 flame reactor, uh, you know, we had probably a half a dozen big projects and we had the,  
2 the state-of-the-art equipment to, to support those. And, uh, you know, the company was  
3 pretty generous in terms of funding those things or, you know, encouraging us to go out  
4 and get, get supportive funding.

5  
6 (0:56:42)  
7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** During your years in the research department, what were some of the  
9 most significant advances in technology that enabled you to do your job?  
10

11 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well I would have to say the, you know, digital computer for sure.  
12 Uh. Cause I was in the transition phase from, you know, desktop calculators and punch  
13 cards to, uh, you know big desktop calculators to, you know the handheld, uh, devices  
14 and desktop computers and so, uh, that was, that was a pretty amazing development that,  
15 uh, made everything more efficient, uh, could more easily connect with our plants or the,  
16 you know, the technical community within the metals industry and, uh, all of that now  
17 has continued to, to advance pretty rapidly, you know, more and more.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** When, when, um, were those introduced, the digital computers?  
20

21 **JOHN PUSATERI:** So I remember the first handheld calculator that I saw was  
22 purchased by my boss probably 1976 or '77. An HP calculator that he got the company to  
23 spend \$400 or \$500 on, you know. And that, that replaced, you know, the big desktop  
24 calculator. And then, uh...  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of functions are you talking about on a calculator that  
27 would cost \$400 or \$500?  
28

29 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, I mean this was...  
30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** For beyond and addition and subtraction...  
32

33 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. This was doing, um, you know, trigonometric  
34 functions, uh, uh, it was actually programmable so that you could do, uh, complicated  
35 algebraic equations and even, uh, integrals, uh, on it. And so that was a big, big  
36 advancement. Um. Everything prior to that, at that level was being done by hand. Um.  
37 And then the, like the punch card computers, you know, I probably remember those until  
38 probably the late '70s, early '80s when we, um, actually when we built the flame reactor  
39 pilot plant we, uh, had as part of that, uh, a digital computer that, um, gathered all the  
40 data from the plant and, uh, we stored it on, uh, magnetic tape and we were able to, uh,  
41 retrieve it later. So that was a big advance. Um. So, and then the desktop computers I  
42 think came later, probably late '80s I want to say. It gets a little fuzzy then. Especially  
43 now that, you know, everything is so commonplace to have such small devices doing  
44 much more powerful things than even the mainframe computers to do when, when I was  
45 in research.  
46

1 (1:00:06)

2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** When the, when the plant shut down in 1979, what was the impact  
4 on the research department?

5  
6 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Um. We continued to operate because we had, um, started these  
7 development projects in both lead and zinc that eventually lead to the pilot plants and so  
8 the company wanted to continue those. Uh. And so my recollection is that we lost a  
9 handful of people, uh, that were more connected directly to the smelter or to, um, the zinc  
10 products. And, uh, but that I would say 80% of the research department continued to  
11 operate through that period. And then when it became apparent that Bob Sunderman and  
12 others were going to make this effort to reopen the smelter, then we got involved in doing  
13 some of the feasibility study work, putting the economics together, figuring out what, uh,  
14 units we were going to operate and, and, uh, uh, you know, doing some of the  
15 groundwork for him to be able to make that proposal. Uh. And so that, you know,  
16 occupied a lot of resources that, uh, during that time period. So it really did not have that  
17 big of an effect on, on us that were in research directly. Of course, we felt terrible  
18 because of everybody losing their jobs and not really knowing what the future was going  
19 to be. But, um, you know, it was a happy day when we were able to restart for sure.  
20 Especially for the community. Of course, with far fewer people and, you know, there  
21 were still a lot of folks without a job. Some of those eventually got a, were able to come  
22 back, but, uh, we went from 1,500 or 1,700 employees. I think they restarted with 500 or,  
23 or less and, uh, eventually might've built that back to 800 or so. But, so, you know, it was  
24 a pretty big negative impact on the valley.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you sense any change in the morale at the plant, uh, after the  
27 1980 reopening? There was no cafeteria to go to. A lot of the other early activities that  
28 had enriched the experience of being an employee there were no longer happening. What  
29 was your sense of the climate?

30  
31 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. I think there was some sadness that, that part of the, maybe  
32 the more people who were into the family oriented aspects of the, of the company were,  
33 were gone. But I would say the guys that came back were very motivated to make this a  
34 success. And so I think maybe they were willing to look past that, um, and of course we  
35 still had the, the union and so, you know, there was still some contention there and, and I  
36 think that, that might've dampened some of the people's enthusiasm to put out for the  
37 company. But, um, my recollection is that people when they came back were very  
38 motivated and, uh, thought it was a good idea and, you know, wanted to be a part of that.  
39 So and I think that, that continued for a good while, um, you know, I think it was  
40 positive. Generally positive, but you know we did miss those aspects of the, uh, kind of  
41 the nice fringe benefits that were, were part of the company before the, the shutdown.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** To what extent did those of you in the research department keep to  
44 yourselves as far as camaraderie and working, um, versus sort of blending in with the  
45 entire factory, I'm sorry, excuse me, plant, uh, population.

46

1 (1:04:55)

2

3 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, I guess the way I, I notice it is that still today I get asked if I  
4 knew so and so from the smelter and I would say 80% of the time is no. I don't know that  
5 person. So, so that tells me that I was probably more isolated than, than, uh, I could've  
6 been or should've been, you know, if, if I hadn't been in research. And I also had the  
7 opportunity then when I went out into the, into the smelter in the technical group that I  
8 had more, uh, opportunities to be in the smelter and get to know people and so that, I  
9 thought that was good and I liked that part of the job. Um. But, obviously we didn't  
10 integrate, uh, all that much with the, uh, the general population in the, in the smelter.  
11 Now a lot of the folks who were in, uh, technical roles or management in the research  
12 department ended up in, uh, management roles in the operation or technical roles. And so  
13 they were out in the plant more and probably got to know more people that way. Uh. But,  
14 you know, when we were in research, we were not, um, that well integrated. Uh. And I  
15 think part of that was, uh, the waning of things like the, uh, company picnics and the  
16 Christmas function that they had and, uh, you know, the departments would have their  
17 own, we still had, you know, research, or, uh, picnics and cookouts as departments  
18 through most of the '80s I think. And, uh, but again it was by departments and so it was  
19 more the research people having their own picnic rather than, uh, combined with other  
20 folks from the smelter. But as, as those things went away, I think we got even more  
21 disconnected. So. And that's one thing that, you know, attracted me to the company when  
22 I first came was the real sense of family and caring about the person, you know, not just,  
23 not just doing the job. So.

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** So your, your next step was in the, uh, a technical group in the  
26 smelter, correct?

27

28 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** What year was that and what did that position involve?

31

32 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay. So I'm going to say that was 1995. And, um, so when I came  
33 the fellow who had been the technical manager for the smelter, Roger Williams, uh, had  
34 left the company and, uh, so I had responsibility for the technical group for the smelter.  
35 But then, like I said, um, we had disbanded the HRD. Well we started, we were starting  
36 to disband the HRD group and so I also had responsibility for the, the HRD plants, the  
37 kiln plants, provide technical support to them. And I had a couple of engineers that would  
38 travel to the plants and do test work, um, gather data, you know, provide that kind of  
39 support. So I think at one time, we had 15 people as part of this technical group. Uh. Four  
40 or five had assignments to the, the, uh, Waelz kiln, rotary kiln plants and then the rest  
41 were in the departments in the smelter.

42

43 (1:09:05)

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** So physically those of you who were at the Monaca site, was there  
46 any central place where the smelter technical group was based?

1  
2 **JOHN PUSATERI:** We had, uh, offices in the basement of what was the shops building  
3 and so the, uh, engineers and a couple of the technicians had their offices there. And  
4 above us was the engineering department, uh, where they did, you know, generated  
5 drawings and did design work and so on. And then there were a few technicians in what  
6 was the product development building or we called it the PDL, product development lab.  
7 And, uh, so we had a couple of people located there that would do test work, uh, go out  
8 and get samples and test them in the labs. So and there were like the high area zinc oxide  
9 operation was out there. That was part of sales. It really wasn't part of the technical  
10 group, but we, we worked together with them. Um. Then of course we had the pilot plant,  
11 um, still operating at that time. Some of the guys were located there. So.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** So now we get into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

14  
15 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** And then there's the bankruptcy that happens in 2002 and Horsehead  
18 Corporation is...

19  
20 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Now the...

23  
24 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Kind of the company. Um. Were you still in the technical group in  
27 the smelter at that point?

28  
29 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** And did you stay there until the plant shut down in 2014?

32  
33 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yes. I pretty much stayed in the same role. I eventually, you know,  
34 had a new title, the Director of Technology title that I have now. I can't remember what  
35 year that was that I became that. But...

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** And shut down in 2014, you're still with Horsehead Corporation and  
38 if you could tell me what you are doing with them since the shutdown?

39  
40 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay. Can I lead up to the shutdown?

41  
42 (1:11:32)

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Please.

45

1 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Because in, uh, in 2011, uh, was when we began the project to  
2 build the, the, uh, the plant that eventually we built in North Carolina. And so that, um, I  
3 was a part of the design team that worked with the two Spanish companies to bring their  
4 technology over and do the, uh, technical end of the process work behind the design. Um.  
5 And then I borrowed my, my engineers from the smelter group at different times to help  
6 with that and we did some small scale test work. Um. We did some pilot testing in Spain.  
7 And those guys, my engineers, participated in that. And, uh, but at the same time we were  
8 providing technical support still to the smelter and to, uh, the kiln plants. And then when,  
9 uh, it became apparent. Uh. Actually, in, uh, at the beginning of that design phase  
10 Horsehead made the decision to put a process engineer at each kiln plant. And so two of  
11 my engineers from here went. One went to the Rockwood Plant, and one went to  
12 Barnwell, South Carolina. And...

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Where's Rockwood?

15  
16 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Rockwood is in Tennessee.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I have a few questions that involve some historical perspective  
19 and...

20  
21 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** If you can't answer these, it's fine, but I figure I will try.

24  
25 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Could I ask how we're doing on time?

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** It's 4:40.

28  
29 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What's your...

32  
33 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay. Thanks.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** In 1937, plant manager George F. Weaton established a formal  
36 research department with Carlton C. Long as Director of Plant and Process Research and  
37 James J. Rankin as Director of Customer and Product Research. What legacies are you  
38 aware of from these two men, who worked at St. Joe Lead for decades?

39  
40 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well I know of Carl Long because, uh, he was still in retirement,  
41 but had contact with, uh, then research director Bob Lund. And, um, so he would come  
42 and just visit once in a while and see what was going on. So I had the honor of meeting  
43 him. And he also established a very detailed procedure and method for writing research  
44 reports and that was one of the first things I had to learn when I got to, to, uh, St. Joe.  
45 And it was just the opposite of everything I had learned in college of course and so, so it  
46 took some, some time to learn. But it was, you know, and he, he had and even the, uh,



1 what you asked about before, the research proposals. He had a very detailed form and  
2 criteria that you had to meet in order to get in presented and, uh, so he had quite an  
3 impact on, on, uh, things that I experienced in the research department. And it was, you  
4 know, part of the really high quality, uh, work that they did that, uh, I was glad, glad to  
5 be a part of. So, that's part of his legacy was what I experienced.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** And any familiarity with James Rankin?

8  
9 **JOHN PUSATERI:** No. I really didn't know him as well. When I got there, um, a  
10 fellow by the name of John Cigan was heading up the product research and, uh, so I  
11 really didn't know the other fellow.

12  
13 (1:19:35)

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** How do you spell Cigan?

16  
17 **JOHN PUSATERI:** C-I-G-A-N.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Thank you.

20  
21 **JOHN PUSATERI:** He lives in Reading, Pennsylvania. [Laughter] So. We've kept in  
22 touch. He, he actually went with Horsehead HRD and was the environmental manager in  
23 Palmerton for a long time and I can't remember how long ago he retired, but it's been  
24 more than 10 years. So.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** During the post-World War II years, the research department staff  
27 doubled in size and operated seven interrelated laboratories, rubber, paint, electronics,  
28 ceramic, microscopic, analytic. How did these laboratories factor into the research  
29 department during your years at St. Joe's?

30  
31 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well, I mentioned a couple of 'em, uh, the microscopy, uh,  
32 metallurgical lab and, um, uh, I forget some of the other ones you listed there.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Rubber, paint, electronics, ceramic.

35  
36 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Yeah. The rubber lab was still going. I did, uh, I was aware they  
37 were working on paint, uh, issues with zinc oxide. And, uh, so those were still  
38 functioning as far as. Now, the rubber lab was located in a building out closer in the  
39 smelter. So I don't, I wasn't as familiar with that. But, uh, microscopy lab for sure. Um.  
40 And corrosion lab that was, that was, uh, uh, functioning. That was a pretty big group at  
41 that time too. Um. So there were, yeah, there were other sub labs of a part of research.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** At one point if at all, did the plant, um, stop, uh, processing zinc  
44 oxide for the rubber industry?

1 **JOHN PUSATERI:** We still produce zinc oxide for the rubber industry. But, and that,  
2 that continued up until the smelter shut down in 2014. Um. And now, you know, the  
3 successor to the Monaca Plant for zinc oxide as part of Horsehead is the Zochem Plant in,  
4 in Toronto. Um. So a lot of the, most of the customers that we had in Monaca went to  
5 Zochem. So.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** What place did women have in the research department?

8  
9 **JOHN PUSATERI:** I would say by in large they were administrative support staff, you  
10 know, secretaries, uh, the librarian, department secretaries. We had some, um, technicians  
11 in the analytic lab and metallurgical lab that Terri was part of. Um. And when I was a co-  
12 op, uh, we had a number of summer engineers and co-op engineers who were women.  
13 And, uh, I'm trying to think. I'm trying to think if we actually hired fulltime engineers as  
14 women, uh, or women engineers. I don't, I don't recall that we did.

15  
16 (1:23:08)

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** We've talked to some extent about some of the innovations and  
19 projects that were going on since you worked there in 1975, started working in 1975. To  
20 the extent you have a historical perspective, what were some of the biggest innovations  
21 coming out of the research department before your time there?

22  
23 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Well really the, uh, the electrothermic furnace, the St. Joe roaster,  
24 and, uh, the zinc, the Najarian-Weaton condenser. Those are probably three of the biggest  
25 ones that, uh, were all, they all had their origins in the research department. Um. And of  
26 course that just, uh, those were kind of the cornerstones of the business there. Um. And I  
27 was always curious about why, you know, the technology didn't get bought up by others,  
28 but there were a couple of plants, uh, one in Japan and, uh, where was the other one?  
29 Now, I'm forgetting. There was one other electrothermic plant in the world that was, that  
30 was built. But, you know, we wouldn't have had a coherent business if, uh, those things  
31 hadn't been developed for the kinds of ores that we had and to, uh, produce zinc metal  
32 directly.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** I've, I've read a lot about the electrolytic, electrothermic...

35  
36 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Furnace.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Furnace. Also the condenser.

39  
40 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Uh-hmm.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** What was novel about the St. Joe roaster?

43  
44 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Um. It was. If I seem to remember to get this right. I think it was a  
45 pressure roaster and that most other, um, roasters operated by putting slight suction on the  
46 furnace, whereas ours, uh, operated under pressure. And so the unique way that we

1 introduced the air and the feed, uh, I think it made it somewhat more efficient. And so,  
2 and I think they had a patent on it for a while. Again, it was something that was kind of  
3 unique to our plant. I don't know how extensive that was, uh, sold elsewhere. But, uh,  
4 that was, you know, our pressure roaster was kind of unique to us.

5  
6 (1:26:19)  
7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Why have you stayed with the company as long as you have?  
9

10 **JOHN PUSATERI:** A lot of it had to do with, um, roots in the local community, family,  
11 church, uh, friends, um, and just the environment in this area for raising a family. And,  
12 uh, that had a big influence and I had four opportunities to go elsewhere and, uh, by  
13 God's grace I ended up being able to stay and, and of course I'm grateful to survive the  
14 plant shutting down and the, the downturn in the, in the research department and the  
15 bankruptcies and economic downturn in 2008, you know, all the rest. And, uh, so I've  
16 been, I've been pretty blessed that way. And, uh, we've also weathered, uh, strikes, you  
17 know. We, we, the salaried staff ended up, um, keeping plants operating that were on  
18 strike in 1994 in Rockwood, you know, twice in Palmerton, once almost in Monaca. But,  
19 uh, you know, and so I just think, you know, I continue to enjoy what I do because there's  
20 a lot of technical variety and I work with people who know the business well and who are  
21 willing to take risks and, uh, to try and advance things, get to the next level, get better and  
22 not just, you know, want to sit on our laurels and, and, uh. I think the fact that we tried  
23 new technology in North Carolina that we still are going or, you know, still get to see the  
24 fruit of that. But I think eventually we'll be, we'll be vindicated that, that was the right  
25 choice to make at the time for, uh, what, you know, and, and others I'm sure have told  
26 you this that we evolved from a company that was based on raw materials coming out of  
27 a mine to now 100% recycled feeds. And, uh, so this technology that we've built now fits  
28 that, uh, that feed profile better and, uh, should enable us to be competitive for a long  
29 time. So we just have to solve a few problems. So, so again, now that we have the  
30 opportunity to solve problems, uh, get better, um, you know, do new things and that,  
31 that's really what keeps me interested. So and I have a lot of good people that both work  
32 for me and that I work with that are just a joy to be around most of the time. We all have  
33 our moments, you know.  
34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?  
36

37 **JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, I don't know. I guess I would've, uh, liked to have avoided  
38 the, the pain of the plant shutdown and the bankruptcies, uh, for sure because it's, you  
39 know, the worst days of my career when I have to tell somebody they've been laid off or  
40 terminated. And, uh, probably every, everybody in my position would say the same. The,  
41 the people aspect of it is, um, is the hardest part and can be the greatest joy as well. Um.  
42 But, you know, if we could've done without those kinds of, uh, stresses it would've been  
43 a little better.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have a favorite memory or anecdote about your, your years  
46 at the Monaca site that you could share?

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**JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, boy. I'm not good at storytelling. So I'm trying to think. I think I would need a minute to think. If I saw this question coming. [Laughter]. Oh, goodness. Oh, I'm drawing a blank. Really.

(1:30:55)

**INTERVIEWER:** That's okay. We've kept you here a long time at the end of an afternoon. Just one last question then.

**JOHN PUSATERI:** Okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

**JOHN PUSATERI:** Oh, I think it's wonderful. I think, uh, you know, we, uh, I think I heard today the governor said that this is the biggest investment in Pennsylvania since World War II and I don't know what that's based on. But, so, it just has that kind of potential impact on, on the economy, on the people. Uh. And this article by Bill Tunney talks about how for a couple of generations now we've been seeing the young people leave the county because there are no jobs and, uh, so this, even though the core job, uh, count is not that great, you know, what it spawns in terms of related and support industries. Just, you know, I think is a wonderful prospect. And, uh, so I think it's all good. Uh. And should, should really benefit everybody in the county for many, many years to come. So.

(END)

**Jim Reese**  
**Interview @ October 14, 2016**

## **JIM REESE**

### **Summary**

The interview with Jim Reese took place on October 14, 2016, at his home in Beaver, Pennsylvania. His experience at St. Joe began as a college student working at the plant in the summers of 1964 and 1965, followed by two summers in a summer engineering intern; he worked fulltime at the Monaca plant from 1968 to 2010 (other than 1980). Jim's main areas of activity at the plant were in environmental engineering and industrial hygiene. He had a number of documents, reports, and St. Joe souvenirs on hand, as well as a 1955 stock certificate and 1985 furnace plans; Jim turned over several of these items for donation to the Senator John Heinz History Center.

Jim explains the organizational structure and location of the engineering department, his experience rotating under the supervision of various senior and area engineers, and his work designing dust collectors leading to his specialization in the environmental facilities area. He talks in detail about dust generated at the plant, lead hazards, and efforts to eliminate them as much as possible from the work environment. He points to efforts to monitor lead levels and protect workers, as well as the growing regulatory climate as the EPA got involved.

Jim describes his transition from environmental facilities engineer to industrial hygiene engineer, and his responsibility to identify and find solutions for problems like lead dust and carbon monoxide emissions that could affect health. He talks about the early use of computers to help monitor and track trends to safeguard employee health and provides additional insight into the introduction of computers elsewhere in the plant.

At length, Jim explains why and how the smelter closed in 1979; what changes and people, such as Bob Sunderman, were involved in refitting and streamlining it to reopen in 1980 (Jim helped evaluate how to repurpose equipment); and how metal products were affected. He comments on the shift in attitude among workers who were asked to come back after having lost their jobs, as well as the redefining of jobs. Jim also places the scaling back of the zinc plant in the context of steel mills being shut down at that time. He provides insight into the causes that ultimately shut down the plant for good in 2014.

Other topics include: the flame reactor, reforestation efforts, wastewater treatment, zinc price fluctuations, ownership by Zinc Corporation of America, women working in the motor shop, and the Route 18 Corridor Group that collaborated to resolve pollution, traffic, or other problems in the community.

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**JIM REESE**  
**INTERVIEW - 10/14/2016**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
JIM REESE

**INTERVIEWER:** This is an interview with Jim Reese, October 14, 2016. Jim, please state your full name, date of birth, and your current address.

**JIM REESE:** Uh, James Reese. Uh. My address is [REDACTED], Beaver, PA and what was the last part?

**INTERVIEWER:** Date, date of birth.

**JIM REESE:** Oh. [REDACTED].

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?

**JIM REESE:** Retired.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area?

**JIM REESE:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall people referring to the area around the plant as Josephstown?

**JIM REESE:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh, what, at what point and in time was it called that and what is, what comes to mind when you think of Josephstown?

**JIM REESE:** Well my uncle worked for St. Joe before I did. Uh. And, uh, so in talking with him he had mentioned that it was called Josephstown and there was actually a, a little bit of a train station there where people I think could get on and off a, a train back when there was one that had people that, uh, travelled. Uh. So he probably was the one, who, who first, uh, mentioned Josephstown to me.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what was your uncle's name?

**JIM REESE:** Uh. William Myers.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what did he do at the plant?

**JIM REESE:** He was the, uh, sinter plant, uh, general foreman.

1 0:01:34

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know when he started working there?

4

5 **JIM REESE:** No. I don't know for sure, but it, uh, when I was growing up he worked  
6 there, uh, for years. So I wouldn't be surprised if it was in the, in the early '50s.

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Did he tell you any stories about working at the plant?

9

10 **JIM REESE:** Ah. Maybe some. It was hot and, uh, dirty at times. Uh, and, and a  
11 tough, a tough place to work. But he always remarked that he liked working with the  
12 people. It was a good group of people to work with.

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any other family members who worked at the plant?

15

16 **JIM REESE:** No.

17

18 **INTERVIEWER:** What education, um, did you complete before working at St. Joe?

19

20 **JIM REESE:** I got a, uh, B.S. in, uh, Mechanical Engineering from Penn State.

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** And what year was that?

23

24 **JIM REESE:** 1963. No. Excuse me. 1968.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. In 1967, you worked as a summer intern in the plant's  
27 engineering department.

28

29 **JIM REESE:** Yes.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** What brought you to participating in that program and, and please  
32 talk about the program.

33

34 **JIM REESE:** Um. I heard about the program, uh, probably again from my uncle I  
35 think, who, who, uh, mentioned. Well I guess to back up a little bit when I, I worked as a  
36 summer, uh, not an engineer, but just a summer worker in 19, it would be, '64 and '65.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** That's after high school while you were in...

39

40 **JIM REESE:** After high school.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** College.

43

44 **JIM REESE:** While I was going to college. And working there during the summer  
45 definitely, uh, convinced me that my time at college was going to be well spent because  
46 you worked pretty hard during the summer to, uh, to make the money to go to college.



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**INTERVIEWER:** What, what did you do during your summer job there when you were in college?

**JIM REESE:** Uh. I, I worked in the sinter plant as a, a cleanup person. Uh. And basically that was with a broom and shovel just cleaning up material that spilled off the various conveyors and, uh, those kinds of things. One, uh, I think very interesting story and revelation that I had was, uh, I was, since I was summer relief when the regular, uh, employees, uh, went on vacation I was supposed to fill in for them. And one older gentleman who was about ready to retire, uh, did the area the ground floor of the high grade and soft sinter circuit, and the day before he went on vacation he had, I guess he talked to the boss and the boss told him that I was going to be taking over and doing his job while he was on vacation. So he took me aside and said, "Now kid, I want to make sure that you do a good job with this and don't leave a big mess for me, uh, to come back to." So I said, "Yes, sir. I will, I will try to do that." So I worked for two weeks while he was on vacation and, uh, worked quite hard I thought to try to get things, uh, in good shape for when he came back. And when he did come back and he stopped and thanked me and said, "Boy, kid, you did a, a good job. Uh. Thank you very much." And I said, "To be honest with you, I thought I was going to have an easy two weeks because every time I see you at the plant when you're working you're leaning on the shovel. You don't seem to be doing anything." I said, "But you have to be working like crazy because the job gets down." And he said, "This is knowing how to use the shovel." So I got, I had a very good experience with understanding how to do a job for a living and know how to do it. A lot different than the rest of us who just try it for a short time.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you do, uh, any other jobs that summer while you were covering shifts for people on vacation?

**JIM REESE:** Uh. I ended up, uh, working, uh, that was the, the steady daylight job. I did end up, uh, transferring to shift work and I was kind of the utility person on, on the shifts and, uh, usually what I did again was fill in for, for the fellas when they went to lunch or something. And then I also drove a little, uh, front loader that loaded material into the, the plant. So that was kind of in a more of a fun job than shoveling.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um. And then in 1967 you came into the formal summer intern program?

**JIM REESE:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** All right. Could you talk more about that program, the, the kind of training that you received there? Was there classroom training, on-the-job training?

**JIM REESE:** Um.

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3 **INTERVIEWER:** The, the structure of the program?

4

5 **JIM REESE:** Right. Uh. The program definitely was designed to try to, uh, uh, have,  
6 uh, summer engineers learn about the, the smelter and, and learn what kind of job  
7 opportunities there might be, uh, in, in the future and to give them an overall idea of, uh,  
8 how the plant worked and what went on. Uh. So, I worked in the engineering  
9 department and, uh, did, uh, the same kind of very easy jobs compared to the, uh,  
10 engineers who worked there full time. But, uh, I was given a little project to, to do some  
11 design work on and with, uh, oversight from one of the senior engineers. I was able to  
12 get things done. So I spent most of my time in the engineering department. But then  
13 they did have, uh, get-togethers for, uh, all the summer engineers once in a while to have  
14 some special program and, uh, each of the engineers was supposed to toward the end of  
15 the year, uh, describe what they did at, at their, during their work at the, at the smelter.  
16 So you got to get an idea of not only what you might be able to do but what others were  
17 doing.

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the summer intern program only for engineers?

20

21 **JIM REESE:** Uh. Pretty much. Yes. It was for various types of engineers, but it was,  
22 uh, basically an engineering program. The, they still did have the, the summer program  
23 to help, uh, with working out in the plant as I had done previous years.

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** And what type of engineer were you training for?

26

27 **JIM REESE:** Mechanical.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** Mechanical. Okay. What was the design project you worked on that  
30 summer as an intern?

31

32 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I think the, the one thing that I, uh, did was, uh, design a steel, uh,  
33 beam structure that would hold, uh, um, an acid plant pipe because they had to, uh,  
34 remove the, the, uh, one of the support beams to get access to some other part of the  
35 plant, uh, and they wanted to build a, a structure that would hold the pipe up, uh, while  
36 they were doing that. So I designed the, the beam and then had the senior engineer  
37 review what I had done.

38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they end up using your plan?

40

41 **JIM REESE:** Pretty much. The, they, they, uh, made it a little more rugged maybe  
42 than what I would've done, but they also said you probably could've parked a crane on  
43 top of it and it would've held up. So. Uh. But it was a good experience. But it, I think  
44 their attitude was a little more steel isn't that much more expensive and if we decide to  
45 hang more things on that part of the, the beam, or that part of the truss we can.

46

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3 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they offer you a full time position at the end of that internship  
4 for when you were going to finish college?

5

6 **JIM REESE:** Yes. After the second year, uh, they expressed interest. In fact, I  
7 worked. Uh. I graduated in March of '68, and I actually worked, uh, my, uh, Christmas  
8 break at the plant for a while before I was full time and then they offered me a full-time  
9 job that I accepted, uh, in March of 1968.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** So did you do two summers of internship there?

12

13 **JIM REESE:** Yes. Two summers. So, uh...

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** When...

16

17 **JIM REESE:** The first, after the first summer, there was, it was just, uh, "Thank you  
18 very much and hope to see you next year."

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** So was that the summer after your junior year that you did that?

21

22 **JIM REESE:** Yes.

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** And then after you graduated...

25

26 **JIM REESE:** No. The summer after my sophomore year.

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

29

30 **JIM REESE:** And then after my junior year, uh, I worked a full summer and then, uh,  
31 my senior year I worked, uh, just over Christmas.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So then you started after...

34

35 **JIM REESE:** After...

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** As a full-time employee right after you graduated?

38

39 **JIM REESE:** Right.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you consider working any place else at that time?

42

43 **JIM REESE:** Yes. I, when I graduated, uh, it was a very good year. Uh. And I think I  
44 had five or six different, uh, uh, job trips and, and, uh, offers from various companies  
45 including General Motors and Dravo and US Steel and some pretty big places, but, uh, I

1 knew the people at St. Joe and they treated me very well and I just thought that was going  
2 to be a nice, a nice place to go.

3  
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5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

7  
8 **JIM REESE:** But they, they actually, uh, we worked five and a half days a week. So  
9 we worked, uh, Saturday mornings. But because we worked that little bit extra it was the  
10 highest, uh, salary of all the jobs that I was offered because I was working that extra time,  
11 but that, that helps. Moved over the edge a little bit.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** So then your full-time employment started in 1968, right?

14  
15 **JIM REESE:** Yes.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** And in what year did you stop working for the company?

18  
19 **JIM REESE:** Uh. 2010.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

22  
23 **JIM REESE:** December.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** So we're looking at 20, 34 years, 36 years.

26  
27 **JIM REESE:** Oh. Yeah. Including summers during college breaks and going back and  
28 working as a consultant, I ended up with a total of 50 years.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** So what position were you initially hired for as a full-time employee  
31 in 1968?

32  
33 **JIM REESE:** An assignment engineer.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** What does that mean?

36  
37 **JIM REESE:** Ah. Basically, it ended up being a whole lot like the summer internship.  
38 You were assigned to a senior engineer and they used you for various projects they were  
39 working on to help them with, with various parts of the jobs that they had. And each of  
40 the, uh, senior engineers were, were area engineers. So they specialized in one particular  
41 part of the plant. There was an area engineer for the furnace plant, one for the acid plant,  
42 and one for the sinter plant and a couple of others for different other areas. So they, uh,  
43 knew those, that part of the plant, uh, better maybe than some of the other engineers. So  
44 you had the opportunity to work for various, uh, area engineers. You got some, uh,  
45 experience at various places in the plant.

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3 **INTERVIEWER:** So did you rotate, uh, around under the supervision of these various  
4 engineers?

5

6 **JIM REESE:** Yes. Yes.

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And, and, uh, whom did you start with?

9

10 **JIM REESE:** Uh. Jim, uh, Sinkovitz.

11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh-huh.

13

14 **JIM REESE:** Who was, uh, the engineer in the furnace plant.

15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** What was that first day on the job like?

17

18 **JIM REESE:** Uh. It wasn't that, uh, spectacular in that, uh, I had known, uh, Jim as a  
19 summer, summer engineer and then over the, the Christmas break, and so I just, in fact, I  
20 think I was sitting at the same desk I was sitting at when I was there as a, uh, as a summer  
21 engineer. So it was a surprisingly easy transition, uh, because I had, uh, worked there  
22 before for the same people.

23

24 **INTERVIEWER:** Where were you physically located at the plant?

25

26 **JIM REESE:** Uh. In the main office building, which was the, the one, uh, the first  
27 building that was built at the plant on the, on the third floor was the engineering  
28 department.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** How many of you were working in the engineering department?

31

32 **JIM REESE:** I think there were about 35 by the time it, it had grown from the earlier  
33 days, but I think it was in that neighborhood.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you all working on the same schedule of hours and days?

36

37 **JIM REESE:** Yes. Pretty much. Um. Somebody might have to work a little bit extra  
38 to get a special job done, but it was generally the same.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** So what, what were the typical hours, uh, for a day?

41

42 **JIM REESE:** I think we worked eight-thirty to five with a half-hour for lunch and then  
43 that Saturday morning.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** In 1970, you became an environmental facilities engineer.

46

1 0:14:17

2

3 **JIM REESE:** Yes.

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the process for you to move into this job from an  
6 assignment engineer?

7

8 **JIM REESE:** I think, uh, at the time I, some of the last, uh, assignment engineer jobs I  
9 was working on was, uh, more in the field of, uh, uh, designing dust collectors and, and,  
10 uh, other environmental projects and they didn't have anyone doing specifically that job  
11 before and they decided that maybe rather than having me continue to work for different  
12 engineers maybe have me specialize in the, uh, environmental facilities area.

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about what some of the  
15 environmental concerns were and why they were getting the, the attention at this point in  
16 time to dedicate a person to be working in that area?

17

18 **JIM REESE:** Right. Probably the, the biggest thing is the, the plant by processing all  
19 these, uh, uh, materials, uh, you do get a lot of dust generated and, uh, they had air  
20 pollution control equipment on the various pieces of, uh, machinery to try to collect the,  
21 the dust and they went to electrostatic precipitators in the sinter plant. Uh. And they just  
22 weren't adequately cleaning the plant up and one of the, uh, lead was one of, one of the,  
23 uh, metals that was in the dust, uh, the zinc ore contained, uh, some quantities of lead and  
24 when you would get it warm enough the lead would tend to, uh, escape and could get into  
25 the environment.

26

27 0:16:08 [REDACTED]

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** [Cough.] Environmental.

30

31 **JIM REESE:** Right. And it was the lead in the dust that...

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

34

35 **JIM REESE:** So that, so, uh, the, uh, lead that was in the dust was getting into the  
36 environment and, uh, lead getting into people can cause high blood lead levels. So they  
37 were working to try to, uh, eliminate as much dust and therefore as much lead as they  
38 could from the work environment. So they were looking for, uh, enhance, enhancements  
39 to the dust collection systems to do a better job of, uh, taking the dust out of the  
40 workplace.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Was this effort internally motivated or were there new regulatory  
43 requirements or outside agencies, EPA or anybody that was reviewing what, how plants  
44 like yours were functioning?

45

1 **JIM REESE:** They had done blood lead monitoring well before it was required by, uh,  
2 any regulatory agency. So they had known that there was, uh, an issue, uh, before, uh,  
3 the EPA, got involved, but it did start to become more of an issue. So as time went on  
4 there became more environmental regulations that dust collectors would have to meet  
5 certain emission standards, for the, uh, exit gases from the, from the baghouses. So the  
6 regulatory agency, I think they started a little bit ahead of the curve. I had a, one, uh,  
7 article that I found that was from an industrial hygienist who come in and did a survey at  
8 the plant and he commended the, the, uh, industrial hygienist at the time for doing a good  
9 job. But then a better job was still needed as time went on.

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13 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any awareness of health hazards in employees getting  
14 sick?

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16 **JIM REESE:** Uh. No. In fact, one of the troubles we had was almost the opposite.  
17 Uh. Uh. In, in the, most of the areas with the highest lead levels were in the roaster plant  
18 and so the people that we monitored blood lead levels for, uh, that were highest were in  
19 the roaster plant. But, uh, I think 80 micrograms per deciliter was the limit at that point,  
20 uh, and we had people were up, a few that were over that limit and we were taking them  
21 off the job and having them do work in a non-lead area and they were always very upset  
22 asking for "why you're taking me from the job I, I like and forcing me to go somewhere  
23 else" because they didn't see any physical, uh, results of the elevated blood levels. But  
24 I'm sure if they would've, uh, maintained those levels for long enough they may start to.  
25 But, uh, it would, in fact, the most difficult thing was convincing people that you need to  
26 do a better job of wearing your respirator and, uh, doing the things that you need to  
27 minimize that, that lead exposure even though you don't notice any particularly ill effects  
28 on the short term.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know what the health hazards are of lead exposure?

31  
32 **JIM REESE:** Uh. Basically, uh, I kind of forgotten what. I know that the 80  
33 micrograms were, uh, the levels. But I think you started having some joint issues and so  
34 forth, uh, if, if the levels continued for a long period of time.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** If someone had to leave a job in the roaster because of his lead levels  
37 and be reassigned if that involved a different pay scale, was there any supplement or  
38 compensation that they received too?

39  
40 **JIM REESE:** Yes, I think they were, they were paid at, at the, uh, higher rate if they  
41 had to go to a job with a higher rate. Now, I think if they went to a job with a lower rate  
42 they continued to get the pay they were getting, uh, where they were.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** That's what I'm asking you.

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46 **JIM REESE:** Right.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Because of the health hazard...

**JIM REESE:** Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** They have to step down...

**JIM REESE:** Right. Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** To another job that they're not going to also get a pay cut for that.

**JIM REESE:** Exactly. So I, I think what the company found was it was, it was tough enough to get people to move to, uh, a new job that if you also were telling 'em well you're also going to take a pay cut, uh, it would be that much more difficult. So...

**INTERVIEWER:** So in April of 1975, you became an industrial hygiene engineer.

**JIM REESE:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** As part of St. Joe Zinc, which by then was a division of St. Joe Minerals.

**JIM REESE:** Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was the significance of this new position of industrial hygiene engineer and was it new to the company?

**JIM REESE:** No. Uh. When I was the environmental facilities engineer, I worked very closely with, uh, the industrial hygiene engineer, and he was the one who kept track of the people's blood leads and, and those kind of things and what I was doing was actually designing the air pollution control equipment to try to minimize the exposure that those people would have. But I would be working with him because he'd say, "This is an area we find, we found, uh..." And he, he, we had, in fact I think even have a picture of this where we were doing air sampling in various areas where we would then measure the amount of lead that was in the air so we could tell which areas were the worst, um, problems. Uh. So I, I worked very closely with him, but I was on more the design, uh, part of it, uh, first. But then he retired and I was more familiar with that part of the, uh, job than anyone else in the plant. So they moved me to that and then they brought another, uh, engineer in to do the environmental facilities job that I had, that I had before.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you please talk a little bit more about the, the scope of the job responsibility as an industrial hygiene engineer in a plant like St. Joe's?



1 **JIM REESE:** Yeah. Basically we were, we were looking at all the potential, uh,  
2 problems that you could have, uh, for, for health. Lead was definitely one of the bigger  
3 ones and it was, uh, something you could, you could measure the person's blood lead and  
4 you could also measure the lead in the dust if you collected an air sample. But in  
5 addition to that, uh, the furnaces produced carbon monoxide gas and it was used in  
6 various other places in the plant. So if there was a leak in a pipe or something you could  
7 get carbon monoxide, uh, into the environment too and so we had meters to be able to  
8 look for carbon monoxide. And CO, you could get a headache if you had, in, in the CO  
9 and definitely fatal if you got in something was too high. Uh. But we'd go try to find the  
10 problem and see if we could, uh, find a solution for, you know, repairing the pipe or  
11 whatever the problem was that was causing the CO emissions.

12

13 0:23:36

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** What's the, uh, most significant, uh, innovation or change that you  
16 implemented while you were the industrial design engineer? Excuse me. Industrial  
17 hygiene engineer.

18

19 **JIM REESE:** Industrial hygiene engineer. Probably the, the more significant physical  
20 changes were as, as the environmental facilities engineer, were we installed these  
21 additional air pollution control devices. Uh. As far as the industrial hygiene engineer,  
22 uh, I started to work with, uh, the very early computers. HP had a programmable  
23 calculator which was, uh, a remarkable thing at the time since a lot of people didn't even  
24 have regular calculators. And I, I did a lot of, uh, monitoring, capturing the monitoring  
25 results for the various employees and tracking them to make sure that, uh, we caught  
26 trends before they became too serious. So I did, uh, probably that work was something  
27 that hadn't been done before.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** Were computers introduced elsewhere in the plant at that time?

30

31 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I had the, uh, I think there were only two of these HP-65 little  
32 calculators and one of them was at the lab and I had the second one. So there weren't too  
33 many places where they were using them at, at that point.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Was it a calculator or a computer?

36

37 **JIM REESE:** Uh. It was a calculator but it had a, a little magnetic strip that you could  
38 program and you ran the strip through the calculator and it would memorize a program  
39 and then so when you put in data it would automatically calculate, uh, an individual result  
40 so you wouldn't have to do the same calculation over and over again.

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you, do you know when computers were introduced into the  
43 plant?

44

45 0:25:29

46

1 **JIM REESE:** I know we, we had, uh, a big IBM computer that was primarily payroll and  
2 that kind of thing for, even when started. Uh. But probably, uh, in the early '70s, I think  
3 the research department ended up with a smaller computer that you could then use to do,  
4 uh, calculations. Come to think of it, as the environmental facilities engineer I did use  
5 that computer to calculate the, uh, size of the ductwork and so forth that was going into  
6 the, uh, air pollution control equipment. So, they did have it. It was back when you were  
7 using individual punch cards and you had to sit in front of the computer and you had this  
8 big stack of cards that you ran through the machine. So...

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they introduce the CAD system into the engineering department?

11

12 **JIM REESE:** Uh. Yes. But not until after I had, uh, left, uh, and, and was on the  
13 environmental facilities side.

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** So then when would that have been? Because you switched over to  
16 environmental in what year?

17

18 **JIM REESE:** I'm trying to remember now. I've got it written down some place on  
19 there.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** I have you down as environmental facilities engineer in 1970.

22

23 **JIM REESE:** Yeah. Okay.

24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** So they had CAD before then?

26

27 **JIM REESE:** No. I don't think they had CAD until probably maybe the mid-'70s for,  
28 and they were using that primarily in the, uh, drafting department where they had, uh,  
29 replaced the, the hand drawings with the, uh, CAD drawings.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So you were, am I correct that you were still in the industrial,  
32 an industrial hygiene engineer up to the point when the smelter closed?

33

34 **JIM REESE:** Yes.

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** In December of '79?

37

38 **JIM REESE:** '79. Correct.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** In your opinion, why did the smelter close at that point?

41

42 **JIM REESE:** Uh. From, uh, what I remembered, the price of zinc had been falling  
43 before that time and the plant was unionized in, uh, I think it was 1973, '73/'74. Uh. So,  
44 the price of, uh, wages, workers' wages and so forth were higher and, uh, it seemed like  
45 they were having more trouble with the furnaces producing as much metal so they had  
46 more man hours and a little bit less production and they were just finding that the, uh, the

1 profits were just diminishing and that the smelter was very complicated at, at that time.  
2 There were, uh, eight roasters, uh, 10 sinter machines, and 17 furnaces and they made  
3 high grade metal and, uh, intermediate metal and these were all grades of how much lead  
4 were in them, and, and then, uh, PW, which was the lowest grade. But, uh, they made the  
5 most PW. But...

6  
7 0:29:01

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** PW being...

10  
11 **JIM REESE:** Prime Western.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Prime Western?

14  
15 **JIM REESE:** Right. So, uh, I, I think, uh, what they found was that the smelter  
16 operation was so complicated and some of the, the smaller furnaces took the same  
17 manpower as the larger furnaces, but you weren't making near as much metal. Uh. So  
18 they were trying to find a way to simplify the, uh, the smelting process, but at the same  
19 time, all the other smelters in the country were electrolytic, which they found was  
20 cheaper to operate and so they were struggling with continuing to run Monaca the way it  
21 was. They didn't think they could do that. So they were looking to build an electrolytic  
22 plant some place and I think up near Balmat, New York, where the mines were, uh. But  
23 then they were also trying to figure what, what they could do to, uh, streamline the  
24 operations at Monaca. Uh. The other thing that happened I think that was difficult is at,  
25 at this point St. Joe Minerals had two divisions, uh, St. Joe Lead and, uh, St. Joe Zinc.  
26 We were part of the, the zinc division. I think, uh, Jim Broadhead was the president of  
27 that division and John Wright was president of the lead division and, uh, I think, uh,  
28 Broadhead decided that, that the smelter just couldn't operate successfully and it was  
29 difficult to continue to run it that way, so they shut it down. It was shut down for a  
30 period. Uh. But then, uh, I think Bob Sunderman, uh, who was, uh, working in the zinc  
31 division, talked to John Wright who was head of the other division and convinced him  
32 that, uh, if you cut down and only ran six large furnaces out of the seventeen furnaces  
33 (they started out with many fewer than that). So they cut the, the number of, of operating,  
34 uh, parts of the plant way down and started up then, uh, just a small number of, of units  
35 and at that point the, uh, the employees were given the opportunity, when the plant shut  
36 down to either take, uh, a severance package or if they thought the plant might reopen,  
37 they could not get severance, but be on a callback list. When the plant started back up,  
38 not very many people were, were on that callback list. So to get enough people to run the  
39 plant, they ended up bringing back the cream of the crop of the hourly people that they  
40 thought would do the best job. So when the, after losing the job and not having anything  
41 when the plant reopened the people were working pretty hard trying to make it work and,  
42 uh, it was, uh, more profitable I think then. By that time, maybe the price of zinc  
43 recovered too. I'm not sure where that was.

44  
45 0:32:25

1 **INTERVIEWER:** At what point did they see this option to streamline some of the  
2 activities at the plant and, and keep it opening, keep it running?  
3

4 **JIM REESE:** It wasn't too long after, maybe only about a year after it shut down that,  
5 um, Bob Sunderman was kind of lobbying to see if this could work. So after I left the  
6 plant and, uh, went to work for Dravo, uh, I got a call from, uh, one of the people who  
7 were, uh, working with Bob, uh, and asked me if I would help, uh, figure out how we  
8 might be able to use the environmental equipment, uh, to, to restart the plant. So I  
9 actually worked for a period, uh, while I was still full time at Dravo, but on weekends and  
10 whenever to, to help, uh, come up with, uh, a plan for restarting.  
11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** Do, do you think there was a missed opportunity here to figure out a  
13 way that they could have reorganized how they were doing things and how they were  
14 operating and make those changes without having to shut down and lay off everybody  
15 and then a year later say, "There seems to be a way."  
16

17 **JIM REESE:** Well, uh, I think it might've been difficult to, uh, to get the attitude  
18 changed. I think one of the things that, that helped was when the new people came back  
19 after the restart they were without a job. They had lost their job and so their attitude was,  
20 was quite a bit different when they restarted. In fact, there was some discussion that  
21 people plan this all the way along. I don't think they did. I think it was definitely going  
22 to be shut down, but, uh, a few people got together and said, "Gee, maybe there would be  
23 a way we could try to make it work."  
24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** Was, was the, the issue in the late '70s the attitude of the workers  
26 such that it wasn't so profitable or the shortcomings of the, the technology and the cost of  
27 running things at that point that made them feel they needed to shut down?  
28

29 **JIM REESE:** I, I think it was the complexity of the plant, and, uh, the high cost of some  
30 of the individual operations, uh, that made it not profitable, uh, and there was some, uh,  
31 issues with, I'm not sure what to say it was attitude, but like, uh, when the union, uh,  
32 came on board, there were many trades. There were carpenters and there were  
33 millwrights and there were sheet metal people, and all of these various trades had their  
34 own separate little groups and if something, uh, needed fixed in the plant you'd end up  
35 with maybe pipefitters and carpenters and a whole group of people working on a job, but  
36 each may be waiting while the pipefitter did their job and the electricians would be  
37 waiting until it was their turn. Uh. But when the plant reopened they said everybody is a  
38 millwright and we'll use the millwrights who have the pipefitting experience to do the  
39 pipefitting and we'll use the millwrights that have the welding experience to do that. And  
40 so when they started back up again it cost less to do some of the maintenance items  
41 maybe than it did prior to, uh, the, the closing because of so many people (about 1,700  
42 employees) at the plant before it closed.  
43

44 0:36:12  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Before it closed, when you had all these different trades waiting their  
2 turn to work on something, was the waiting because of union rules that only one trade  
3 could be on the job at the plant?  
4

5 **JIM REESE:** I think so. I'm not totally, uh, I wasn't directly involved with that, but I  
6 think there were some of those things and then physically you just couldn't, couldn't be  
7 in the same place at the same time because if the, if the job was small enough that there  
8 just wasn't a place for both the pipefitter and a sheet metal man to work at the same time  
9 and, and it was hard to schedule jobs, uh, so that the people were, uh, kept busy and, and  
10 productive.  
11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** So when it reopened, were these, were these positions still union or  
13 were the unions kept out when you reopened in 1980?  
14

15 **JIM REESE:** Uh, I'm quite sure that it still was unionized. However, uh, it, it didn't  
16 have all the same job classifications. It was much streamlined compared to what it was  
17 before.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** But aren't there definitions about what a job is, especially when you  
20 are talking about union?  
21

22 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I think they were able to get the millwright job expanded to include  
23 the various trades, where originally it was set up because the, the, uh, the pre-shutdown,  
24 uh, work arrangement had things set. There was a carpenter shop. There was a pipe  
25 shop. There was a sheet metal shop. So it naturally kind of went that all those people did  
26 their own, their own trades. Uh. And then I think they were able to, uh, eliminate some  
27 of that when the, when the plant restarted.  
28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** When the plant restarted, were people trained to be a jack of all  
30 trades?  
31

32 **JIM REESE:** Yes. To, to where they could be.  
33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** So they could no longer just be...  
35

36 **JIM REESE:** Right.  
37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** Be a pipefitter...  
39

40 0:38:08  
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42 **JIM REESE:** Right.  
43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** The had to also be able to be the...  
45

46 **JIM REESE:** Yes.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Electrician or...

**JIM REESE:** Yeah. Now electricians I think were somewhat separate because that was a little tougher to, uh, to cross that, that border. So we had, uh, um, mechanical maintenance and then we had electrical maintenance, but we didn't have, uh, uh, a pipe shop and a sheet metal shop and some of those other types.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you said you stayed on at the plant a little after it closed until the end of January 1980?

**JIM REESE:** Yes. Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** So what were you doing in roughly that extra month there as part of the transition?

**JIM REESE:** Uh. They, they were looking to, uh, put together drawings and so forth that would kind of, uh, show what had been done. I think there was some thought that they might do something with the plant. Were they going to, uh, tear it apart and save the, the big motors and some of the pieces of equipment and so forth. So I did some work in, in that area and it was my knowledge of the facility that kind of led them to have me do that.

**INTERVIEWER:** But the furnaces sat idle.

**JIM REESE:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Until the following October.

**JIM REESE:** Right. Yeah, it was strange. I, I went out into the plant and it was normally, well, noisy probably would be fairly, fairly accurate. And I remember I walked into the furnace plant and I could hear a hiss of an air line that, uh, was making a little bit of noise and I don't know why it would make it any difference, but I decided I was going to go find that valve and turn it off just because it seemed like it was waste of, a waste of air. But it was really eerie to be in the plant when there was nobody there because it ran 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. There was always somebody there working and during that time it was empty.

**INTERVIEWER:** I imagine it was a little cooler then too.

0:40:21

**JIM REESE:** Yes. It was. [Laughter]

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your first last day on the job?

1 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I was very fortunate and I was able to find, uh, a job at Dravo, and  
2 so I started the very next day, maybe it was a Monday or something. But unlike other  
3 people who were laid off and had, uh, to, to figure out how to survive on the, on the, uh,  
4 severance pay and so forth, I was extremely lucky and I got the severance pay but started  
5 the next week with a new job and so I actually financially was in, in very good shape. I  
6 gave them the schedule that I had, they kind of allowed me to work until, until the end  
7 even though I may not have been as needed toward the last, the last few days.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** So you, you received the severance pay and yet they hired you back  
10 further down the road. It had been my understanding that if you, if an employee opted  
11 for severance, then they would not have been eligible to be rehired.

12  
13 **JIM REESE:** Yes. I was just working as a consultant at, at that point. I, I wasn't, uh,  
14 really, uh, an employee.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** When they closed at the end of '79, did you have any inkling that the  
17 closure might be temporary?

18  
19 **JIM REESE:** No. I don't think I did, but it wasn't too long after that, that I started to  
20 hear rumors there was some thinking about it, but, it wasn't until I actually got the call  
21 that could you help, uh, us put together a plan that I really thought well maybe they will  
22 do something with it.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have any sense about how difficult it was for the people who  
25 were laid off in 1979 to find other jobs and if they had to leave the area?

26  
27 **JIM REESE:** I suspect since there were originally 1,700 employees, even later when  
28 they brought back six furnaces that we finally ended up using for the long term. I think  
29 there was about 600 people. But I'll bet when they started back up there might've been  
30 200 or something. So out of the 1,700, there may only be a few hundred that actually  
31 were able to go back working in two years. And some of them, I think, found jobs at  
32 other places and then came back to St. Joe. But I'm sure other ones probably had to leave  
33 the area because there were no jobs. That was about the same time the steel mills were  
34 being shut down too, I think. I'm not exactly sure of the timeframe, but somewhere  
35 around 1980 I think is when the steel industry in Beaver County kind collapsed. So I  
36 think it was very difficult to find a job.

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40 **INTERVIEWER:** How much advance notice was there, um, was given to the  
41 employees about the closing of the plant in '79?

42  
43 **JIM REESE:** Um. They made a closure formal announcement on November 27, 1979.  
44 What they did is they, they phased the shutdown, uh, to a degree, uh, the material runs  
45 through the plant from the, uh, roaster plant to the sinter plant to the furnace plant. So  
46 they decided how much ore they were going to process and they ran the roasters until

1 they ran out of ore and then they made sinter and then they ran the sinter plant until they  
2 ran out of sinter, and then they ran the furnaces until they ran out of, uh, the sinter was  
3 used up that they, that they had produced. The last day of the Engineering Department  
4 was December 21, 1979.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Is this, was this sort of slowing down before they gave notice that  
7 they were going to be shutting down?

8  
9 **JIM REESE:** No. I think there, there might've been a little bit of a slowdown, but not  
10 at all associated with shutdown. So I don't think anybody had any inkling that, that, uh,  
11 this was going to happen until the announcement was made and then, uh, the shutdown  
12 was, uh, the roaster plant people were let go first, the sinter plant next, and the furnace  
13 plant, and the refinery were down to the, down to the end. So it was, uh, it was a tough  
14 time.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. When the smelter reopened in October of 1980, it reopened as  
17 the St. Joe Resources Company. It had closed as St. Joe Mineral and reopened as St. Joe  
18 Resources. What was the significance of the name change from St. Joe Minerals to St.  
19 Joe Resources Company?

20  
21 **JIM REESE:** I, I think that had something to do with the, uh, the St. Joe Zinc part of the  
22 company of St. Joe Minerals, and the St. Joe Lead part of St. Joe Minerals. And since  
23 the, the zinc division kind of disappeared, uh, I think they decided to, to maybe use this  
24 new name, but it was under the, uh, what used to be the St. Joe Lead division under John  
25 Wright. So I, I don't know exactly, you know, I think they just looked for, looking for a  
26 new name, uh, just to try to turn the page.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** You talked a little bit about the before and after of the shutdown.  
29 Could you please summarize what this significant difference was between what was  
30 produced before the shutdown and what was produced after the shutdown and what  
31 processes or aspects of the plant did not start up again?

32  
33 **JIM REESE:** Right. Um. Primarily, uh, there were three different metal products.  
34 The, uh, Prime Western metal, the intermediate grade metal, and then the high grade  
35 metal. Well the high-grade metal came from the high-grade furnaces, which they didn't,  
36 uh, reopen, and the intermediate grades were some of the other small furnaces which they  
37 didn't, uh, reopen. So they only made Prime Western zinc. They were making what they  
38 called American process oxide from the small oxide furnaces. Uh. But they shut those  
39 all down. And the American processed oxide was not as pure as the French process,  
40 which was made at the refinery. So they eliminated all that. So they ended up, uh,  
41 making, uh, PW metal from the furnaces and then they took metal from the furnace plant  
42 to the refinery, uh, where they, uh, distilled it and made high grade, uh, or special high  
43 grade with very low lead, uh, levels in the metal. Then they could also take it to another  
44 column that made, uh, high grade zinc oxide when it went through a distillation process.  
45 So there was quite a few less, uh, products and like as I mentioned before, I think there  
46 were, uh, 17 furnaces originally, uh, and they didn't start up furnaces one through 10. So



1 they had, uh, furnaces 11 through 17, which was seven furnaces. And they didn't start all  
2 these up at one time, but after, uh, a period of time they ran six furnaces and then had one  
3 down because the furnaces have to be rebuilt. So there was always one down to be  
4 rebuilt, uh, and then the other, uh, six would be producing.

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8 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you aware of, um, marketing research that was undertaken to  
9 make sure that if they produce just these grades of, of zinc and zinc oxide and not the  
10 other grades that they also used to sell that they would have the supply and the demand to  
11 make this profitable?  
12

13 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I wasn't, uh, directly involved with that or even indirectly I guess.  
14 But I wouldn't be at all surprised that that work was done by, uh, the people in the sales  
15 and marketing group. So, uh, that they kind of knew what, what they could sell. I suspect  
16 that they definitely lost some business for sure, but I think they knew they could sell what  
17 they made because, uh, back before shutdown, uh, the Monaca plant was the largest zinc  
18 smelter in the country. So when it did shut down, of course the price of zinc shot up  
19 quite a bit because the, the, the, uh, demand, uh, was still there and the supply was way  
20 down. So I think they had a fairly good idea that they'd be able to, uh, at least get some  
21 of that market back.  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** What was that market in the 1980s?  
24

25 **JIM REESE:** Uh. Probably the biggest, uh, part of the market was the galvanizers.  
26 They would use the, the Prime Western, uh, metal. Uh. The high grade oxide I think  
27 went into pharmaceutical, uh, things and, uh, some of the zinc oxide ointments that we  
28 use. I guess some of the electrolytic smelters would make the high-grade zinc metal. But  
29 I don't know that they made the oxide. So I think the oxide market was, uh, maybe  
30 mostly foreign at that, that point. I don't know for sure.  
31

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34 **INTERVIEWER:** How did salaries and benefits compare before and after the reopening  
35 of the smelter in 1980?  
36

37 **JIM REESE:** I thought they were comparable, but I don't know for sure. Uh. But I  
38 don't, I don't think people, they, you know, cut wages particularly when they had people  
39 come back. I thought they were similar to what they were before, but I don't know for  
40 sure.  
41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** How did the culture of the plant and employer/employee relations  
43 change when the smelter reopened? Was there ever that same trust again in having a job?  
44

45 **JIM REESE:** Uh. No. I, I think that part of it, uh, was, uh, a little bit of an issue. But  
46 on the other hand the people who were working there were very dedicated to trying to

1 make it work. They're going to give us another chance to, to do this. Let's do the best we  
2 can to, uh, try to make sure that the company is profitable and they stay in business. So I  
3 think the attitude generally, uh, did improve, uh, for some period of time after the restart  
4 than after it got well developed again I think, uh, it maybe tapered off a little, a little from  
5 that, but initially I think they were very dedicated.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any, um, incentives or bonuses in that period of getting it  
8 going again for people who were dedicated to making that work?

9  
10 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I think everybody was, since they were paid the same I don't know  
11 that there was, uh, anything special for, uh, I think there were some, uh, some small  
12 things maybe that were done for employees, but I don't know that there was financially a  
13 direct gain.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. You returned to the plant at the end of 1981?

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17 **JIM REESE:** Yes.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** As senior design engineer and about seven months later, you were  
20 promoted to environmental manager.

21  
22 **JIM REESE:** Right. What was, what was a little strange about that was, uh, I came  
23 back. Uh. Well actually I should back up a little bit. In addition to the smelter at  
24 Monaca, there was, uh, the research department, and when the smelter shut down the  
25 research department for the rest of, uh, St. Joe Minerals stayed in operation. So those  
26 engineers and staff, uh, were there and one of the, uh, projects that they were working on  
27 was a, uh, a flame reactor project that was supposed to, uh, take some of the, uh, crude,  
28 uh, zinc oxide that was recycled and, and make a product out of it. They were working  
29 on that and needed some engineers. So I heard that they were looking for someone and  
30 since I was travelling from Chippewa to, uh, Dravo on Neville Island and it was a long  
31 ride. I, I enjoyed the work there but, uh, when I saw well, gee, maybe I could go back to,  
32 uh, work on the flame reactor project maybe that would be, uh, an okay thing for me to  
33 do. So I came on the flame reactor team and worked for them. Then Bob Sunderman,  
34 who was the plant manager, said, "Gee, if I would've known you wanted to come back, I  
35 would've offered you an environmental position." So shortly after that, I ended up  
36 moving back to the smelter as the, uh, environmental manager.

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38 0:55:19

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40 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that flame reactor project successful?

41  
42 **JIM REESE:** Yes. Yes. They, they, uh, finally got the flame reactor, uh, project going  
43 and they made it run. I think they put one flame reactor in, uh, Texas. Now what was a  
44 little bit interesting is the flame reactor was originally intended to be in, in competition  
45 with New Jersey Zinc, uh, and the, uh, kilns that were in Palmerton. Well, once the  
46 merger happened, then the flame reactor was kind of the competition's idea of what to do

1 and, uh, they tried it, one in Texas. But it never, uh, never was, uh, real successful and  
2 part of that might've been not the technology as much as just the, the difference now in,  
3 in the, uh, people who were make, calling the shots on what direction they wanted to go  
4 with, with technology.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the flame reactor technology patented by the company?

7  
8 **JIM REESE:** I believe that it was.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** And who was heading that design, engineering design team?

11  
12 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I've forgotten now who that was. I know I, I was working with Don  
13 Talbot, who, uh, was on the team, but I've forgotten who our supervisor was at that point.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So seven months later, you went over to environmental.

16  
17 **JIM REESE:** Right.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Why seven months?

20  
21 **JIM REESE:** I don't know what happened. Uh. I know that some of the environmental  
22 work getting done at the plant was being done by corporate and, and, uh, it might've been  
23 after I came back and was working on the flame reactor. Somebody said he was  
24 environmental facilities engineer, and he knows the, the plant pretty well. Maybe he'd,  
25 maybe he'd be interested in doing that." I never did hear exactly what triggered the timing  
26 on it.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the most challenging issues you addressed as  
29 environmental engineer? I'm sorry. Environmental manager.

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31 0:57:42

32  
33 **JIM REESE:** Environmental manger. Uh. I, I think it was kind a continuation of what  
34 I had done before although it was a lot more, uh, regulatory issues. SO<sub>2</sub>, uh, emission  
35 requirements and, and other regulatory things that, that I was working, working with.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Were these state or federal regulations?

38  
39 **JIM REESE:** Uh. They were state regulations, but, uh, required by the federal rules.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you assess the company's success or lack thereof in  
42 addressing these environmental issues?

43  
44 **JIM REESE:** It was kind of an ongoing, uh, thing. You, you seemed to correct one  
45 thing and get it under control and then some new thing would pop up that you, uh, had,  
46 had to deal with. So you were constantly working on one project or another.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Could, could you comment on the, the deforestation and the reforestation efforts?

**JIM REESE:** Uh. I, I know the SO<sub>2</sub> did cause a lot of the problems with some vegetation around the, around the plant. Uh. We argued that it wasn't all caused by, uh, the smelter because there were other areas upwind that seemed to have the same issues too. We did try to, to do what we could to reduce the emissions so reforestation would come back.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there, was there any active tree planting?

**JIM REESE:** Yes. I think there, there was some tree planting. I don't think it was real widespread, but there was some.

**INTERVIEWER:** How about water treatment issues?

**JIM REESE:** Water treatment, uh, issues were always a, uh, a big thing and they, uh, were making changes to the waste water treatment plant to, uh, be able to meet the, the standards as they got stricter.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were there any new technologies introduced at St. Joe to help with these various environmental concerns?

**JIM REESE:** Yeah. There was one in particular where we had several engineers working on the, the wastewater treatment plant trying to come up with ways to, uh, modify it slightly using additives that would reduce the amount of lead in the effluent.

1:00:41

**INTERVIEWER:** In 1987, Horsehead Industries bought St. Joe Resources and combined it with New Jersey Zinc to form Zinc Corporation of America.

**JIM REESE:** Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** Or ZCA. What was the impact of this change in ownership on the operations of the plant and your experience in particular?

**JIM REESE:** Uh. I was, uh, kind of concerned at, at the time because there were quite a few environmental engineers at Palmerton, who were doing the same kind of work there that I was doing in Monaca and I was wondering a little bit whether since they were now overseeing things. So I wondered if, if I might find myself on the, the wrong side of the door at, at some point. Maybe it was my knowledge of the plant that saved things for me and possibly the people in Palmerton either found other jobs or left for other reasons. I'm not sure. But I ended up being one of the few, uh, people that, uh, stayed between the two companies. Tom Janeck, who was my, uh, supervisor, worked for, uh, St. Joe

1 Corporate under Gary Welsh and, uh, we kind of ended up, uh, lasting longer than, uh,  
2 the other Palmerton people did.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any different in the, the culture of the plant because of the  
5 new ownership?

6  
7 **JIM REESE:** Yes. There did seem to be. Maybe it was not so much a change in culture  
8 as it was just, uh, not knowing, uh, the new people, uh, as well as we knew the people  
9 that had been running the plant for all the years before. As you go, go through the history,  
10 uh, the New Jersey Zinc people ran it for a while and then, uh, there was another change  
11 in ownership and so that the people changed again and so sometimes people went back  
12 and forth. I know Tom Janeck ended up being let go and Rich Krablin became my, my  
13 boss and then after a while that the whole regime was out and, and there was a new  
14 management team. Bob Sunderman was back in and so he brought Tom Janeck back. So  
15 there was a lot of, uh, change back and forth between the two managements.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** How about at the, the level of people working in the furnace plant  
18 and the, the, the hourly workers I mean were they, were they getting laid off through any  
19 of these changes?

20  
21 **JIM REESE:** No. Not, not, uh, specifically because of an ownership thing. Uh. There  
22 did seem to be some, some layoffs occasionally if, uh, the price of zinc really went down  
23 and they were looking at, looking to ways to try to, uh, reduce costs. Occasionally there  
24 were some, but I don't think there was anything directly caused by the, the, uh, people  
25 that were operating the, the facility.

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27 1:04:21

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29 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please explain just for a layperson's benefit how the  
30 changing or the fluctuating prices of zinc affected how the plant operated?

31  
32 **JIM REESE:** Okay. Uh. It was, it was amazing. I was trying to, to look at one point  
33 to see, uh, how the price of zinc affected, uh, different managers and people who, who,  
34 uh, appeared to be doing very well, uh, at managing the plant, uh, may have been  
35 managing at a time when the price of zinc was going up. So what, what happens, uh, the,  
36 the fixed cost, uh, of, uh, the feed materials and so forth, uh, are fairly stable, uh, and the,  
37 uh, the costs of, uh, the hourly wages and those kinds of things and the other, uh, things  
38 you'd need to bring into the plant and, uh, coke or, yeah, coke and, uh, we used a lot of  
39 electricity so we bought coal for the power plant. But all those prices were not connected  
40 to the zinc price. So if the zinc price went up, uh, and you'd be receiving a lot more  
41 money for the zinc you, uh, produced, but your cost of operating the plant stayed about  
42 the same. So any time the price of zinc went up, it was a bonus because it, it was extra  
43 money, uh, particularly once you, uh, switched to, uh, mostly secondary materials for  
44 feeds. When you were running, uh, the, the mines and you were pulling some of the, uh,  
45 zinc ore out of the ground. The mines could maybe sell the ore to someone else, uh, for a

1 higher price and so maybe it would, that price of the ore could go up and down a little  
2 more with zinc price, but the other feeds seem to be, uh, not related to the price of zinc.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** So if, if the zinc you're bringing in to process is at a higher price, if  
5 your buying...

6  
7 **JIM REESE:** If, if the zinc, the feeds that we brought in.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Then you can sell your product at a higher price?

10  
11 **JIM REESE:** No. The, the product, uh, price is based on the London Metal Exchange  
12 and it is a particular price. I think the price structure normally was to sell zinc for so  
13 many cents above that price or so many cents below that price depending on how good of  
14 a customer maybe they were. But, uh, the price itself was, uh, uh, based on the London  
15 Metal Exchange.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** In September 1988, ZCA appointed you Director of Environmental  
18 Affairs. Was this a change in title and/or a change in your scope of responsibilities?

19  
20 **JIM REESE:** Uh. It was probably both. Uh. I did a lot of the same things. Uh. But it  
21 did expand, uh, uh, a little bit and then later, when I was, uh, Director of Environmental  
22 Affairs and Health and Safety. So for a while I was overseeing the safety of people at the  
23 plant. But the, the Director of Environmental Affairs was, uh, predominantly the same  
24 things. Although I think I got a little more involved with, uh, dealing with, uh, regulatory  
25 items with the state government an, sometimes even with the EPA.

26  
27 1:08:06

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the bigger issues that you needed to deal with at  
30 that point?

31  
32 **JIM REESE:** Basically, uh, we were, uh, arguing against some of the, uh, uh,  
33 regulations saying they weren't feasible. It was going to be very difficult to meet the, the  
34 lower limits that they were trying to set and so we were arguing, uh, that, uh, they were  
35 setting the limits lower than they needed to be set and it was going to be very difficult to  
36 meet those requirements.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a public affairs component of your job or was there a  
39 separate public affairs person?

40  
41 **JIM REESE:** No. There was not.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Who represented you in the community?

44  
45 **JIM REESE:** I occasionally did get involved with that. Although Tom Janeck who was  
46 the, uh, Vice President of Environmental Affairs, uh, did a lot of that work too.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Horsehead bought the company in 2003 after Horsehead Industry's  
3 bankruptcy, Horsehead Corporation bought the company.

4  
5 **JIM REESE:** Right. Right.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Again, how if at all did this change the day to day operations of  
8 the plant and the experience of the employees?

9  
10 **JIM REESE:** I don't think it changed it too much except for every time something like  
11 this happened people were, were concerned about the viability of the smelter. Why is it  
12 closing and sometimes there was bankruptcy involved or, uh, the change in ownership  
13 just, uh, worried people on, on what it meant for the long-term viability of the plant. But  
14 most of the, uh, the people who were running the various departments, uh, uh, were the  
15 same, the same people that had been. So it didn't change too much.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the biggest challenges you faced as Director of  
18 Environmental Affairs, um, during your final few years at the plant?

19  
20 **JIM REESE:** I'm trying to think of. It seemed like it was nothing, uh, that was much  
21 different than, than what we'd been doing all along. Uh. I, I guess I was training my  
22 replacements and, uh, trying to get them up to speed with, uh, the kinds of things that we,  
23 that we worked on, but it wasn't anything dramatically different.

24  
25 1:10:32

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** When and why did you retire?

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29 **JIM REESE:** Uh. I just turned 65 and, and, uh, decided that, uh, it was a pretty good  
30 time to do that and then I also knew that, uh, they were interested in having me work part  
31 time as a consultant and so it looked like I could still make, uh, a little bit of money  
32 consulting and not work near the hours. So, I picked my hours.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** And what year was that that you retired?

35  
36 **JIM REESE:** Uh. December of 2010.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** What ultimately, ultimately caused the closing of the plant in 2014?

39  
40 **JIM REESE:** I think it, it's been the same, uh, problems that they've had all along.  
41 Although the management, uh, thought that, uh, they were going to build a new, uh,  
42 electrolytic type plant down south, uh, where they could, uh, do more chemical, uh,  
43 processing of, of the material. Not do the pyrometallurgical. So it, it was very much the  
44 same story that, that has been plaguing the plant for, uh, ever since the 1979 shutdown. It  
45 was just costing, uh, more money to run it and the competition from the electrolytic  
46 plants made it, uh, uh, just difficult to continue to run the plant.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any change in demand for the product?  
3

4 **JIM REESE:** Uh. Not that I'm aware of. But there, there could've been that too.  
5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of jobs did women hold at the plant?  
7

8 **JIM REESE:** Uh. Unfortunately particularly when you, you look at the list of  
9 engineers and, uh, scientists that went through the various programs there were very few  
10 women. So it was definitely a men's world, but I wouldn't say men's only. But, maybe  
11 they just didn't promote women the way should, should have. Although when I left, they  
12 hired a couple of people, one of them decided to move on, didn't last. It was kind of a, a  
13 change in philosophy I guess and people were moving in and out, but the last, uh, person  
14 I worked with as a consultant was, was female. Uh. And she was doing a very good job.  
15 In fact so good that they decided they didn't need me anymore. [Laughter]  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever hear stories about women's, uh, role in working at that  
18 plant during World War II?  
19

20 1:13:32  
21

22 **JIM REESE:** Yes. I, I did know that we had, uh, some women working out in the plant  
23 particularly in the motor shop, uh, we, we rewind motors rather than sending them out  
24 to someone else to have them electrically redone. There were several women that, that  
25 worked in the motor shop and they rewind these motors. And I think they were kind of  
26 left from women who worked in the plant during the war years, but definitely there were  
27 some people during that period. We did have a cafeteria that had quite a few ladies that  
28 staffed it, but, uh, as far as in management unfortunately there just weren't too many.  
29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** In looking through publications from the 1960s, it seemed there were  
31 few if any African-Americans on the St. Joe workforce. During your years at the plant,  
32 did you see, uh, any efforts to recruit African-Americans or an increase in the African-  
33 American presence in the workforce?  
34

35 **JIM REESE:** I wasn't aware of anything particularly. I don't think they, uh, had any  
36 discrimination. It's just we, we weren't getting too many applicants. Uh. And I don't  
37 know exactly why that, that was. I know there were a, a few, uh, black men that did, did  
38 very well at their jobs, but there just didn't seem to be, uh, very many applicants I don't  
39 think. Although I wasn't involved in that phase of the work too much.  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Do you know of any efforts the company made to hire veterans?  
42

43 **JIM REESE:** Yeah. I, I think they tried to hire veterans. Uh. After World War II, they  
44 seemed to be very interested in, uh, helping the veterans. Uh. They probably did a better  
45 job with that then they did with blacks.  
46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** In addition to providing employment to a lot of people, how did St.  
2 Joe contribute to the larger Beaver Valley community?

3  
4 **JIM REESE:** As part of the environmental work that I did, we had a, uh, a group called  
5 the Route 18 Corridor, uh, Group. And it was, uh, uh, members of, uh, companies  
6 including BASF and Arco and the other companies right along that, that strip. We met  
7 and, uh, I know we did some of the flower planting that, uh, was along the road up by the  
8 mall. Uh. That group used to do it exclusively and then, uh, Penn State did take it over.  
9 But, uh, that was one of the projects that, uh, that group did. We also, uh, invited, uh,  
10 other, uh, non-industry people. The, I know the superintendent of, uh, the, uh, uh,  
11 schools for Center Township, uh, was a member and, uh, he came to find out what kind  
12 of, uh, training that they might be able to provide that would help Beaver County people,  
13 uh, get some of the jobs that were going to be available. So it was, it was one window  
14 that the, the plants had to the, to the community. And we, uh, welcomed residents if they  
15 were interested and sometimes they, residents would come and complain about one issue  
16 or the other. Pollution or, or traffic or something and we'd try to help resolve things the  
17 best we could and at least provide an ear to listen to them.

18  
19 1:17:56

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21 **INTERVIEWER:** Just a few last questions here. Why did you work at the plant as long  
22 as you did?

23  
24 **JIM REESE:** I guess inertia might be a big part of it, but I, I really enjoyed the people  
25 and, and, uh, the work and, uh, it just seemed like a good place to be. It was close to  
26 family and, uh, as far as moving out of the area I wasn't that terribly interested and they  
27 always treated me, treated me well. So it is amazing. It has changed now I think, but at  
28 the time that I was there, there seemed to be an awful lot of people who had spent a lot of  
29 years, even some of the, the payroll people had, had gone most of the careers, uh,  
30 working at, uh, at St. Joe.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** What single memory stands out in your mind when you think about  
33 your years working there?

34  
35 **JIM REESE:** I guess the, the memories now with all the changes that are happening  
36 with the Shell purchase are overriding some of the other things. To see that the ground is  
37 totally different and the things that I helped design and build and install at the plant to try  
38 to make the workplace better and the environment better are all gone. Of course the  
39 environment is in good shape right now. There's no pollution at all. But, to see the  
40 things that you accomplished during your career kind of all go away has been a little bit  
41 difficult.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience working at the plant have been better?

44  
45 **JIM REESE:** Well I, I don't know that it could be. I was working for good people and  
46 they were reasonable to work for and, and told me what they expected of me. So I, I can't

1 think of anything that could've been much better. More money always would've been  
2 nice I guess, but I can't complain about that.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

5  
6 **JIM REESE:** Uh. They had a little, uh, uh, get-together, a luncheon. All the people,  
7 who, uh, I'd worked with were there and wishing me well. It was nice. A lot of the people  
8 that I didn't see routinely stopped in and wished me well, which was nice.

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10 1:20:46

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12 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

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14 **JIM REESE:** I'm real pleased to see it because I think since we've seen, uh, Horsehead,  
15 uh, almost, uh, since 1980, struggling and, uh, the jobs went from 1,600 down to nothing  
16 it went downhill. So it will be real good to see, uh, a lot of jobs come, come back into the  
17 area.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered  
20 today?

21  
22 **JIM REESE:** I can't think of anything. I'm real glad I've been able to, uh, provide  
23 information that you didn't have before and I'm, I'm real happy to see that at least the  
24 memory goes on.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Well thank you very much for sharing your stories and your time and  
27 your home.

28  
29 **JIM REESE:** Thank you.

30  
31 (END)

**Earl “Butch” Shamp  
Interview @ October 13, 2016**

## **EARL “BUTCH” SHAMP**

### **Summary**

The interview with Earl “Butch” Shamp took place on October 13, 2016, in the kitchen of his home in Monaca, PA. He grew up on Rt. 18 in the vicinity of the zinc plant; he starting to work there in 1977 in the furnace plant and subsequently became a bricklayer, rebuilding furnaces, condensers, and other equipment. Earl stopped working at the plant when it shutdown in 1979. Although he only worked at the zinc plant a relatively short time, he had a lot of stories to tell from his years of living in the area.

Earl shares many childhood stories about growing up around the St. Joe smelter. He describes the clubhouse (boarding house), a former farmhouse where his grandmother worked as the housekeeper, and memories of spending time there in the 1960s. Earl also recalls finding headstones on the property, and working and playing on the St. Joe farm run by Jim Druschel. He reminisces about the St. Joe Auditorium—working as a pin boy in the bowling alley and Hank Davenport the athletic director—as well as schools and the County Home.

Earl explains the safety training and precautions related to working in the furnace plant, including clean air rooms, and the function of the cam-o-tractors. He goes into greater depth describing the role of bricklayers to rebuild and reline furnaces, and comments on the temperature extremes of working in the furnace plants and the air tunnels that provided relief during summer. Earl talks about the bricklayers’ office, the sheds where bricks were stored, and the camaraderie among bricklayers. He explains the severance options St. Joe offered employees when the plant was shutting down in 1979.

Other topics Earl covers include: the tank farm at Raccoon Creek and Mowry Road, a Rosie the Riveter type welder making pipe bombs to blow slag off furnace walls, and the Midway, a favorite bar for St. Joe workers after hours. As a recent and current township supervisor, Earl talks at great length about the impact of Shell coming to the area.

1 **EARL "BUTCH" SHAMP**  
2 **INTERVIEW – 10/13/2016**

3  
4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 EARL SHAMP

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** This is an interview with Earl, also known as Butch...

8  
9 **EARL SHAMP:** Exactly.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Shamp on October 13, 2016. Um. Please state your full name, date  
12 of birth, and your address.

13  
14 **EARL SHAMP:** Earl Alan Shamp, also known as Butch. Uh. Born [REDACTED], and my  
15 address is [REDACTED], Monaca.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?

18  
19 **EARL SHAMP:** Working.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** And where and doing what?

22  
23 **EARL SHAMP:** Self-employed general contractor.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

26  
27 **EARL SHAMP:** Mostly in Beaver County.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Where were you born and raised?

30  
31 **EARL SHAMP:** Potter Township.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** And where did you go to school?

34  
35 **EARL SHAMP:** Center High School.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. What were people doing for employment before St. Joe's  
38 established a smelter here in the '30s, if you know that far back?

39  
40 **EARL SHAMP:** I really don't know that. Uh. Coalmining probably would've been  
41 prevalent in the area, um, but with influx of St. Joe and the Koppers Company. Um.  
42 There was probably a big influx of workers came at that time.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** What was that second company you mentioned?

45  
46 **EARL SHAMP:** Koppers Company, which is now, uh, Nova Chemical.

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**INTERVIEWER:** How do you spell, spell Koppers?

**EARL SHAMP:** K-O-P-P-E-R-S.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**EARL SHAMP:** Um. That's a neighboring, uh, facility near the proposed cracker plant. Um. Also known as the Kobuta Plant, which is a derivative of Koppers and butadiene, which is what produced, synthetic rubber for the war effort is what it was named.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What do you think of when you hear reference to Josephtown?

**EARL SHAMP:** Josephtown. Uh. When I was younger, I was always told that Josephtown had its own zip code and own mailing address, um, but after I grew up and, and actually learned that back in the day when they, when they first started here there was only RD-1 deliveries and RD-2. So they just started addressing things to Josephtown because they know it was St. Joe, um, and that's where it was to be delivered.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there, were you aware of any plans to build a company town here along with the plant?

**EARL SHAMP:** Not for St. Joe. No.

0:02:30

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh. When did people stop referring to the plant area as Josephtown?

**EARL SHAMP:** Uh. Even when I was a youngster, we didn't call it Josephtown. So that had to be somewhere in the '30s or '40s, um, as a guess.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In general, do you think people moved to this area because St. Joe's offered employment back in the '30s and then later years or did St. Joe's employ people who happened to live in the area?

**EARL SHAMP:** I think a little of both. Um. In large part, Mr. Weaton, who was the first, I guess, CEO of St. Joe, um, he worked in Missouri, St. Joe, Missouri, at the plant and relocated to this area to build this smelter because of the resources that were here. And he became an integral part of Potter Township. He actually built his home here. He contributed to, uh, well the plant did to the municipal building, to building Potter Township a school at one time. Um. The people probably did come because it was being built during the Depression. So I would guess that, uh, quite a few did come for work. But as I was growing up in the, in the mid- to late '60s, nearly everyone who lived in Potter Township worked at St. Joe Lead. So, yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was Mr. Weaton still at the plant when you were growing up?

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**EARL SHAMP:** He was not. No.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of stories did you hear about him?

**EARL SHAMP:** Um. A very intelligent man. Uh. He, he and another, uh, engineer developed the condensing system to actually get the zinc metal out of it cause when they first opened it was supposedly only for zinc oxide, a derivative that they use in medicines and rubber and everything else. So, I guess he was a big part of the plant. Now I went to school with his one daughter who was a couple of years older than me. Um. So we went to school together at the Potter School for eight years cause that's all the further that Potter went and then we had a choice to go to any other high school we wanted to at the time.

0:04:55

**INTERVIEWER:** When you say the Potter School, do you mean the one that was on the grounds?

**EARL SHAMP:** Um. Not for me. In 1952, they built a new school just, just up the road here a little bit. Um. And it was a probably 12-room schoolhouse, and it had grades one through eight. So my first, actually I never made it to eighth grade because that's when we were forced to merge with the Center School District. But my seventh-grade class had only seven kids in it. So. Um. My classes were always that little growing up. There were six kids, eight kids. So it was pretty small.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were they St. Joe kids?

**EARL SHAMP:** So, yeah, many of 'em. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you feel any kind of special bond with them because they were St. Joe families?

**EARL SHAMP:** No, eh, my dad worked at Koppers. Okay. The chemical plant next door. Um. I felt a little angry at them cause St. Joe gave such nice Christmas presents to those kids. They would be huge trucks and everything, and we didn't get anything from Koppers. So, a little animosity I guess.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um. But did you have some family members who worked at St. Joe over the years?

**EARL SHAMP:** I did not. No, no family members. No.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What were the highlights of growing up as a St. Joe kid? And I'm a little confused then if you weren't.

1 **EARL SHAMP:** I, my grandmother worked at what they called the clubhouse. She was  
2 the housekeeper. I guess she was employed by St. Joe. The clubhouse was a rather large  
3 mansion. Um.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** What did it look like?

6  
7 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. Big, two-story, clapboard siding colonial style. Huge white  
8 pillars in front. I remember in front of it with a drive-through portico. I believe it  
9 belonged to Mr. Jeffries, who was from Beaver and bought the property, where St. Joe,  
10 um, and got St. Joe to come here. Uh. Once he did get rail service to the area and sold  
11 St. Joe the property. But he rented that property to somebody. Anyway, St. Joe ended up  
12 with everything, and they had the clubhouse, was there for, uh, summer help for college  
13 kids. Cause they hired a lot of college kids in the summer, and it was a boardinghouse  
14 more or less. And, uh, she was the housekeeper there.

15  
16 0:07:09

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was her name?

19  
20 **EARL SHAMP:** Mabel Ferguson. Yeah, it was and she got like two cents to do bed  
21 linens, you know. And I remember she did all the laundry in the basement, um, in an old  
22 ringer washer machine.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Did she live there as well?

25  
26 **EARL SHAMP:** She did. She lived on the first, about a quarter of the first floor, which  
27 was a huge place. Um. And I remembered it always smelled like natural gas in there. It  
28 always had this smell about it. You know, it's funny what you remember.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Was she cooking for the boarders?

31  
32 **EARL SHAMP:** She did not. No. No, she just, uh, daily housekeeping, making the  
33 beds, cleaning the, uh, the bathrooms and stuff like that.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** So what were your experiences being over at the boardinghouse?

36  
37 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. I was probably, um, um, I've been trying to think about it since,  
38 since I talked to you, um, probably five, six, up to eight years old, you know, spending  
39 the night there. Um. We were allowed to go down cause it was in close proximity to the,  
40 to the main entrance of the, the plant, and we were allowed to go down to the guardhouse.  
41 And in the guardhouse was an ice cream machine that you could get, you know, ice  
42 cream sandwiches or, or Goody bars and like that. But, uh, there was always a roar  
43 because you were right at ground zero. So there was a constant roar all the time of the  
44 plant running. But, uh, I guess it helped you get to sleep at night. You know.

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46 **INTERVIEWER:** So you're talking about the 1960s?



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**EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh, what do you recall about the summer interns who were staying there?

0:08:42

**EARL SHAMP:** Um. Didn't see them much. No, hardly at all. Cause they'd be up and gone to work and, you know, I was just a kid. That's where my grandmother lived. You know. It wasn't, it wasn't anything special that I thought of at the time.

**INTERVIEWER:** So what else were you doing on the grounds as a kid?

**EARL SHAMP:** We explored a lot of stuff. Um. We found headstones. Um.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where were the headstones?

**EARL SHAMP:** Directly behind the clubhouse, uh, on a hillside, which I remember them pretty vividly when I was a kid, but, um, and, and where they were located and through this whole process with Shell I've tried to work with them and say this is approximately where I saw them, but nothing was ever found. So they could've been moved.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember, um, if you could read the headstones back then?

**EARL SHAMP:** No. You couldn't. Yeah. And there was a bus stop there that had a chalkboard in it. I remember that. Um. There was a big pond in front of the clubhouse.

**INTERVIEWER:** With a bus, a bus stop with a chalkboard?

**EARL SHAMP:** A big, yeah, it was a big bus stop, um, well-built, probably eight foot by six foot and on the one wall there was a big chalkboard.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was that the former school?

**EARL SHAMP:** No. It was, it was just, it was just, uh, a bus stop. So, um, and I remember being picked up, where I lived as a kid being picked up there and we'd go around there and pick other kids up, and that, that is where they got on. Yeah. So, it's, uh... So that would've been '67, '68 probably somewhere in that area. In the meantime, now, I lived on Route 18. Um. And I remember this specifically it was the summer before I started first grade cause we swam in Raccoon Creek. So I was with my mother and two brothers and we walked down to Raccoon Creek and walked past the St. Joe Farm, which was a pretty good farm. I mean they had probably a hundred head of cattle and a couple hundred head of hogs, but there was a, a small child swinging on a swing about my age. So we stopped and it turned out, and to this day, it's still one of my best

1 friends, Jim Druschel. And his dad ran the farm down there. So, uh, that would've been  
2 1963. And I would've been five years old, cause I wasn't quite in first grade yet. So  
3 then, um, and then we grew up on the farm and we would work all day baling hay.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** This is on the Druschel Farm?

6  
7 0:11:23

8  
9 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. Well, the St. Joe Farm, but Druschel ran it. We'd work all day  
10 baling hay or, you name it, you know, running down hogs just so we'd get to drive the  
11 tractor at the end of the day. And, and we did. And that, that was the cool thing. Mr.  
12 Druschel always let you ride that tractor for a little bit, drive it, you know, safe. So it was  
13 kind of neat, but you would baling hay for nothing. Maybe you'd get lunch. You know.  
14 [Laughs]

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. When did the farm stop supplying cafeteria with meat?

17  
18 **EARL SHAMP:** Uh. I would guess '74 or '75 I think cause of state issues.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Before the cafeteria closed then?

21  
22 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. Yeah, it was before then.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was the slaughterhouse?

25  
26 **EARL SHAMP:** The slaughterhouse is still standing today actually. Um. It is on the  
27 north side of Raccoon Creek. There was a barn and a slaughterhouse there with a huge  
28 walk-in cooler, which is all still there. Um. And I remember slaughtering days. That  
29 we'd, you'd go down and you'd get the hogs down into the slaughterhouse. And you'd  
30 spend all day butchering, which is kind of neat. [Laughter]

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have any idea like how many hogs a week went over to St.  
33 Joe Cafeteria?

34  
35 **EARL SHAMP:** You know, I don't. You know, again, we were young and we were, I  
36 remember Ray Brandt, who was the butcher from the plant he would always say that, "Be  
37 careful cause that knife will cut hot meat as good as it cuts cold meat." You know. But  
38 we always got the skull. He'd cut the head off and we'd have to be taking the meat off the  
39 skull so they could make sausage out of it. So that's what the kids got to do. We weren't  
40 allowed to butcher, butcher anything. [Laughs]

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there dairy cows as well?

43  
44 **EARL SHAMP:** No dairy. No. I think they were all angus, beef cattle. And then in the  
45 later years, they had no more beef cattle. I guess they were more work than the hogs. So,  
46 um, they did away with the cattle and just had hog, a head of hogs. But we shot pigeons.

1 I mean when I was eleven or twelve years old. We all had shotguns and we all reloaded  
2 our own ammunition and we would shoot pigeons.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you talking about real pigeons or clay pigeons?

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6 0:13:40

7  
8 **EARL SHAMP:** The real ones.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever go to the trap shoot?

11  
12 **EARL SHAMP:** No. At the plant? No. Uh-uh. See I was younger then and, but, uh,  
13 we... It would be nothing if we, Jim to, uh, say, he'd call me and say, "Let's go shoot  
14 pigeons." You know. We'd spend all day shooting pigeons because they were eating all  
15 the corn and everything else, you know.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** The auditorium served several functions. Can you describe what you  
18 remember about the auditorium as a building and activities?

19  
20 **EARL SHAMP:** The auditorium, I believe I started there in about the 1970s as a pin  
21 boy in the bowling alley. Um. I probably worked there '70, '71, '72. Um. A great place.  
22 Uh. You got paid by the line they called it, I think. So you got like 25 cents per person  
23 per game. But you know, you know, I was still young. So you were trying to save as  
24 much money as you could to, to get a car so you weren't stuck in your house. Uh. The  
25 gym had its own smell. It smelled like a gym, you know. And the bowling alleys were in  
26 the basement, four of 'em, along with two pin, uh, ping pong tables, and, uh, and a pool  
27 table. And the guy who ran the gym's name was Hank Davenport. A really cavalier kind  
28 of guy. He was, he was the kind of guy that once you met him, you would never forget  
29 Hank. We would shoot pool and he would smoke a cigarette and he would put it in his  
30 ear while he's taking his shot. But, um, Hank always drove Thunderbirds and, the  
31 upstairs, St. Joe had their own volleyball teams. They had inter-department volleyball  
32 and basketball. And, uh, it was a really neat building. It's a shame that it was just left to  
33 deteriorate. Then they finally demolished it, but that all happened once the union came in  
34 and I'm not even sure what year that was.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** That was '74.

37  
38 **EARL SHAMP:** '74. Once the union came then it, then all those little benefits kind of  
39 went away. I think the, you know, the bowling alleys probably by  
40 '76, '77 were no longer being used.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Why's that?

43  
44 **EARL SHAMP:** Well I think, I think the company kind of felt, you know, what we've  
45 given a lot in union wage here we can't afford to keep, um, you know, all these other little  
46 perks and then they had the St. Joe Boat Club. They also had a park right across from the

1 entrance to, to St. Joe, where they used to have autumn picnics and all that for the  
2 company families. And then once the union came they had to give something up in order  
3 to make those wages.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** What became of that park?

6  
7 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. Right now it's under probably a hundred feet of dirt. Um. It was  
8 a, I remember it slightly. Um. It was called St. Joe Park, I believe. Um. It was, uh, I  
9 remember a big concrete pad being down there. But, uh, pretty much just wasted away.  
10 The state used it for, the state highway department used it for a while for a salt and slag  
11 for winter road maintenance and then, then it got buried. [Laughs]

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were a child on the grounds, how tight was the security  
14 and how much free run of the place did you have?

15  
16 0:17:19

17  
18 **EARL SHAMP:** We had pretty good run of the place. I mean, we didn't go in the mill  
19 proper, but we went completely around it. Um. There was the, we, we never got into the  
20 County, the old County Home that was on the grounds. But the County Home barn was  
21 outside the fence line. Um. So we used to go to the County Home barn quite often to,  
22 you know, just, just kids, you know.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What did you do at the barn?

25  
26 **EARL SHAMP:** Oh, tried to break things, but it was built so well you couldn't. I mean,  
27 to be honest, we would, you know, short of setting it on fire it was mostly concrete and,  
28 um, it was well built. It was built by the county back then. But, uh, yeah, that was, uh,  
29 other than you, you didn't try to go through the fence line, but if there was stuff outside it  
30 we went there. Yeah.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you hear any stories about the County Home?

33  
34 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. A lot of stories some escapees, you know, cause they were called  
35 inmates. Um. And the Laughners, who lived like at ground zero there they would  
36 wander their way there to be, you know, to get a meal.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** What did you call them?

39  
40 **EARL SHAMP:** The Laughners. Um. Bob Laughner. Um. I think he probably talked  
41 to you a little. But, uh, and his dad's the one that got electrocuted when he was like 28 or  
42 something like that. So they lived right close to the plant and that would've been the first  
43 house available to anybody leaving the County Home. But, uh, by the time I was born  
44 the County Home was already in transition to move to, uh, Brodhead Road and then  
45 eventually to Brighton Township. But for years I wanted to go through the County Home  
46 cause I, as a contractor, I, uh, was renovating a store in Beaver. That was probably a

1 110-year-old store, a building, and in the basement we found blueprints for the County  
2 Home. And apparently the architect once was in that building and had these draft  
3 drawings and then final drawings of the County Home. And, uh, and that even perked  
4 my interest even more. So when Shell came and we made it quite clear to them that there  
5 was several of us that wanted to tour that building, and we did. We got to go through it.  
6 Um. It was kind of nice. And then reading the history, uh, you know, finding out the  
7 history of it cause, uh, it was kind of neat. The first electric dryer was used in the Beaver  
8 County Home, and it was huge. It would do 200 bedsheets at a time.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** The first electric dryer in the country?

11  
12 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. It would do 200 bedsheets at once. It was a chicken wire  
13 basket, a huge basket, with a blower on one end and they would just toss the, the linens  
14 around, but it's described in, in several history books as, uh, how it was used, and how  
15 they, you know, they used all the, the workers, I mean, all the inmates were, were  
16 expected to work. You didn't get a free ride, which is unheard of today. [Laughs]

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about the school on the property?

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22 **EARL SHAMP:** The orange brick school, which was at the corner of Pleasant Drive  
23 and 18, which I believe was a two-room school. Um. I remember playing on the  
24 playground there only cause it was in close proximity to the clubhouse. Um. I don't  
25 remember it being an operational school in, in my lifetime. But, uh, now that, that school  
26 was built by St. Joe because Mr. Weaton felt. Before that we had two schools. We had  
27 the Potter School, which was on old Route 18 not far from here, and then we had, this  
28 was Potter Number One and then there was Potter Number Two, which was in the, down  
29 near the river at the St. Joe facility. Um. And he felt, you know, that they needed a  
30 better school. So St. Joe actually built the school.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Any idea when they built it?

33  
34 **EARL SHAMP:** That had to be in the '30s I would think. Um. St. Joe came in '29.  
35 Probably late '30s it was built. And it was probably used until 1952 when they built the  
36 bigger school right out the road here. So, um, it was just a plain, orange brick  
37 schoolhouse. You know, with swings in the backyard.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** When it was no longer used as a school, was it repurposed for another  
40 function?

41  
42 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. Not that I'm aware of. No. [Coughs]

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** So when did you start working at the plant?

45  
46 **EARL SHAMP:** The, working as uh...

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**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, not, not at the bowling alley as a...

**EARL SHAMP:** Not a pinsetter. Yeah that would've been 1977. And I started, uh, daylight, uh, furn, furnace plant cleanup. It was a great job for \$4.13 an hour.

**INTERVIEWER:** How did you apply for a job at St. Joe?

**EARL SHAMP:** Actually a friend of mine's dad was an engineer down there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Remember the name?

**EARL SHAMP:** Uh. My friend is Jim Bishop. His dad was Gerald Bishop. Um. I graduated high school in '76, and I was, I was a mason and I worked in Pittsburgh laying brick and block and it got slow and so I said, you know, maybe I'll give it a shot in the plant, and my buddy Jim went to the Navy out of high school. So, and, I knew his dad pretty well and I talked to his dad and said, "Hey, can you get me a job down there?" He said, "Put an application in." And a couple of weeks later I started. So, and I thought it was pretty hideous.

0:22:55

**INTERVIEWER:** What was your... Tell me about your first day on the job.

**EARL SHAMP:** Uh. The first day on the job, you know, new safety glasses, a new hardhat, and...

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you get some kind of safety orientation?

**EARL SHAMP:** Oh yeah. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**EARL SHAMP:** Um. Eh. Yeah, you always had to wear your fireproof clothing, um, steel-toed boots, hardhats issued, safety glasses. They paid for the glasses. Um.

**INTERVIEWER:** What about the other things you were required to wear?

**EARL SHAMP:** Yeah, they paid for all fireproof stuff. Not your boots. That was payroll deducted because they had a boot truck come, you know. Um. It was, uh, safety, yeah, don't get your hands caught in anything, you know. A lot of hot stuff here. Don't get burned. But nobody took you by the hand and said do this or do that, but I think they were required to give you so much safety training. So that didn't pay very much at \$4.13 an hour. So a job came up in the furnace plant.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about the first job you had at the plant.

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**EARL SHAMP:** Daylight cleanup?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. It was awful. Um. It was mostly cleaning up, uh, soot, and, um, and mostly powder cause all the machinery grinding. It would create dust that was so fine and when you hit, when you swept it with a broom it would look like water. It would just ripple across the floor. Um. And it would be in some of the most awful spots, you know, behind equipment, under furnaces, and you had to go in with a broom and shovel and keep it clean, and you would do that, you would have an area to get completed. Um, and it wasn't, um, it wouldn't take anyone eight hours to do it. The thing is you could go in on your shift and clean it right away and by the time your shift was over it would look like you didn't touch it. So you would kind of goof off for six or seven hours until the end of your shift and then you would go clean it up. And then by the time you got relieved your area was clean.

0:24:53

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you wear a respirator when you were working with all this fine dust?

**EARL SHAMP:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, and I remember they had clean air rooms. You know. Throughout, every floor had a clean air room. So you would...

**INTERVIEWER:** What does that mean, you had a clean air room?

**EARL SHAMP:** Well, they had a, you know, the whole building is open, wide open, the furnaces are running and dirt and dust everywhere. Well they had a, almost like a small mobile home inside each floor, um, which was called the clean air, the clean air room, and you'd go in there and it was filtered air. So you could take your respirator off. Um. I'm really painting a bad picture here. Huh. But I remember next to the one clean air room there was a job and I remember the job being open several times for bidding. It was asbestos packer. Uh, and this guy would take bags of asbestos, dry asbestos, and dump them in a big mixing machine and add water, and that was his job. And we used asbestos to pack around the electrodes in the furnaces. But, uh, pretty crazy that asbestos was so bad for you, but hey, it was just a thing that they did down there, you know.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you're, you changed into that?

**EARL SHAMP:** I didn't take asbestos packer.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh, okay.

1 **EARL SHAMP:** I, I did after, uh, a job did come up on bricklayers. So which was, it  
2 was two shifts. It wasn't steady daylight. There was two shifts, daylight and three to  
3 eleven. [Phone rings] Where were we?  
4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** Well you didn't take the asbestos job.  
6

7 **EARL SHAMP:** I didn't.  
8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** So we were going to talk about the, um...  
10

11 **EARL SHAMP:** The next job. The bricklayers.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** Bricklayers.  
14

15 **EARL SHAMP:** Okay. So a job did come up. The job was in bricklayers. Um.  
16 Daylight and three to eleven. And, and I got on bricklayers. It was, it was a pretty good  
17 job. Not only did you lay brick, but you had to go in and demolish, uh, furnaces. When  
18 they were shut down, you had to go in and jackhammer out the brick and stuff like that.  
19 That was a, that was a job that you had a bricklayer and a helper and maybe the  
20 bricklayer would go in and work 15 minutes in the furnace, jackhammering slag out and  
21 brick. And you would be his safetyman and he would come out and you would go in and  
22 do the same thing.  
23

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25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** What does that mean to be somebody's safetyman?  
27

28 **EARL SHAMP:** You're keeping an eye on them cause they're in a hole and, you know,  
29 anything can happen. Um. It could be, when they shut the furnaces down, they may let  
30 'em cool for a week and then they would send the bricklayers in, but it could still be red  
31 hot on the inside. So you could be overcome by CO gas or anything. So you always had,  
32 you always had somebody watching you while you were working, and again, you were  
33 only allowed in for like 15 minutes and then you had to come back out and you'd trade  
34 places. Um. That was the worst part of bricklayers. The best part was, it was, it was a  
35 pretty decent job for down there and it paid well.  
36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** What were you doing in the hole there?  
38

39 **EARL SHAMP:** Well, you'd go in the furnace or you'd go into a condenser, which the  
40 condenser is twice the size of that refrigerator, and you had to go inside of it.  
41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** You'd go inside these?  
43

44 **EARL SHAMP:** You'd go in through a hole about this big and these condensers got  
45 bigger as you went in. So, and that's what held the hot zinc. But when they'd drain that  
46 down for a rebuild, then you'd have to go in and jackhammer out all the old, um, slag and



1 then the brick would need to be repaired so you'd end up lining the inside of those with  
2 brick.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** So, okay. So these were brick and over time all the slag accumulates  
5 on them and you're stripping it down?  
6

7 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah, yeah. Well this, during operation, this is something you may  
8 have heard or not, during operation the slag would build up inside the condenser. Now,  
9 the bricks were pretty thick. Now, it's a big metal thing, but it's all lined with these real  
10 thick brick. And the hot, the molten zinc would lay in there and then it would rise and  
11 lower as they're taking it off or it's, it's condensing out of the furnace. But every time  
12 there would be a ring like a bathtub ring. A little bit of slag would build up on this brick.  
13 So the guys that ran the, um, utility gang, they would have to open the door up to the  
14 condenser. If too much slag built up they would shoot a shotgun blast into there to knock  
15 the slag off of it. Well after so many, so many shotgun blasts they'd shoot through the  
16 brick. So that's when eventually there would be so many things wrong with either the  
17 furnace or the condenser they would do a shutdown to do, to do a rebuild.  
18

19 0:29:12  
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21 **INTERVIEWER:** How often would they have to do the shutdown and rebuild on each  
22 furnace?  
23

24 **EARL SHAMP:** You know, it probably depended on how much feed they were putting  
25 through it because some of the furnaces they had, they had what they call high-grade  
26 furnaces, which was really good zinc ore and they were smaller and they got good stuff.  
27 The others were called Prime Western. These Prime Western furnaces they would put  
28 anything into them to get something out of them. So those, those furnaces I think burned  
29 hotter and they were larger. But I would think six months maybe, maybe eight months  
30 they would get out of, get out of a furnace before it was shut down and they would  
31 always go in rotation. So there were 17 furnaces total. At any given time, two of them  
32 were always offline. So...  
33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** So you always had a hole to climb into?  
35

36 **EARL SHAMP:** We always had a hole to climb into.  
37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** And how did you get the slag off the walls of the...  
39

40 **EARL SHAMP:** A jackhammer about 18 inches long and it had an air hose on it, and  
41 you just brrrr, jackhammered.  
42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** How could you see what you were doing?  
44

45 **EARL SHAMP:** Uh, a little light you took with you. Yeah. You, a little utility light.  
46 Yep.

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**INTERVIEWER:** And what was some of the other responsibilities as a bricklayer?

**EARL SHAMP:** Um. We, we'd have to work in zinc dust. Um. There, there were zinc towers and zinc dust that, uh, had, everything was brick-lined of course cause of the molten. So anything that had molten steel running through it the bricklayers were responsible for. The zinc dust towers, those would last a year or two years. Um. But they were tricky to rebuild. And then there was what they called the east secondary, where the, um, it was a byproduct that came off the process, ran through a trough down there and you would have to reline these brick troughs. That was all cold processing. There was nothing hot down there. But that's pretty much it.

0:31:03

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there ever bricklaying being done that wasn't on the equipment like building new buildings or other kinds of construction?

**EARL SHAMP:** Not for. No. Not for the bricklayers. The bricklayers were strictly, um, furnaces and condensers and equipment stuff. Any outside construction was going on they would bring in, uh, outside contractors to do that. Um. So...

**INTERVIEWER:** How did, how did you learn what you needed to do as a bricklayer?

**EARL SHAMP:** Well I was a bricklayer before I started down there and, uh, a real bricklayer, as I like to call it.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, but I mean this kind of bricklayer.

**EARL SHAMP:** Well I didn't, but it didn't take long to figure out you didn't really need to know a whole lot because they just slopped some clay down and the brick were key shaped cause the furnaces were all round, so um they, they were all ordered. You would know each floor cause the furnace would start out small and get larger in the middle and then get small again at the top. So when you started your shift, there was a job on bricklayers, ah, his job, his only job was to deliver the brick that were needed for that floor. And they were numbered in pallets and you would, you would know which, how many of these brick you would have to use and that would create the circle and it would get bigger and bigger and then it would start getting smaller and they ran a string line from the center of the fifth floor to the basement and that was the center of the furnace and then you used, you used a stick to go around and make sure that you, you were going out at the right distance. So it was pretty much idiot proof the, the way they had to do it. It wasn't hard.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is, is that if you were building one?

**EARL SHAMP:** One furnace. Yeah. Condensers were a little trickier. They had their own special brick. All the brick were, everything was a puzzle, you know. And every

1 brick fit in its place. Um. Sometimes on a condenser, say they, say they, just had a  
2 furnace rebuilt and a condenser rebuilt and it's only been running a month or two and all  
3 of a sudden they've already shot through the brick we would have to do what they call a  
4 hot, a hot operation. So what, what they would do with the metal still in the condenser,  
5 they would idle down the furnace and try to get the temperature down as low as they  
6 could and the millwrights would come in and what would happen on the back of this  
7 condenser it would start to glow cherry red because the brick are gone. So then they  
8 knew exactly where it needed brick. So they had the millwrights come in and they  
9 burned a hole in the metal and they removed that metal and then bricklayers would come  
10 in and we would have to lay brick backwards upside down over top of molten zinc to key  
11 them in there. It's, it was kind of crazy.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Wait. Are you suspended down?

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15 **EARL SHAMP:** Well we're standing on top of it now, but it's hot. It's very hot.

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19 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you standing on the molten zinc?

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21 **EARL SHAMP:** No, we're standing on the outside of the condensing housing. The  
22 molten zinc is inside of there, but once the millwright cuts the metal out of the top you  
23 can the, the molten zinc is just maybe two feet below you, but if you drop a brick it's  
24 going to splash. So it would take a couple bricklayers in order to, and get the brick all  
25 right so when you finally get 'em in place you let 'em go and they lock in because it's  
26 round, so it would lock into place.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you need mortar also?

29  
30 **EARL SHAMP:** We did. We mortared. We'd get 'em all ready and get 'em, get 'em hot  
31 and then we'd go for it all at one time. And then, as soon as we would do that then the  
32 millwrights would come back and weld a patch in place.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of, uh, injuries did you, occur during that?

35  
36 **EARL SHAMP:** You know I only got burnt once and that was on daylight cleanup  
37 under a conveyor belt and a hot cinder went down and got in my, uh, uh respirator strap  
38 and you, you know, you have gloves and then by the time you get to it it's already done  
39 the damage. So, but, uh, that was the only thing I got hurt on down there.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** What was it like doing this work in July and August?

42  
43 **EARL SHAMP:** It was, uh, it was absolutely terrible. You wore, you wore, um, you  
44 wore long johns almost year round. In the winter to stay warm and in the summer so that  
45 the heat didn't. So you'd wear long underwear, you'd wear your regular clothes, and then  
46 you'd wear your fireproofs overtop. So you'd have three layers of clothing and, uh, and

1 that was just cause of the heat of the furnaces, you know. And in the winter cause they  
2 just had big fans blowing cold air on everything. Yeah.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any heat control in these plants?

5  
6 0:35:20

7  
8 **EARL SHAMP:** Not. I worked primarily in the furnace plant and no, only in the clean  
9 air rooms there would be air conditioned or heated. But, uh, the, the furnace plant had,  
10 had a basement and a subbasement. The basement is where the cam-o-tractors would  
11 work taking the slag out of the furnaces. And then there was a subbasement below that  
12 where, um, the conveyor belts were that would move the slag out of the plant and, uh, but  
13 the whole basement and subbasement were pressurized. They had forced air in there,  
14 cause you had to go through an airlock to get down to it. And in, in the summer  
15 sometimes guys, the airlocks or the, uh, the air tunnels that kept the basement cause these  
16 buildings were huge, they kept them, uh, under pressure. The air tunnels were you could  
17 drive a car through. That's how big they were. So guys used to go in there and sleep  
18 during the summer because it was just cool air blowing, you know. I remember doing  
19 that after a rough night.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. I'm trying to visualize you being in a furnace hole to take care  
22 of the inside lining of the furnace. How did you get in there?

23  
24 **EARL SHAMP:** Well, we never went in a furnace unless it was shut down. But you  
25 first start, um, you could be looking at it, it would be a big brick wall and you just start  
26 jackhammering through the wall and that's where you'd go in. Now, at that point, when  
27 they shut the furnace down they, they didn't put anymore feed into it. The feed's shut off  
28 and the guy in the basement takes the cam-o-tractor and he's raking out all the, all the hot  
29 material and then like I said, they would let it sit for a few days cause everything's still  
30 really hot. But when you first blew into it you would, it would be hot, real hot coming  
31 out of that furnace.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** But how tall were these furnaces that you were going into?

34  
35 **EARL SHAMP:** Five stories.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** So how could you clean five stories worth of lining off of the inside  
38 of the furnace by coming in at the bottom level having punched a hole through?

39  
40 **EARL SHAMP:** Well you would. Well they had rings, every floor had a ring that  
41 would support that brick. Now that ring never changed. It stayed there. But you would  
42 start, say the top of the furnace didn't get a lot of heat and maybe they're not going to  
43 rebuild the very top of the furnace. That's where the pre-heated material would come in  
44 and to tell you the truth, the whole time I was there I don't remember rebuilding the very  
45 top of the furnace. It would be the second floor was the electrode floor and the fourth  
46 floor was an electrode floor. These big electrodes went in, uh, to heat the furnace. Those

1 were constantly almost always being rebuilt, but, uh, you would, anywhere you'd blow in,  
2 you might blow a hole in up here on the third floor and a guy on the second floor is doing  
3 the same thing, and he's taking the material out as you're knocking it in and you would  
4 take these little Georgia buggies full of brick and slag and you'd take 'em and dump them.  
5 And it was like one wheelbarrow at a time.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** What were you standing on if you went in on say the third-story level  
8 when inside the furnace?

9  
10 **EARL SHAMP:** Well we would demo everything we could. It would go down to the  
11 basement and we'd take that out and then they had, they had scaffolding that, uh, was  
12 numbered for each furnace and layered and the guy that would deliver the brick that  
13 knew which brick went on each floor, it was his job also to deliver the wood scaffolding.  
14 So he would bring it to that floor and then we'd start putting the wood, so we did the  
15 wood scaffolding part too.

16  
17 0:38:43

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** That's the part I was missing is what you were suspended on as you  
20 were inside a furnace.

21  
22 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. The furnace had to get it opened up to get it to cool off cause it  
23 was so hot, you know.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** What was like the lapsed time of doing a furnace repair?

26  
27 **EARL SHAMP:** A rebuild?

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** A rebuild.

30  
31 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. I would say a full rebuild would take six weeks. Yeah, it would  
32 take a while on a big furnace, on the big PW furnaces. The smaller ones didn't take that  
33 long, maybe four weeks.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** So, walk me through a day from the minute you arrive at the plant at  
36 the gate.

37  
38 **EARL SHAMP:** Uh-hmm. Punched in. Um. Go to your locker and get changed. Get  
39 your fireproofs on. Um. Then we would go to the bricklayers, the bricklayers had their  
40 own office.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was that?

43  
44 **EARL SHAMP:** Um, that was just inside the guardhouse, and it was actually probably  
45 one of the nicer parts of the plant. Um. Uh. It was, it was the brick shed. The  
46 bricklayers' office was in the middle of two huge brick sheds where they stored all the

1 brick. Cause these brick were all ordered cause each one's a special size, you know,  
2 they're all in order and you would get your orders and you would go in teams. It would  
3 be you and your helper and you would be told you are going to furnace so and so on the  
4 third floor and shift number one laid this many brick today cause they tried to get you to  
5 have competition. So, so you'd always try to one up the previous shift until we caught on  
6 to it. You know, they're killing us here. But, uh, then, then you'd go and, um, there was a  
7 lot of goofing around too. I, I have to say that. I mean snowball fights. We did do that.  
8 And, uh, and again it was almost like daylight cleanup. Well, if shift number one laid  
9 1,200 brick, we can put 1,200 brick in a half a shift and then we don't do nothing the rest  
10 of the day, you know. And that's kinda how it worked and, and as long as you got your  
11 quota, the bosses would leave you alone. They didn't really care.

12

13 0:40:43

14

15 **INTERVIEWER:** But what kind of breaks did you get throughout the day?

16

17 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. You, you'd get a morning, a morning break, well say if you were  
18 on daylight you'd get a morning break, a lunch time and an afternoon break.

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** How long was a break?

21

22 **EARL SHAMP:** Uh. They were supposed to be ten minutes, but how long were they  
23 really probably a half-hour. Yeah. Yeah. Lunch could be an hour. So as bad as you  
24 think the mill was, it provided a pretty good paycheck if you had the right job. It was  
25 dirty. It was nasty. But you know the whole Beaver Valley and, and Pittsburgh, that was  
26 the way of life. That's what you did. You know. So it wasn't that bad. [Laughs]

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever have, uh, hours cut back because the company had to  
29 hold back on wages?

30

31 **EARL SHAMP:** No. Um. I, well, I, we did get laid off for like six weeks one time.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** When was that?

34

35 **EARL SHAMP:** It had to be mid-1978, which I thought was fantastic cause it was, it  
36 was on mail claims. I didn't have to go the unemployment office for six weeks, and me  
37 and a buddy of mine got on our motorcycles and just didn't come back for six weeks.  
38 And then got called back right away, but then when they, they shut it in 1979 and that's  
39 when they laid everybody off and you had a choice of taking a severance or if you didn't  
40 take the severance you had a chance of being called back if they opened back up. Well, I  
41 took my severance pay and, and I moved to Florida, and I spent the next 15 years down  
42 there before I moved back here. But, uh...

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you explain a little bit more about that option of severance  
45 versus taking your chances?

46

1 **EARL SHAMP:** Well, the, the option was, uh, I think you got one week's pay for every,  
2 every year you were there. So, I'm like, I was only there three years. I, three, okay, give  
3 me three weeks' pay. If I hadn't taken the three weeks' pay, now saying St. Joe closed in  
4 late '79 and maybe reopened in '82.

5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh, '80.

7

8 **EARL SHAMP:** '80. Okay well they reopened. If you didn't take the severance you  
9 were the first to get called back. Okay. Um. I took my severance. They never called me.  
10 And that was okay with me.

11

12 0:43:00

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** But that was part of the deal if you took the severance.

15

16 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. If you take the severance, you're done. You know. So...

17

18 **INTERVIEWER:** How much, um, advanced notice were the employees given of the  
19 plant shutdown in December of '79?

20

21 **EARL SHAMP:** I think it was two weeks. Yeah. If I remember right.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there rumblings among you thinking that might happen?

24

25 **EARL SHAMP:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. I remember it.

26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you join the union?

28

29 **EARL SHAMP:** Yes. Yeah.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any conflict or...

32

33 **EARL SHAMP:** I don't, you know, I was, I was a kid, you know. I, you do what they  
34 tell you to do. You go with the flow. You know. Um. I remember, uh, it had gone on  
35 for weeks, you know, they're going to have a layoff. They're going to have a layoff. And  
36 then it finally came down they were going to shut down, and I remember, I remember the  
37 boss would, I don't even, I forget who my boss was at the time, Red something, his name  
38 was. But he said, you know, I'd like to talk to you and, and he took each one of us  
39 individually and said you know I'm glad you could work for us for this long, but here's  
40 your option you can either take a severance pay or not take a severance and have the  
41 chance of coming back if, if and when we reopen. So, that was, that was about it.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** Any regrets that you didn't?

44

45 **EARL SHAMP:** No. Not at all. [Laughs] No. Life is much better now. [Laughs]  
46 Yeah.

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you characterize the rapport between the supervisors and  
3 laborers at the plant?  
4

5 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. I, I think it was good. Um. I think every, you know, it wasn't  
6 like, it wasn't like a big separation. Everybody that was a boss had done your job before,  
7 you know, they had moved up in the plant. Um. And they knew how the whole thing  
8 worked and they knew how to get work out of you if they needed to. And, and, I think  
9 there was, there was kind of a status quo, we need this done today and tomorrow is  
10 another day. If you can get this done in an hour, the rest of the day is yours. And that's,  
11 and that's pretty much how it worked in a lot of the mills.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** But when you say the rest of the day was yours...  
14

15 **EARL SHAMP:** I mean you couldn't leave.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** You'd still be clocked in.  
18

19 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. You'd still have to stay. But, you know, get, get this done. I  
20 need this done, and then we'll move on. You know. So, it was. So it was kind of an  
21 understanding between bosses and, uh, employees.  
22

23 0:45:35  
24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about, um, the cafeteria?  
26

27 **EARL SHAMP:** I loved the cafeteria. Yeah. That was a great place. They had the best  
28 food.  
29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of your favorites?  
31

32 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. Probably my favorite was, um, roast pork sandwich. Uh. It  
33 probably came from the farm. Um. With mayonnaise and onions. It was always  
34 delicious. And then, uh, they had a hot roast beef sandwich that was really good. Um.  
35 But I think in '79 there, there was pretty much a skeleton of a, of a cafeteria. Most of  
36 your food came out of a vending machine. Um. You know. Dinty Moore beef stew and  
37 stuff like that. I know it had been severely curtailed. Maybe it was open for daylight  
38 only or like daylight till seven at night. But years ago it was open around the clock. You  
39 could go in at any time and eat.  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** So when you were a kid, there were all these activities going on at  
42 the, at the plant for families and...  
43

44 **EARL SHAMP:** Uh-hmm.  
45

46 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were actually working there in the late '70s?



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**EARL SHAMP:** None of that was taking place.

**INTERVIEWER:** Nothing? Was there anything you were participating in other than work?

**EARL SHAMP:** No, they had nothing.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of, um, holiday vacation time did you get?

**EARL SHAMP:** Uh. I think, I think the first year you got a week's and then the second year I think you had two weeks' vacation. And holidays, you know, I think there was 11 holidays. Um. I remember getting triple time one time. I worked in the basement as a cam-o-tractor operator. This was my stint between daylight clean-up, to cam-o-tractor operator, to bricklayers. But, um, they'd had a blowout in the furnace plant, which is like the worst thing that could happen. People die. Um. And the, these cam-o-tractors ran on electric trolleys, um...

**INTERVIEWER:** What is the role of the cam-o-tractors?

0:47:33

**EARL SHAMP:** The cam-o-tractors.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tell me about that a little bit more.

**EARL SHAMP:** Yeah, the cam-o-tractor takes, it has a big iron rod sticking out of it and a poker and it, it drags the slag out of the furnace. Uh. Imagine the furnace is a big round turntable and there's a gap between the bottom of furnace and the, the top of this table and it can vary from eight inches to 18 inches, and that, it's just glowing hot ore is what it is. Well the, the material has to keep moving through the furnace so it doesn't freeze up. So the cam-o-tractor operator's job is to drag this slag out, and he gets readings from the guy on the feeder floor, and the guy on the feeder floor is supposed to get a steady flow of material coming in and every hour you'd get a reading. Um. One foot, which means you better get some slag out of that furnace because the feeders it's, it's completely full. Down to seven feet, then you have to stop because it's not, there's not enough material in there. But the cam-o-tractor main purpose was the, stick the big iron bar in and you rake the slag out. The dangerous part of that is these furnaces get filled with hot gas. If you happen to hit a pocket of hot gas, that furnace could blow out and I mean several guys have died because of that. So it, back to my original story, I got triple time. They'd had a blowout and it had burned some of the trolley lines, so the furnaces, the other furnaces were still running so the cam-o-tractors have to still run. So they needed a safety guy just to hold the cable for the cam-o-tractor because the trolley wasn't working. So I remember, I remember like hour 23, 24, I'm like my head's bobbing because it was a holiday. I think it might have been. It was either Thanksgiving or Christmas, but it was my sixth day on a holiday and they couldn't get anybody else to

1 work, so I said well, I will. And they paid me triple time for it, which was like, oh, that  
2 was big.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** So a 23-hour shift?

5  
6 **EARL SHAMP:** A 23-hour shift. Yeah. Probably not allowed, but they did it. [Laughs]  
7 Um. So I couldn't wait. I kinda skipped over that cam-o-tractor job part cause I went  
8 from like \$4.13 an hour. I bid on this cam-o-tractor job and they give you like a quick  
9 two-week training. It paid really good money. It paid at the time like \$14 an hour, but I  
10 knew as soon as I took it, I said man, I don't want this job. It was, it was just the worst.  
11 And you were...

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Worse than cleaning out the furnace?

14  
15 **EARL SHAMP:** Oh, oh absolutely. And I mean you don't do anything physical labor.  
16 You're, you're on a machine and you're, you know, operating a machine, but the danger  
17 involved was, was the thing and you were responsible for three or four furnaces at the  
18 time and it doesn't sound like it's hard and it isn't. It's when you get a furnace that was,  
19 they would flare and, and you'd get big slag, hunks of slag that you couldn't get out of the  
20 table. And, you know, it's, it's kinda like trying to pick up, uh, I don't know, trying to  
21 pick something up with a toothpick. You can't do it. You couldn't push it out of the  
22 furnace. But the more of those you got, the more danger there was that the furnace is  
23 going to blow out because you need to get that slag out of there. But, uh, so I couldn't  
24 wait to get out of there. I was, that was like the most horrific job in the world.

25  
26 0:50:42

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that a round-the-clock shift?

29  
30 **EARL SHAMP:** That was. Yeah, yeah. Uh. I mean out of 17 furnaces, you would  
31 have your 15 running at a time so you would have four to five cam-o-tractor operators at  
32 any given time, uh, down there.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** How many bricklayers would be on a shift at a time?

35  
36 **EARL SHAMP:** I'm gonna say eight. Eight bricklayers, eight helpers on each shift.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** So 16?

39  
40 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. That sounds about right. It was so long ago. [Laughs]

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know anything about the tank farm?

43  
44 **EARL SHAMP:** The tank farm was a fun place to play when I was a kid. We used to  
45 call it the holler tubes. It had these big steel vents that came out and turned down and,  
46 uh, me and Jim Druschel, we would holler in them and they would echo and echo and

1 echo and echo cause it was just big empty tanks. But, uh, yeah the tank farm was off  
2 limits, but we played there.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was it located?

5  
6 **EARL SHAMP:** Uh. Raccoon Creek and Mowry Road, just not far from here. Um, we,  
7 we and I say we, the Township, uh, Horsehead abandoned it in the earlier bankruptcy. It  
8 would have been the Horsehead, one of the Horseheads. There're two Horseheads,  
9 Horsehead Corp and Horsehead something else.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Industries.

12  
13 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. Yeah. They abandoned it in a, in a bankruptcy. Um. About a  
14 year after that the Army Corp of Engineers calls the Township and says we would like to  
15 do a cleanup, but we need permission from the property owner and the property owner is  
16 the bankruptcy judge, and he won't talk to us. So, uh, there were six 1.7-million gallon  
17 tanks on this site. All buried. And, uh, I was at the time a supervisor so I talked to a  
18 solicitor and said can we take it by eminent domain? And he said yeah, I think we can.  
19 So we got the property, the Township did for a dollar, and once we did that then we could  
20 get, uh, the Army Corp to start a cleanup on this site, which they spent two years doing.  
21 And they removed five of the six tanks. The sixth tank was used by Horsehead or  
22 probably St. Joe. It would have been 1972 during the oil crisis. They used one of the  
23 tanks, um, and if it was previously used, the Army Corp was not responsible for it. Cause  
24 it was a Department of Defense site. So they were responsible for the cleanup as long as  
25 nobody used 'em, but St. Joe used the one so we still have the one tank in the ground  
26 down there.

27  
28 0:53:13

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** So who owns it now?

31  
32 **EARL SHAMP:** Potter Township. We're currently looking into making it an  
33 amphitheater and activate it. Um. Shell's shown great interest in it. Um. It's been done  
34 in New Zealand. These big underground storage tanks, it is about seven feet to the top of  
35 it below grade. It has nine inches of concrete on it and they're 30 feet deep after that. So  
36 total, they're about 40 feet below ground, and they're a 100 feet in diameter. So, they're  
37 massive tanks. And, uh, in New Zealand they took on and unexcavated it, cut it in half  
38 and made an amphitheater out of it, which is kinda cool. And, uh, the way this one sits  
39 on the site it would be, it would work really nice for, you know, for a band or whoever  
40 would be down there and the grade would come up from it. So we're looking into that  
41 right now.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** So did St. Joe fill it with oil?

44  
45 **EARL SHAMP:** They used, uh, yeah. They used it for oil in the '72, '73 oil crisis  
46 because they used fuel oil at the plant to fire their furnaces. Um. So they would truck it

1 in and truck it out. It is what they did. Now, they did, they did close in place according  
2 to DEP specs. They call it an Act Two cleanup, so it's closed in place. We had the tank  
3 tested. It has about four feet of water in it right now. But it has no, uh, petroleum  
4 products in it at all. So it's basically clean. It's just sitting there with water in it. It's, uh,  
5 we inherited it. But we thought, we thought the risk of inheriting that and getting five of  
6 them removed was worth taking the property over. So that's why we did it.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** How many acres is the...

9  
10 **EARL SHAMP:** Sixty-two acres. Currently being developed into a park. We just put a  
11 new entrance in this year, which Shell, um, gave us a grant for. And, uh, we just  
12 recently, um, we had a bunch of architects down there cause we're, there's two blending  
13 plants on the site. Big steel buildings that were disguised to look like barns from the air  
14 during World War II. So, uh, currently looking to have one, one rehabbed so we, and  
15 actually just last night at our meeting we had opened up I think like seven bids for the,  
16 uh, design work and stuff. So it's moving along. Yeah.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever hear any stories about women working at the plant  
19 during World War II?

20  
21 0:55:40

22  
23 **EARL SHAMP:** Yes. Um. Actually one of my fellow supervisors Al Cwynar, his  
24 grandmother worked there.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you happen to know her name?

27  
28 **EARL SHAMP:** It wasn't Cwynar. What was it? Uh. Oh. I'll think of it. She was a  
29 typical Rosie the Riveter. She was, uh, [Coughs]. Excuse me. She was a welder, and she  
30 welded pipe bombs. That was her job. Um. I, I told you earlier about these furnaces.  
31 The condensers would get slag and the furnaces would also get slag built up. Now the  
32 brick were like 17, 18 inches thick. So they would know that slag would build up  
33 because, uh, electrodes would, um, be getting overheated and stuff. So they knew that  
34 side of the furnace would get slag. So the utility gang would come in and they'd drill a  
35 big hole about that big into the side of the furnace, and then they would insert a pipe  
36 bomb and then that pipe bomb, once it was in there for so long, once it got hot enough, it  
37 would explode. And it would blow the slag off of the walls.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** What was inside the pipe bomb?

40  
41 **EARL SHAMP:** Water, which was the tricky part of her job. She had to be a quick  
42 enough welder to not evaporate the water that was in that bomb because if too much  
43 water evaporated it wouldn't explode. And she was the best at it of anyone that, they  
44 always said that she was the best. So imagine you have to weld a cap on a pipe and then  
45 you fill it with water, put another cap on it, and you got to weld it before any water

1 evaporates and you don't blow yourself up in the process. And she was the best at it.  
2 Um. Geez I can't remember her name. It'll come to me.  
3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Was this just during the war or was it a job she continued to have?  
5  
6 **EARL SHAMP:** She did it until retirement.  
7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Really?  
9  
10 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Was she doing it before the war?  
13  
14 **EARL SHAMP:** I don't think so. No. I think she was hired because of the war. Yeah.  
15 Her last name was Short. What was her first name?  
16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Marie?  
18  
19 **EARL SHAMP:** Yes.  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** There's a, a photograph of her in the 1964 company history.  
22  
23 **EARL SHAMP:** Is there?  
24  
25 0:57:42  
26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. It's a photo called Women with Us from the War Years.  
28  
29 **EARL SHAMP:** Yep.  
30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** And I have a list of the names of the women, and Marie L. Short is on  
32 that list.  
33  
34 **EARL SHAMP:** Yep. That's her. Yeah. Pretty cool.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Uh. I saw a photo album from the '40s of all the employees.  
37  
38 **EARL SHAMP:** Did you...  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** And there were lots of Rosie the Riveter...  
41  
42 **EARL SHAMP:** Oh. I'll bet.  
43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Looking photographs.  
45

1 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. And she lived here in the Township. So, yeah, that's pretty  
2 cool.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What else about the women who worked there?

5  
6 **EARL SHAMP:** You know, she's the only one I really remember. Now I worked with a  
7 couple women on daylight cleanup when I first got hired there. I don't remember their  
8 names, but I remember one got burnt in the face, like in the neck, like the same place I  
9 did and she got money for it because she was a woman. It kinda made me mad. So if a  
10 woman got burnt anywhere on her face or on her arms, she could get money for it, but if  
11 a guy did, too bad. You got burned. You know, but I understand, you know, cause I'm  
12 rough. Other than that, I don't remember a lot of women there when I worked there.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if they made any effort to recruit women in the late  
15 '70s?

16  
17 **EARL SHAMP:** I would have no idea of knowing. I doubt it. [Laughs] It was a pretty  
18 rough place to work.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Uh. Looking through company publications back in the 1960s  
21 it seems that there were very few, um, if any African-Americans, um, on the St. Joe  
22 workforce, in looking through the magazines.

23  
24 **EARL SHAMP:** Uh-hmm. Yeah.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you characterize the racial mix during your years there  
27 and also give a perspective of having been on the grounds as a child.

28  
29 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. Um. As a child, I don't remember. Uh. When I worked there,  
30 um, I, I would, there weren't a lot. There were some and we had an influx of Vietnamese,  
31 who came during the end of the Vietnam War. Um. So we had I bet it was probably at  
32 least a dozen of them that worked there. Um.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** In any particular jobs?

35  
36 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. Um, I saw daylight cleanup, which was a huge crew. I mean  
37 they, you know, they worked daylight and that's all they did was cleanup. But remember  
38 they didn't speak a lot of English. But they were hired and they were good workers. You  
39 know. So, I, I do remember that. And there, there was several African-Americans, but I  
40 don't remember what jobs they did.

41  
42 1:00:17

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there, um, efforts to hire veterans or give veterans priority  
45 hiring?

46

1 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. I, I would have no idea. I know that, that there was a couple  
2 guys that worked with me that then went to the service and then came, were promised  
3 their jobs when they came back. Then of course I didn't, you know, the plant shut down.  
4 So, I have no idea of knowing.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm just wondering if you had Vietnamese refugees I presume...

7  
8 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Working at the plant. If Vietnam vets were also?

11  
12 **EARL SHAMP:** I, I don't know.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Offered jobs. Uh. In addition to providing employment, how did St.  
15 Joe's contribute to the larger Beaver Valley Community?

16  
17 **EARL SHAMP:** Well they certainly contributed a lot to Potter Township and, and what  
18 they did for the county I really don't know other than pay taxes. They could've done  
19 something. But I was never aware of that. In Potter, they, they, you know, they  
20 contributed to the Borough Building. They built that school. Um. And even in the later  
21 years, um, we had a road down here that was sliding, um, the road goes through their  
22 property and, uh, you know, we asked 'em can we have some land so we can move the  
23 road over. It was never an issue. Always a yes. Whatever you need. You take it,  
24 subdivide it, whatever you have to do. The fire department asked them for the land to  
25 build their fire department and they gave them five acres. So that was all, uh, St. Joe's  
26 property. St. Joe owned a large portion of Potter Township, which now Shell does. So,  
27 you know...

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the, the best part about working at the zinc plant?

30  
31 **EARL SHAMP:** Three to 11 bricklayers, on three to 11. Single. Go out at night. Drink  
32 half the night. You know, you didn't have to get up in the morning. That was the best  
33 part. Um. The paycheck. You know, it was good. Health benefits.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the health benefits?

36  
37 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. Nothing like today. I mean it was full benefits. It was, you  
38 know, had dental, eye, health, um, low deductibles on any, everything. But, uh, which  
39 could be part of their surmise. I don't know. [Laughs] But then when, when you're a kid  
40 you don't need any of that. You don't need dental. You don't need health. Cause  
41 you're, you know, indestructible. So...

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Well there's the potential for a lot of accidents while you're working.

44  
45 **EARL SHAMP:** There is. Yeah. Yeah. So...

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

2

3 **EARL SHAMP:** I, I don't know that it could've been any better, but I don't think it  
4 could've been badder or any worse. Um, I, I think you, you have a certain, um, I don't  
5 want to say expectations, but you have a certain knowledge going into a mill what you're,  
6 what your role and your position is and you know if you understand that, then if your  
7 employer's providing you with a paycheck and he expects you to do this, I mean, as in  
8 anything I think, um, you know, it's, it's fair. I'll come here and work for you and you'll  
9 give me a fair day's wage and we're all good. And that's kinda how, I think that's kinda  
10 how a lot of the, as we call mill wonkies had to look at it. You know.

11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

13

14 1:04:02

15

16 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. It wasn't sad. It was, it was like, uh, get all your buddies  
17 together. Hey we're going to the Midway to get a drink. You know and that's pretty  
18 much what it was. Cause the Midway was a little bar, um, right next to the plant.

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Where?

21

22 **EARL SHAMP:** Um. It's where the West Hall Bridge is now, um, which is the big  
23 bridge that, uh, you see but you don't cross when you're going out on 18. Um. It was a  
24 little hole in the wall for many years and then... It was called the Midway because it was  
25 midway between St. Joe Lead and Koppers. Uh. At one time it was a gas station turned  
26 into then a little restaurant turned into a bar. It was one of three bars that Potter  
27 Township had at one time. Even back during the day when liquor license went by  
28 population. Uh. Today we have approximately 500 residents so we wouldn't even  
29 qualify for probably one liquor license, but back in the day when, uh, Koppers and St. Joe  
30 were here, and Koppers had a, uh, what they call Kubota village, which was onsite, uh,  
31 housing. So we had a huge population cause they counted the inmates at the County  
32 Home. So we had a huge population of probably 4,000 people, which allowed us to have  
33 three liquor license. Now they're all gone. So...

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Maybe with Shell you'll get some back.

36

37 **EARL SHAMP:** Maybe.

38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** With the people coming...

40

41 **EARL SHAMP:** Oh, who knows. We don't have any room.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** When you say Koppers, how do you spell that?

44

45 **EARL SHAMP:** K-O-P-P-E-R-S.

46



1 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

2

3 **EARL SHAMP:** It's, uh, and actually the company is still in existence today, Koppers.  
4 Um. They're based in Pittsburgh.

5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

7

8 **EARL SHAMP:** I love it. I do. Uh. You know, we looked at this as, uh, as supervisors  
9 and, and you know Horsehead's leaving. We, we've known that for quite some time.

10 Um. We get a, we get a call one day from a real estate guy. I don't know who he is, very  
11 broken English, very Scottish accent and, uh, he wants to know if there's any property  
12 available in Potter Township for an industrial development, and we say, uh, you know.  
13 He's looking at little parcels that are spaced out around the river down there. No, but you  
14 know what, when, but Horsehead's going to be going out. We know they're moving. So  
15 maybe you want to talk to Horsehead. That's how the whole ball got started rolling. The  
16 realtor for sale contacted us. We put him in touch with Horsehead and it was such a great  
17 transition because we thought maybe we were going to get stuck with a brown field and a  
18 huge brown field at that and according to the EPA, one of the worst brown fields. And it  
19 turns out it, it moved right from Horsehead leaving and almost, almost like Shell hurry up  
20 and get outta here so we can get this cleaned up. Um. So I think it's, it's fantastic. Um. I  
21 had a meeting with DEP just Tuesday evening and, uh, and, and a big discussion on how  
22 much has been remediated not just in solid waste, but in, in, you know, liquid runoff  
23 that's been treated since Shell came here. So, and I think they're environmentally  
24 conscious company. And they're big boys. I mean. I believe that in the future they will  
25 do a lot for the entire region, not just for, for Potter Township. So I think its good times,  
26 although it makes me tired cause we meet a lot. [Laughs]

27

28 1:07:39

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Did Horsehead have to do any remediation as part of the terms of  
31 selling?

32

33 **EARL SHAMP:** No. Shell did it all. Um. Eh. Let's put it this way, uh, maybe  
34 Horsehead did all the demolition, um, but I believe in the contract that was part of, um, I,  
35 I only know that because I know the demolition permits were issued to Horsehead. So  
36 that is, is in itself a kind of a remediation, but I'm sure it was funded or contractually  
37 taken out of by Shell. So, um, it's hard to believe it's been five years now since they first  
38 started talking to us. It's hard to believe it's going to take five more to have it running,  
39 but... [Laughs] It is a big place.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you foresee the impact on the Valley here?

42

43 **EARL SHAMP:** Um.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Or as a township supervisor what do you have to start planning for?

46

1 **EARL SHAMP:** Well, that's a good question. You know, we, we had a, we had an  
2 impact study done early on, like probably after the first year that we spoke to Shell, and  
3 actually my wife and I, um, sat, sat here for... Because of the governor, Governor  
4 Corbett said, uh, you know, they're really it was between Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West  
5 Virginia, and everybody's trying to court Shell to get them to come to their region. So,  
6 uh, Governor Corbett proposes a tax abatement, uh, school, county and local for 22 years,  
7 and we're like, me and my wife sat here and we in, in touch with the tax collector and the  
8 township secretary, you know, and we need these numbers and we, we crunched numbers  
9 for six weeks. And we said, you know what we have a net loss of a \$100,000. We can't  
10 do it. Our budget at the time was \$500,000 a year. If we lose \$100,000 of that, that's a  
11 lot of money. So I put a presentation together. I showed it to the county. Shell probably  
12 won't like hearing this. I showed it to the county and to the school district, and to, of  
13 course to our supervisors and I, I showed the county and the school district how much  
14 money they're going to lose if this takes place. So in, in the midst of all that, then Shell  
15 comes up and they propose a pilot agreement, payment in lieu of taxes of a 110 percent of  
16 what Horsehead is paying. So that's great. Okay. We got our money back. We have no  
17 growth, um, over the next 22 years, but we got our money back plus 10 percent. But  
18 Governor Corbett, the legislation had to be signed by October first of whatever year it  
19 was, which it was now like September 29th, and the governor calls and he says you guys  
20 haven't signed the legislation. No, we're not going to sign it governor cause we lose too  
21 much money. Meanwhile, the school district and the county signed it. So it's a go except  
22 not for us. He goes, "Well what do you need?" And I said, "We need \$100,000 a year  
23 for the next 22 years." And he didn't like it, but he says, "You have my word on it." And  
24 Rebecca Matsco, she's our chairwoman, she goes, "Well quite frankly Governor, it's an  
25 election year and, uh, we're going to have to have that in writing." And by the next day,  
26 we had it in writing. The terms of the agreement were we would receive \$2.2 million...

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** From the state?

29

30 **EARL SHAMP:** From the state, not from Shell, to cover our losses due to the incoming  
31 plant. Now, remember we have 500 in residency, now about 250 homes in the whole  
32 township. Most of our money is generated through industrial development. So, that's a  
33 big hit for us. We can't really sustain that. So, the terms of the agreement were if Shell  
34 commits and if Horsehead sells them the property and they make a commitment you'll get  
35 it in one lump sum. Well, just about three weeks ago we got the check for \$2.2 million in  
36 one lump sum. So, that made us whole again. Um. I don't know where I was going with  
37 that, but it's interesting that, uh, we were able to hold out and get what we had to have.  
38 So, in the big picture, Shell's great. It wasn't because of Shell we got that, but it kinda  
39 was. So...

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** What will you use that \$2.2 million for?

42

43 **EARL SHAMP:** It's, it's earmarked for police and fire and safety, and that's all we can  
44 use it for. So it's in its own account. Um. But we can, we subcontract our police over to  
45 Center Township. Um, and currently our, our, our contract with Center Township is  
46 about a \$102,000 a year. So that \$2.2 million doesn't quite cover that for the next 22

1 years. But our hopes were that we'd have ancillary businesses pop up around the cracker  
2 plant. So we had the whole Route 18 corridor, which was PGT Trucking, VersiTech, um,  
3 several empty parcels and then we would, uh, we would see some ancillary businesses  
4 coming in there and we had, we had rezoned it for, you know, office buildings, where we  
5 can get high densities of people and collect LST and EIT tax. So we had it all planned  
6 out, and then Shell comes in and they buy up all those properties. So Shell comes, and  
7 they only buy, they don't only buy the Horsehead property. They buy 35 additional  
8 properties of which four or five of them are businesses. So we lose, we lose all that  
9 money now. So we're actually in negotiation with Shell right now over that because, eh,  
10 there's, there's a significant loss there to us. But, uh, I think it will all work out in the end.  
11 We all seem to get along. So... [Laughs]

12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you think Shell's moving here and employing 6,000 people is  
14 going to mean new schools for you or infrastructure?

15

16 **EARL SHAMP:** I don't think. I think, uh, I think that the 6,000 construction workers  
17 will be, um, out of every local between the New York state line and probably the Virginia  
18 line and, and, you know there's going to be a big 500-mile radius of union workers that'll  
19 probably come here. We'll have a, we'll have a, a bust of, you know, a couple of years.  
20 Um. Do we call them transient workers? Mmm. Yeah. Are they going to contribute a  
21 lot? They're probably going to make their paycheck and send it home. That's kinda how  
22 we look, are looking at it, and with that being said, you know, every deal we can make as  
23 a township is, is good for us because we, actually on the tank farm, we've actually talked  
24 about putting in, um, RV camping for the transient workers, who needs spots for their, for  
25 their campers. But I don't know if that's going to work or not, but you know we, we have  
26 time to, to act on it.

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** Well when, when this is completed and the cracker plant is  
29 operational, how many people will it employ?

30

31 **EARL SHAMP:** 600.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** 600?

34

35 **EARL SHAMP:** Yeah. Now, take that in perspective when Horsehead closed, I believe  
36 they had 400, but at peak, St. Joe employed 1,500 people. You know, it was huge  
37 numbers. Um. Although I think the Shell jobs will be much higher paying. So, you  
38 know, that helps the emergency services tax stuff cause that's based on one percent of  
39 your pay. So, so the numbers will be higher that way. We do a lot of number crunching.  
40 [Laughs]

41

42 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, that's the end of my prepared questions. Is there anything you'd  
43 like to add that we didn't talk about?

44

45 **EARL SHAMP:** Man, I think I covered it all. You got me to talk about everything.  
46 (END)

**Ted Simmons**  
**Interview @ October 14, 2016**

## **TED SIMMONS**

### **Summary**

The interview with Ted Simmons took place on October 14, 2016, in the living room of his home in Monaca, Pennsylvania. Ted started to work at St. Joe in 1963, left in 1979 prior to the shutdown, and returned to the plant in 1985, where he remained until retiring for medical reasons in 1996. Ted worked in many locations throughout the plant: furnace basement, refinery, storeroom, transportation department, zinc dust department, and daylight utility. At the end of the interview, Ted brought out his St. Joe jacket and a ZCA coffee cup.

Ted talks about his reasons for seeking employment at St. Joe, the skills he brought to the job, how the six-day workweek was structured with three shifts running around the clock, and the bidding process to move from job to job at the plant. Ted mentions working in the yard and hand digging rocks called “St. Joe potatoes.” He explains in detail the operations on the condenser floor of the furnace—pouring molten metal into molds and skimming—and the process for making different grades of zinc. Ted describes the extreme heat conditions and health hazards that went along with working at the plant and the measures the company took to provide a safe workplace, handle emergencies, and offer continued employment to injured workers.

Ted explains his qualifications for a position in the storeroom, the role of the storeroom in the running of the plant, staffing, and the card system for tracking inventory before computers were introduced. He describes the role of the transportation department for the repair of trucks, trains, backhoes, cranes, and other equipment. Ted also talks about the production of zinc dust, two fatalities that occurred in that department, as well as other tragic losses of life at the plant.

Unionization comes up in Ted’s interview: the process of voting in the union, conflicting views on unionization, and the positive and negative effects of having the union at the plant. He reminisces about the cafeteria, the food, and the ladies that worked there, as well as the golf league, the trap range and team, and the pistol range in the County Home basement. A sense of friendship, family, and camaraderie among St. Joe employees comes through clearly in Ted’s interview.

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**TED SIMMONS**  
**INTERVIEW - 10/14/2016**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
TED SIMMONS

**INTERVIEWER:** This is an interview with Ted Simmons. October 14, 2016. Ted, could you please state your full name, date of birth, and your full address?

**TED SIMMONS:** Ted Simmons. [REDACTED]. My address is [REDACTED], Monaca, PA zip 15061.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?

**TED SIMMONS:** I am retired.

**INTERVIEWER:** And since when, when did you retire?

**TED SIMMONS:** Well, uh, mine was, uh, more of a medical retirement. I retired in 1996. So I have been retired for quite a while. I had a, uh, I had an issue with my heart and I had a quadruple bypass and the position I was working at down at St. Joe the extent, the temperatures were in the 120 and 140-degree range. So I couldn't return back to my regular job. So I went on, uh, Social Security.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were there, was there any kind of medical benefits or disability that St. Joe paid you?

**TED SIMMONS:** No, this is...

**INTERVIEWER:** You couldn't work there because of the...

**TED SIMMONS:** This strict... Uh. It was strictly Social Security Disability. I had no, uh, Worker's Comp or anything like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Are you from the Beaver County area?

**TED SIMMONS:** Uh. Not originally. I'm from, uh, Burgettstown, which is in Washington County, and we moved here in 1967 when I, uh, got a job down at St. Joe. I had started, I had started in St. Joe at, uh, on November 11, 1963, and we didn't find a house until '67. So I moved down so I could be closer to my employment.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

0:02:27

1 **TED SIMMONS:** And when I, when I got hired prior to, prior to working at St. Joe, I  
2 worked in, uh, building trades and, uh, that was seasonal, seasonal and I had gotten  
3 married. So I decided I needed something more on a steady basis.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** What skills had you developed working in the building trades?  
6

7 **TED SIMMONS:** I worked more in the bricklaying part of it. So, uh, huh, it's funny  
8 when I, uh, interviewed with the personnel manager, uh, Joe Nard was his name, I was  
9 making in the building trades, I was making \$3.27½ cents an hour and Mr. Nard says,  
10 "Well," he says, "we can't pay you that kind of money." So I started at \$2.05 an hour, and  
11 it was six days a week. That was, that a norm, normal schedule down at St. Joe, and you  
12 had short changes, which I'll give you an example. If I had been working four, if I had  
13 been working four to twelve on a Saturday I would had to come out at daylight on  
14 Sunday. So there was, you know, they called it a short change. So that's how they  
15 operated down there at St. Joe. The, the long part, the long part of the, uh, their schedule  
16 was if you worked daylight, then you'd come, uh, the following day you'd come in at  
17 midnight. So, it was like a day off.  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** All right. So how many hours then would you have off between the  
20 two shifts?  
21

22 **TED SIMMONS:** About eight hours. But if you worked, yeah, if you worked four to  
23 twelve you came out at eight. So what would you have?  
24

25 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
26

27 **TED SIMMONS:** Eight hours.  
28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** And then how long would you be on the dayshift?  
30

31 **TED SIMMONS:** Well you'd work, uh, six days. It'd be six days and, uh, then, uh, after  
32 you'd go to afternoon. Same. The six-day whatever shift you were working, daylight,  
33 afternoon, or midnight.  
34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** So was your, the seventh day, your day off, did that float from one  
36 shift to the next as to what do you got off?  
37

38 **TED SIMMONS:** Yeah. You would be going, you would be going from daylight to,  
39 uh, midnight. So you would work, like I would work, uh, Saturday, and I would go in  
40 Sunday midnight. So I'd finish up like at four o'clock on Saturday and I'd have that  
41 evening off. Then I'd have all day off on Sunday until about ten o'clock when I'd have to  
42 get ready to go to work.  
43

44 0:05:27  
45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** And was that a consistent schedule each week, that Sunday was the  
2 day you were off?  
3

4 **TED SIMMONS:** Uh. Yeah and no. Not, not really. You know, they alternated, uh,  
5 you'd get that, you might get that like you'd finish up on a Wednesday on daylight and  
6 then, uh, you'd go Thursday midnight. It all depended, you know, there were like, uh,  
7 four shifts. So everything was covered. You know. It just wasn't, uh, they had to cover,  
8 you know, the 24-hour schedule because, uh, that was, that was just the way it was for the  
9 longest time. Uh. I had worked, uh, when you first came, when you first came into the  
10 plant they usually sent you into the basement of the furnace plant. That's where the  
11 dirtiest and hottest part of the plant was at that time. And you'd work there and you had  
12 to bid on jobs. So I bid after, I don't know how long, I bid on a job in the refinery and,  
13 uh, I worked there and then, uh, I bid on a job in the storeroom because I knew how to  
14 type. So I, I got the storeroom job, which is steady daylight and then it was like, uh, two  
15 days off. You know. So that was nice. Then after the storeroom I went, uh, I went into  
16 the transportation department where I would, uh, order parts for all the heavy equipment  
17 throughout the plant, all the trucks, all the different backhoes and, uh, cranes and things  
18 like that. So I had that job for, oh, up until 1979 when I was offered a job from, uh, an  
19 International Harvester dealer, which I took. And I left St. Joe before they shut down.  
20 They had shut down for a while. Uh. So I, I, uh, I missed out on that part of it, on the  
21 shutdown part. So I went with, I went with this company as a product, uh, a product  
22 support manager and I would, uh, I would go to the various, uh, like, uh, coal, coal strip  
23 mining sites, you know, to, uh, offer service and parts and things like that. I had, uh, and  
24 I would go to the different mills also, you know, because of, uh, they had, uh, the  
25 company I'd, uh, gone to work for had, uh, a line of equipment and that would  
26 encompass, uh, cranes, backhoes and things like that that they might use in the mill. So I  
27 had that job for four years and then everything went south when the coal industry had, uh,  
28 gotten to the point where it wasn't profitable for the strippers to be doing coal. I went  
29 back to St. Joe in 1985. And I worked, uh, I went, uh, I went into daylight utility. And,  
30 uh, I worked there until, uh, October of '96 when I had this issue while I was doing my  
31 job. And I had gone through a quadruple bypass. So like I stated earlier, I couldn't go  
32 back to the same job. But anyway, uh, I told, I told you I started at \$2.05 an hour? In  
33 1996, I was making \$13 an hour.  
34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** What education and other work experience or training did you have  
36 before you started working at St. Joe?  
37

38 **TED SIMMONS:** When I was 17, I enlisted in the United States Air Force. I had four  
39 years there. Uh. Overseas was in Narsarssuak, Greenland, and Goose Bay, Labrador.  
40 All cold places. Finally they sent me to California and when I got back I went into the  
41 building trades. Then later on I went into computer. I went into computer training in  
42 Pittsburgh. And like I said, I was working building trades because I was making more  
43 money. Then I went to St. Joe because, uh, I had gotten married and my wife was  
44 pregnant and, uh, I was off for a period of time because of, uh, you know, there was no...  
45 Uh, we built, uh, high schools and hospital buildings and things like that and there was a,  
46 uh, certain times weren't, during the summer that, there was no work and my wife was



1 working and she was pregnant. So I went golfing and at this particular golf course I got a  
2 hole in one. So I, I golfed, they gave me free golf for the rest of the year. So I  
3 periodically heard this, "I was working and pregnant and you were out golfing all  
4 summer." You know. That's what my wife, that was my wife's rundown on that. But  
5 anyway, I went to St. Joe and St. Joe provided a living for us. Uh. We had three other  
6 children besides the, our oldest daughter. We have three, three girls and a boy and, uh,  
7 St. Joe provided, uh, provided a living. You know. We got by. I mean we weren't rich  
8 or anything like that, but, uh, they took care of us. They, they, uh, they had Christmas  
9 parties for the kids every year. They'd take you to Idora Park, which was an amusement  
10 park outside of Youngstown, which is no longer there. But, uh, Christmas parties, a lot  
11 of things. A lot, a lot of these things and my wife always remembers and I do too. And,  
12 uh, they had a gymnasium and another thing too. They had a bowling alley and my wife  
13 and I, we bowled in the couples' league down, uh, down in the mill. Right under the, uh,  
14 lower part of the gymnasium, gymnasium was the bowling alleys and we bowled with  
15 people that worked, you know, the husbands and wives that worked down at the mill. So  
16 that was nice.

17  
18 0:12:51

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** How many lanes in that bowling alley?

21  
22 **TED SIMMONS:** I think there was only two. Just two. And there was no pinsetters.  
23 There was a boy, a boy who would set the pins for you.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** So you, so you started at St. Joe in 1963 and ultimately, um, retired  
26 in 1996. When you started in '63, how did you find out about a job at St. Joe and how did  
27 you go about applying for it?

28  
29 **TED SIMMONS:** Uh. I don't know. Uh. I probably drove... I, I think to the best of  
30 my knowledge or memory I drove down this way, you know, looking cause there was  
31 nothing, you know, back... We, we lived in Washington, Burgettstown in Washington  
32 County and, uh, there was no employment available down there. So I drove down this  
33 way and I probably put, just stopped and put an application in at St. Joe. And, uh, I don't  
34 think it was too awful long before they called me. And I went into the personnel office  
35 and just, you know, had an application. I filled it out and left it there. And then in a short  
36 period of time they called me and I, I went down and, uh, talked to the personnel  
37 manager.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** At that time, was this referred to as Josephtown?

40  
41 **TED SIMMONS:** Uh. When I was hired down there, it was St. Joe Lead and during the  
42 tenure of my employment at one point it was St. Joe Minerals, St. Joe Resources, uh, and  
43 then of course ZCA. I don't think there was anything I missed. There was St. Joe, St.  
44 Joe Minerals, St. Joe Resources, St. Joe Lead, and then ZCA. Uh. Fortunately, during, I  
45 don't know what, I think it was St. Joe Resources, Fluor Corporation bought St. Joe. So I  
46 was able to have, uh, like 20 years under Fluor and I got a pension, which, you know,

1 plus the, plus the, uh, 401 deal. So when I left St. Joe, you know, it was, uh, I just rolled  
2 my, my stuff, you know, all my investments over into Vanguard, where they sit today  
3 going up and down. So, but anyway, like I said, St. Joe was good to us.

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6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

8  
9 **TED SIMMONS:** I'll not say anything derogatory about St. Joe, but there was big  
10 change when the union came, and I'm not... I wasn't against the union or anything like  
11 that, but, uh, all the things that, that were pertinent to my family kind of disappeared. Uh.  
12 You know, the Idora Park, the Christmas parties and things, they all left. The gym, the,  
13 the whole works, which was sad. And, uh, we had the best cafeteria in the world.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Talk a little bit more about that.

16  
17 **TED SIMMONS:** We had ham and egg sandwiches that you could die for in the  
18 morning, and they had ladies working in there and, uh, you'd go over for lunch. You  
19 order a sandwich and you could make three sandwiches out of it because St. Joe had their  
20 own farm. And they, they raised, uh, oh, the raised a lot of hogs and, uh, they would get  
21 the meat there and then they, they would get beef, I guess buy beef. But, I mean, the,  
22 huh, the amount of meat that those ladies would give you on a sandwich was really  
23 something, but, uh, when the union came in it wasn't too awful long before they started  
24 weighing, weighing the meat, you know. So, things changed.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember any of those ladies in particular from the  
27 cafeteria?

28  
29 **TED SIMMONS:** Yes, I do. I remember Bertie. Oh, I remember them, but I, I, forget  
30 their names. But I remember Bertie because she was so feisty. She was just a little thing  
31 and she just raised all kind of, you know. You could have fun with her kiddin' her and  
32 stuff. She was really, really a nice lady. Oh, they all were. All the girls. All the girls. I  
33 mean, ladies. They, they were all nice. They're all nice ladies.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there mingling between say management and, uh, laborers  
36 within the cafeteria setting?

37  
38 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. I don't. You know, it wasn't, uh, it wasn't divided.  
39 You'd, you could sit with, you, you know, you had your meal and you were in the  
40 cafeteria and you were, you could sit with your foreman or you could... It was no big  
41 deal. You know, the salary part of it, part of it because, uh, uh, I shot trap with them.  
42 You know. Golfed with 'em. And, uh, in our golf league we had, uh, like 125 employees  
43 that golfed and that would encompass, uh, you know, hourly and salary. So... And the  
44 golf, and the golf situation, we golfed every Tuesday, every Tuesday evening, and then  
45 we had outings. We'd travel to different places. Then, the yearend, the last outing would  
46 be a two-day affair. And the golf was good, you know. So if they were working in the

1 evening they or, you know, they couldn't go they'd go out and, uh, golf in the morning.  
2 You know, and have their scores and turn their scores in.

3  
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5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** What golf course was this?

7  
8 **TED SIMMONS:** We golfed at, uh, Rolling Acres and, uh, Black Hawk.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the company pay the golf fees?

11  
12 **TED SIMMONS:** No. No, we played, we paid our own. We paid, you know, like if we  
13 had an outing, if we were going somewhere, uh, maybe it would cost 25 dollars or  
14 something like that, you know. We'd travel all over the place, you know, on these  
15 outings. And, uh, you'd have teams and we'd have scrambles and things like that. So...  
16 Do you golf?

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm not bad at miniature golf.

19  
20 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, okay. [Laughs]

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** But that's about it. So when you were first hired in 1963, what  
23 position or what department did you start in?

24  
25 **TED SIMMONS:** I went right straight into the furnace plant.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you, did you go into the yard at any point?

28  
29 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, yes. I did go into the yard. Yeah.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you...

32  
33 **TED SIMMONS:** I did. Yeah.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Talk about that and, and what your first day on the job was like.

36  
37 **TED SIMMONS:** Well, the first, yeah, I totally forgot about the yard because I was  
38 only there for a short period of time. Then, I was in the furnace plant. But what I noticed  
39 about the yard is you had to dig by hand and they had these big round rocks and they  
40 called 'em St. Joe potatoes. And you'd dig. In fact, right outside in my yard or right  
41 outside of my house there's St. Joe potatoes that I brought down, that I got down there  
42 and brought up and put, you know, for landscaping. So, uh, and the people I remember,  
43 uh, back then you could smoke and it wouldn't hurt you. You know, you never thought,  
44 you know. So everybody would take a coffee break. Everybody would smoke. Back  
45 then, you could drink and not get cirrhosis of the liver also. You know, nothing. You  
46 could do all those things and it wouldn't, wouldn't bother you.

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**INTERVIEWER:** So what were, what were your job assignments while you were in the yard? Digging. Was it digging the St. Joe potatoes?

**TED SIMMONS:** Yeah. They. Yeah. If, uh, if they had a project, if they were going to put something in or like if they were going to put a footer in for a building you'd have to dig the, you know, dig the footer out by hand.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how long did you stay in the yard?

**TED SIMMONS:** Not too long. I bid on that, I bid on that, uh, basement job and I got that. It was more money because the yard was just entry and, uh, the next job you bid on, you know, you'd gain, you know, a little bit more money.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, what, what was your, uh, what were your responsibilities in the furnace plant?

**TED SIMMONS:** Clean up. Clean up when you first went in. Then I went on to, then I went to the condenser floor.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what took place on the condenser floor?

**TED SIMMONS:** That's where, that's where they'd pour the molten metal into, into a tray. Well they called 'em trays. There was like, uh, a whole line of 'em and I would skim. They'd pour and then you'd skim the dross off of the zinc and then go, and then hold your board. It was like an asbestos board with a wooden handle and you would cross over, you just, oh, you'd skim, skim that, skim the dross off the first one, put your board over so the operator could, you know, hit your board and not get any metal in between the molds. So as far as I can remember they were 60 pounds a piece and then you'd, then you'd have to dump 'em and stack 'em. They'd flip over after they cooled. Well, you had gloves and stuff like that and you'd flip 'em over. They were 60 pounds and you'd stack 'em, you know, until you got, uh, you know, whatever, whatever you were, you know, how big a load you were getting. I can't even think. I don't know if it was forty-eight, and I can't remember but, uh, and then it, they would pour ingots. The big, real big ones and of course they'd take that out. They'd take the ingots out with a crane because they were like two or three thousand pounds and you'd skim those. Oh, so...

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you explain a little bit more what you mean by skimming those?

0:24:57

1 **TED SIMMONS:** Uh. When they pour, there's like, uh, like a residue on top of the, on  
2 top of the slab. They called 'em slabs. You'd skim that off, you, you know. Very lightly  
3 take that off and throw it in, into an, a tray because they wanted that to be perfectly  
4 smooth, you know, not rough. That's all you were doing was taking the, uh, the dross  
5 or... Yeah, they called it dross.  
6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the part that you skimmed off then put back into the mix?  
8  
9 **TED SIMMONS:** Yeah.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** To pour into...  
12  
13 **TED SIMMONS:** Yeah.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** More molds?  
16  
17 **TED SIMMONS:** Yeah. Yeah. They would, uh, what you skimmed off they would re-  
18 melt. They'd throw it back in, you know, in case there was some zinc left in it. But, uh...  
19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. The company made various grades of zinc.  
21  
22 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, yeah. They would've had...  
23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what were you producing there in the condenser?  
25  
26 **TED SIMMONS:** It wasn't high grade. It was standard. They might've had, you know,  
27 they might add a little lead to it depending on... Or, you know, I don't know. Uh.  
28 Aluminum. Over in the refinery they'd add a little aluminum, but they called it zamac.  
29 But, uh, it all depend... It all depends on what the, you know, the customer ordered.  
30 What, you know, what specifications, what they wanted, you know for the purpose that  
31 they were going to use the zinc in whether it was going to be for coating or whatever, you  
32 know. So they would take samples to make sure that they were within range of what the  
33 customer wanted. And that's about it.  
34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** How, how would the process for making the standard zinc, um,  
36 versus the high grade differ?  
37  
38 **TED SIMMONS:** Well the high grade, uh, they had, they would have on the last, uh,  
39 last end of the big furnaces or there would be like, uh, I think there was 16 furn, they  
40 called it 16 furnace. It would have an enormous ladle and they would put it in an elevator  
41 and send it up and it would go through a walkway across into the refinery. And the, uh,  
42 oxide operator would pour that metal, that big metal, or big ladle of metal into a column  
43 and it would pure. There were trays in this column and as it goes down it purifies it until  
44 it's perfectly, you know, it's all zinc, nothing else. And then you would have what they  
45 called at the bottom of the, uh, bottom of the system, they had, uh, it would be runoff.  
46 That would be the, you know, all the impurities and things like that. They would get lead

1 out of it and then they would recycle it and send it back up. But, uh, I'm sure somebody  
2 could probably give you a better example of, you know, of what, what went on in the  
3 refinery because, like I said, I was there a short time too because I wanted steady daylight  
4 and I ended up getting it. So I spent the better part of my time working steady, steady  
5 daylight.

6  
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9 **INTERVIEWER:** You... So, I'm correct. You worked in the furnace plant and then  
10 the refinery?

11  
12 **TED SIMMONS:** Right.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** What was your job within the refinery?

15  
16 **TED SIMMONS:** I was on utility. I was, uh, I was on runoff or runoff operator and, uh,  
17 that was it.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you get to do this?

20  
21 **TED SIMMONS:** Not much. All you did was, uh, well back then you dipped, uh, you  
22 dipped it out by hand. But now the latter part of the, uh, operation they had pumps that  
23 they would pump the molten lead, uh, metal into the runoff into a ladle and you would  
24 send it back up to the top floor to be recycled again. But there used to be like a dipper on  
25 a chain and you'd go into the... There would be like, uh, like a reservoir and you'd dip  
26 into that and then dip it into your ladle and you'd fill your ladle up and then send it up.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of safety precautions did you take working around all this  
29 very hot metal?

30  
31 **TED SIMMONS:** Hard hat, uh, Nomex hood, which is something that you put around,  
32 only your face shows. Uh. Flame retardant, uh, face shield, flame retardant clothing,  
33 gloves, uh, steel toed shoes and plus they had leggings that you'd go, you could put over  
34 top. So if you did splash metal down it would hit, you know, hit, hit the legging. It just  
35 clamped around the bottom of your leg and had a flap that covered your shoe.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** And how hot was it in these plants in the summer?

38  
39 **TED SIMMONS:** Hot. Very hot.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have people passing out from heat exhaustion or  
42 dehydration?

43  
44 0:30:53

45

1 **TED SIMMONS:** Well, yeah. You could take breaks and things like that and they, uh,  
2 they would give you, uh, salt, uh, almost like candy, like, uh, gel but it was full of salt.  
3 It's what it was. But, uh, the daylight utility was really, really a hot job because you were  
4 there, uh, what you did... Daylight utility, uh, you were right in between the furnaces.  
5 [Clears Throat] You know, so you had heat on the backside and heat on the front. You'd  
6 actually have to go outside to, you know, take a break, get some air. [Clears throat]  
7 Excuse me. I don't know if I'm jumping all over the place but, uh...

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** What measures were taken to protect workers from cadmium, lead,  
10 and other hazardous materials?

11  
12 **TED SIMMONS:** You had to go periodically to the nurse and have a urine sample taken  
13 and a blood sample taken.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** How frequently?

16  
17 **TED SIMMONS:** I don't know. Maybe every three months or so. I can't remember  
18 exactly. You know, but that's, that's what they would do. And if your lead were, if your  
19 lead was above a certain level they would assign, they would send you to a different job.  
20 You wouldn't have to go back to that high lead area.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they guarantee that you wouldn't get a pay cut if they had to  
23 switch you into another position?

24  
25 **TED SIMMONS:** No, no, no. You got. They didn't do that. No, you... To the best of  
26 my ability or what I remember I don't think anybody took a pay cut. I don't know.  
27 Maybe. My lead was never that... I never had a problem with lead.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** How, how was the company equipped to handle injuries on the job?

30  
31 **TED SIMMONS:** Well we had a nurse and, uh, they had a company doctor.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** On, on the premises?

34  
35 **TED SIMMONS:** No. The doctor wasn't. No, just the nurse. [Clears throat] We had  
36 24- hour coverage with a nurse. And of course, you know, we had, uh, we had an  
37 ambulance, our own ambulance. And we had, uh, you know, people that were instructed,  
38 you know, like, uh, safety guys that would go get you in the ambulance, with the  
39 stretcher, and things like that. They were, they were trained. I would imagine. I wasn't  
40 involved in that, but I'm sure they were. But the furnace plant, uh, from the top floor to  
41 the bottom, it was a rough place to work. Not only dirty, it was hot. Noisy, noisy, noisy.

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44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you work with earplugs?

1 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, yes, I did. But, huh, I'll give you a good example of why you  
2 should have worn earplugs. I worked with this fella on daylight utility. He was an old  
3 guy, Bill Etzel. That was his name. I don't even know if he's still living. But he  
4 couldn't hear. Never wore earplugs. Finally, he got hearing aids. He got two of 'em. So  
5 we, we would break for lunch or, I think it was lunch or coffee break. I don't what, what,  
6 but anyway Bill's sittin' there in the clean air room and we're there. The whole utility  
7 gang. Uh. He says, "Boy." He says, "These things are marvelous." He said, "I hear birds  
8 singing." He said, "I hear things I never heard before." And this guy sittin' across from  
9 him, Mac McClain, he says, "What kind are they?" And Bill says, "A quarter to nine."  
10 [Laughter] True story. True story.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there any changes in procedures or new technologies that were  
13 introduced to provide a safe workplace?

14  
15 **TED SIMMONS:** Uh. When I was there, the only thing I saw that they, they improved,  
16 you know, in my, in my short period of time in, uh, production. Let's put it that way. In  
17 my short period in production, they came up with automatic, uh, slab, uh, the procedure  
18 where I was describing where you did it by hand and you skimmed and you had to dump  
19 'em. Well, they came up with a system where there was, uh, like a compartment where a  
20 person would skim as the ladles came through. They were, they were automatically, uh,  
21 go right down the line. You know. Then, they would dump and they would stack  
22 themselves. They'd have a stacker down there. So they took the, they took the, uh, hand,  
23 handling of the dumping these slabs, the 60-pound slabs, they eliminated that. And it  
24 worked, you know, pretty well.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall roughly when that innovation would've been put in  
27 place?

28  
29 **TED SIMMONS:** Well, I left there... Well it had to be prior to '96 because I left, you  
30 know, that's when I left. But, uh, but a good example is not everything's, you know, the  
31 best, you know, whether it speeded up things, but there were issues at times. And there  
32 was, there was a plug up on the stacking part and this tray would go like this and stack,  
33 you know, stack this all, it was all mechanical and it was, you know, zip, boom. And, uh,  
34 this particular young guy he had a foul up down there. So he went down there to try to  
35 get it straightened out and he got his hand caught between the stack, where the stacker  
36 would go through, where it'd push the steel plate and it took his hand off down there.  
37 And he was working by himself. [Phone ringing] And he was down there for the longest  
38 time. Excuse me. Boy, I'll tell you what.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** So you were just talking about, uh, a really tragic accident and...

41  
42 **TED SIMMONS:** Right.

43  
44 0:38:31

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** In the refinery?



1  
2 **TED SIMMONS:** Yeah. Yeah. That was in the refinery that happened. They gave the,  
3 they gave that particular fellow a job as a watchman, as a guard. So they provided, you  
4 know, he couldn't do anything, you know, within the mill, you know, losing your hand.  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** After a, a few years, you transferred into the storeroom. Is that  
7 correct?  
8  
9 **TED SIMMONS:** Yeah.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So...  
12  
13 **TED SIMMONS:** It wasn't too long. I was in the storeroom for quite a long time.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** What year did you start in the storeroom?  
16  
17 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh. I don't know.  
18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Before or after the unions came in?  
20  
21 **TED SIMMONS:** When did Kennedy get assassinated? Do you know what year?  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Sixty...'63.  
24  
25 **TED SIMMONS:** See. It was '63. I know, uh, I think it was '65. 1965, I got into the  
26 storeroom and then there, you know, they needed somebody. They had gotten to the  
27 point where they needed somebody to, uh, do the, uh, requisitioning for all the heavy  
28 equipment. And I did that for a number of years. I was there by myself.  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what qualified you for a job in the storeroom?  
31  
32 **TED SIMMONS:** Uh. Typing and you'd take the, you know, you'd take, I guess, a test  
33 or... I didn't take a test for it, but, uh, earlier. I think, uh, I don't know. I can't  
34 remember exactly if we, when I first was hired if they gave, uh, gave tests. I'm, I'm pretty  
35 certain they might've given some sort of test. Maybe, uh, but I know typing was one, one  
36 of the requisitions and I had, I had, uh, taken typing in high school. And when, uh, when  
37 I went to the service I typed quite a bit too.  
38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** So what was the role of the storeroom in the running of the plant?  
40  
41 **TED SIMMONS:** We provided all the necessary bolts, nuts, cleaning equipment,  
42 everything. You know. They'd stock it. They'd have, they would have certain, uh,  
43 reorder points. An example is the, what they, they would have brooms. They would have  
44 buckets, you know, for the cleanup crews down in the basement. They'd go through  
45 brooms like, you know, or they used quite a bit of 'em. And, uh, the, they would have  
46 parts for different, uh, machines that were throughout the plant.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Were you involved with tracking the inventory for the storeroom?

**TED SIMMONS:** We did inventory. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** At what point was that computerized?

**TED SIMMONS:** Uh. It was after I left because we had a card system.

**INTERVIEWER:** How did that work?

**TED SIMMONS:** Huh. Well, if... The thing was if you, if you took a part and you wrote it, you know, filled out a card and that card would be subtracted from the...[Clears throat] Excuse me. From the index file in the storeroom. Everything was great. But if, uh, say a millwright came in and he needed so many bolts and he just took 'em and walked out the door, you know, then your, your, your index card is showing that you have so many there and then when you go to do a physical inventory it's gone. You know. So there was, there was always an issue going on about, you know, different things like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you initiate any procedures or controls to minimize that kind of, um, discrepancies in the inventory?

**TED SIMMONS:** You could suggest things, but the storekeeper was the, he was the, uh, person that would, you know, take charge of that.

**INTERVIEWER:** How many of you worked in the storeroom?

**TED SIMMONS:** There were, there were counter people. There were three, three counter people. There was one, uh, fella that took care of the inventory. He'd ride around, uh, you know, periodically checking the inventory. There were, uh, probably four people in the storeroom doing the, you know, doing the requisitioning and, uh, doing the index cards, taking, had tray after tray after tray. You know. And, uh, you would have to subtract and this was all manual. You had to subtract whatever. You had these, like these, uh, IBM cards. These small cards that they had out at the, out at the desk, where they issued all the parts and then they'd come into the office at the end of the day and then the next day you'd be taking them off, you know, to get your inventory in, in good shape or as close as possible if everybody filled out a card.

**INTERVIEWER:** And was the storeroom manned 24/7?

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**TED SIMMONS:** No. Daylight.

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**INTERVIEWER:** So what happened if somebody needed a part on, uh, nighttime shift?

**TED SIMMONS:** That's what I was saying. They'd come in and they're supposed to fill out a card, but you know, sometimes they wouldn't.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how long did you stay in the storeroom and where'd you go next in the company?

**TED SIMMONS:** I went from the storeroom to transportation department. They have, they initiated the storeroom. So I started that and I stayed there, oh, maybe three or four years. Then I took a job in 1979 with State Equipment.

**INTERVIEWER:** Just going back to the transportation department role you had there, was this a new position for them to have a storeroom to be managed?

**TED SIMMONS:** They had, you know, it was, it was more convenient for... This is where they repaired all the, uh, all the equipment, the trucks, trains. They had the railroad. Uh. Frontend loaders, cranes, backhoes, all this, you know. So it was, it was right next where it was supposed, you know, where it was worked on. Rather, rather than walk to the storeroom to get a part that you needed in the garage, you'd come right in and get the part and I took care of it. I had my own office there and I was there by myself.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you start up this new storeroom?

**TED SIMMONS:** Yeah, basically. Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did they give you a pay raise to do that?

**TED SIMMONS:** I can't recall if they did or not. I, I don't know. I don't think.

**INTERVIEWER:** All right. So you, you left St. Joe in 1979.

**TED SIMMONS:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And the reason you left in '79?

**TED SIMMONS:** Well, the reason I left is I took a job with State Equipment and it was substantially more money and, uh, they gave me, uh, a 1979 Jeep Cherokee, which I could use for my own personal use, and I would use that to go... I didn't have to go to the office, which was, uh, 52 miles away. So I operated, you know from home. I'd leave home and then go to various strip mines or mills or whatever, you know, just, uh, selling, uh, parts and service. You know. I was a parts and stuff, parts and service manager was my title, and I was on a bonus system with State Equipment. And I think it was my second year I got the biggest check of my life at that time. I got a \$6,000 bonus check, which was nice too, and it was a lot, you know, it was a lot different. I mean, I

1 entertained, you know, customers like, you know, go to different places. They wanted to  
2 go to a particular restaurant. I'd pick up the tab and stuff like that. So, it was nice. It was  
3 a different. It was an entirely different experience than I had at St. Joe.  
4

5 0:47:58  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you come back to St. Joe in 1985?  
8

9 **TED SIMMONS:** Well, like I had mentioned earlier, the company I worked for, uh, or  
10 the company I took the job with they, uh, they more or less went out of business. They  
11 had all these different branches but they, uh, periodically closed 'em down one by one  
12 until I was told that, you know... I came in and worked one day and, uh, the, uh, the  
13 general manager told me. He says, "Well, I got bad news for you. Today is your last  
14 day." So, uh, and that was, that was in nineteen... I think it was 1982. I, I worked for  
15 them like three years. And my brother-in-law and sister-in-law in Georgia had a cleaning  
16 service. So we went down there, my wife and I, and they showed us, you know, they had  
17 four or five, four or five cars going out, like station wagons with four girls and, and they  
18 would do houses, different houses. Well, we did this. We started doing it, uh, and it was  
19 tough. You know. I, I swept floors with a vacuum cleaner. But that was in, uh, like '84.  
20 I did it for about a year and then I said, "I'd like to get a job." I didn't want to do that. My  
21 daughter was working and my wife hired these different girls and I felt like, uh, I was out  
22 of place, one guy, even though I could do a good job on the carpets. But anyway, uh, I  
23 wanted to go back to a regular job. So I went back to St. Joe in '85. Uh. A friend of  
24 mine was the, uh, superintendent of the furnace plant.  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that?  
27

28 **TED SIMMONS:** Joe, uh... Senior moment right now. Uh. He played, he played golf  
29 too. You know, and I can't think of his name right now. His last name... Names I'm bad  
30 on it sometimes. Anyway I got back there, and I can't remember where I went... Oh, I  
31 know where I went. I went to zinc dust. I went to the zinc dust department when I went  
32 back. I bid on the job down there.  
33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the, what was the zinc dust department and what were you  
35 doing in there?  
36

37 **TED SIMMONS:** This was a new deal. They would make, uh, zinc powder. Zinc dust.  
38 They used it in batteries and paints and things like that. Well, I would pack the  
39 containers, and it was shift work. So anyway I was there for a period of time and I tell  
40 you what during, during my time down there or I think it was down there they, they had a  
41 big, a big container where they had the, had the metal in there and it would convert it to  
42 zinc dust. Well periodically you had to clean it out. So they, uh, they sent two guys  
43 down there to clean that out and, uh, they never, they never come back. They got, they  
44 got gassed by CO2 gas. Uh. A guy named Simon and a guy named McMillan. So they  
45 died in there. Uh. And it was bad. A lot of people, a lot of people I know died down  
46 there. Right up the street, uh, maybe a quarter of a mile up the road, uh, a fella named

1 Jordan, Jack Jordan, had five little girls and he was working in, in the basement running a  
2 buggy that they have a bar on the end of it to keep the slag from, you know, uh, keeping  
3 the slag loose. Well, somehow he hit some electrical thing and he got electrocuted, and it  
4 killed him. And a friend of mine, who I fished with, Ralph Emert, he was operating a  
5 crane and he had a fella inside the boxcar, uh, like getting, shoveling some of the stuff  
6 over so he could reach it with the crane. Well the kid got into the wrong place at the  
7 wrong time and when Ralph, uh, dropped his bucket it hit the kid and killed him. So  
8 there's... It wasn't a very... You know, some days you could go to work and maybe  
9 some days you wouldn't come back. I don't know.

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11 0:54:11

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** How, how did the company handle these employee tragedies? And  
14 the families...

15  
16 **TED SIMMONS:** OSHA would come in. I don't know what they, if they did anything  
17 for the families or not or what can you do. They, you know, they could say, "Well we're  
18 sorry." Or... I don't even know if there's anything, uh, you know, if they provided  
19 anything in a monetary sense. I don't know.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Death, death benefits?

22  
23 **TED SIMMONS:** Insurance.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they pay for the funeral?

26  
27 **TED SIMMONS:** No.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they hold a memorial service at the plant?

30  
31 **TED SIMMONS:** Well you have, you have, uh, you have an insurance policy. I have  
32 an insurance policy with the company to this day for like \$10,000 and, uh, I don't know if  
33 that was the extent of what they had or not.

34  
35 0:55:05

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** So we were talking about your having switched into the  
38 transportation department storeroom, um, in 1979. Were you there for the rest of your  
39 career at St. Joe's or did you also work in other capacities there?

40  
41 **TED SIMMONS:** When I left the storeroom, uh, you know, I, I had a period where I  
42 was employed with a different company for three years and, uh, there was maybe two  
43 more years I was in the business with my wife and then I went back to, uh, I contacted,  
44 uh, Joe. I told you. Strupek's his last name.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Strupek.

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**TED SIMMONS:** Joe Strupek, who I used to ride back and forth to work with when we, we first started at St. Joe, when we both lived down in Burgettstown. So anyway, I got back and I worked at zinc dust for a while and then finally I got a bid to work daylight utility and that's, that's where I ended up.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was that back in the furnace plant?

**TED SIMMONS:** Back in the furnace plant. Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** How had things changed in the furnace plant from when you started working there in the 1960s to when you returned into the furnace plant in 1985?

**TED SIMMONS:** Oh, they might've, you know, the casting machine benches were, were an upgrade, but that didn't have anything to do with daylight utility. Basically it was the same from, you know, nothing really changed. I mean as far as that operation went, you know, cleaning out the furnaces and things like that. So... My stomach's growling. But anyway, uh, I was there until '96. It was a good job. You know. It, it paid more money then, uh, then some of the other jobs in there because you were, uh, you were subject to high, a lot of hot, you know, hot, hot conditions. I mean extremely hot. You know, the temperature if you were working in a certain area it might be 140 degrees, and it's bad enough that the temperature was high and, uh, you had to wear all this clothing and, uh, face shield, hard hats, hoods, things like that. So, you had to take care of your, uh, your salt intake that was for certain because, uh, you did perspire quite a bit.

**INTERVIEWER:** During your years working with the company, were your hours ever cut back for economic reasons that were going on at the plant?

**TED SIMMONS:** No. You could work, you could work overtime. You could, you know... It wasn't cut back. I mean there was a lot of opportunity to, uh, you know, work additional hours. And a lot of, a lot of people took advantage of that too. And in some cases, uh, you know, uh, they could work, huh, they could work an additional 10, 20, 30 additional hours and, and, uh, in conjunction with their regular hours. You know. So they could make money, but you had to put the time in.

0:59:14

**INTERVIEWER:** You were working at the plant during the time the unions were voted in?

**TED SIMMONS:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did that seem to be a clear-cut choice to go with the unions or was there a lot of debate back and forth among the laborers?

1 **TED SIMMONS:** They voted on it so. Uh. I'll tell you the truth. I think basically the  
2 older people were probably, uh, not in favor of it, you know, to begin with because they  
3 were, they were in their niche and they were making top dollar and they had their, you  
4 know, particular job that, that, uh, they were off and they had time off and I think there  
5 were a lot of younger guys that were hired that probably pushed it and voted for it. And I  
6 can't even remember if I voted for it. I don't know. I don't think it was a show of hands.  
7 I think you had to fill something out, but when they started the union they had, you know,  
8 they had to lay out all these different things and meet with, uh, with the company on  
9 what, you know, what they were going to do and what the job increments would pay and  
10 all this stuff so. And I wasn't privy to any of that. So I worked and I come home and in  
11 fact I worked two jobs. I worked for the township, this township. I was police chief here  
12 for four or five years before I gave that up.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** In hindsight, what do you think were the positive and negative  
15 effects of having the union at the plant?

16  
17 **TED SIMMONS:** Well probably the positive thing of it. Uh. I wouldn't say it, well...  
18 There's good and bad with the union. Uh. You might establish higher wages, but you  
19 might be in a position that you have to protect people that really don't deserve to be  
20 protected. You know. They might be in a situation where they're doing something that is  
21 entirely wrong and they still get away with it by having the union protect them. The  
22 benefits of not having a union they were all the things that I named about St. Joe. All the  
23 early years. The Christmas parties, which, you know, the four of my kids enjoyed. Uh.  
24 Idora Park. That was a big deal. We'd pack up and go to Idora Park and then ride and,  
25 uh, they would like raffle off, uh, gifts, you know, different, like TVs and things like that.  
26 And then the trap range.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk about that a little bit more?

29  
30 1:02:47

31  
32 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, yeah. The trap range. That was one of my, that was one of my  
33 big deals. I shot trap for a number of years and, uh...

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Where was the trap range located?

36  
37 **TED SIMMONS:** The trap range was located well where the, right behind, well it was  
38 on top of the hill where the mall, the mall is now, down in the wooded area below. I  
39 don't even know if it's still there. But it was just a building and, uh, and we shot, we shot  
40 trap there. And it was behind the, uh, you drive right passed where the old Humane  
41 Society used to be. Well there's some new company there now. I don't know what, what  
42 exactly is there. But, uh, and then we would travel to different sportsmen's clubs and  
43 shoot there. You know. You'd have matches. And you were asking me about, uh, if I  
44 had any, anything. But, you know, relating to that. I do have a jacket with St. Joe, uh,  
45 Trap Team on it. The patch. It's thirty-one years old. I found it. Ha-ha. You were  
46 asking me and I looked around.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Can we take a look at it later?

**TED SIMMONS:** Yeah, sure. Yeah, sure. Uh. Trap was, trap was fun. You know. I enjoyed that. So St. Joe had a lot of good things, you know, like the trap range, the pistol range. The pistol range was...

**INTERVIEWER:** Where was the pistol range?

**TED SIMMONS:** The pistol range was down in the basement of, uh, the Poor Farm. The, uh, well they called it the Poor Farm. The County Home. You know. Uh. They had moved the offices down there after a while, you know. That's where the offices were. And, uh, like the bowling and the, uh, and the gymnasium, the cafeteria. There was a lot of pluses.

**INTERVIEWER:** Just going back to the pistol range for a minute. That was in the basement of the County Home and there were offices and I believe some labs also in the building. Wasn't it disruptive to have the pistol range going on in the basement?

**TED SIMMONS:** They did that in the evening when we did it and, uh, I don't think the offices had been down there when we moved. I think we went into that pistol range when there was, wasn't, you know, anything wasn't established yet. They're, they were still at the main office, up at, you know, in front of the plant.

**INTERVIEWER:** Outside of company sponsored activities and the walls of the plant, to what extent was your family and social life connected to other St. Joe colleagues and their families?

**TED SIMMONS:** Oh. I have a lot of friends, you know. Uh. In fact, huh, I have a friend, who's right now he's at, uh, he was a foreman in transportation. He was a supervisor, one of the supervisors. I fish with him. I'm friends with him. He, in fact, he has a place, uh, up at Pymatuning. Frank Parker is his name. And he has a place close to mine up at, uh, Pymatuning. We both fish and, uh, we've been friends for years and years and years. In fact, in fact, his wife always tells him that I'm the only friend he has. So I don't know what that means, but he's, uh... Then I have friends like Pat Shively was a friend of mine. He was a salary, salary foreman in the furnace plant. He would come to my home. We fished together. We went to Lake Erie together. Uh. Ralph Emert is one I was talking about that had the tragic event in his life. Went hunting and fishing with him. Art Baker, another fella that's gone. These, these fellas I'm mentioning with the exception of, uh, Frank Parker, they've, they've all passed. Good friends of mine. And we, we've had parties here, you know, when we were younger. Our partying days kinda slipped by the wayside, but we used to get together and that Ralph Emert they used to call him Wimpy. He'd come to my house. He'd come here. He'd drive up in his truck and have coveralls on, bib, bib overalls. He walked over and I says, I said, "Do you want a beer?" He said, "What do I look like a camel?" [Laughter] So, so we socialized. Salaried, or, foreman, mill workers. It didn't matter. There was no, uh... Maybe there was



1 cliques higher up. I don't know. But, uh, Bill Murphy another, he was another, uh,  
2 friend of mine that passed. He'd come here, play guitar, he and his wife, sing, play guitar.  
3 We'd have parties with all the people that I mentioned earlier. Had good times. And then  
4 he took a job in Beaumont, Texas and, uh, he passed away. He had cancer. But... So I  
5 have a lot of friends on the other side. I hope I get to see 'em all. I really do. But St. Joe,  
6 all in all, of all the things they provided and all the dirty jobs that I had down there, uh,  
7 they're part of my history. You don't realize how... I can't express the, I can't express  
8 the feeling. But when I ride by there... Earlier before they changed the highway and  
9 seeing nothing, seeing it all, see it all gone, you know. It's like, "Hey, what happened?"  
10 Twenty-nine-and-a-half years I was down there and if I hadn't, uh, you know, had the  
11 issue with my heart I probably would've retired and had gone onto maybe 44 or 45 years.  
12 So it's kind of hard when you go by there and say, "Well, hey." Huh. I remember  
13 working midnight, which, uh, which was terrible for me. I couldn't sleep during the day.  
14 I just couldn't do it. No matter how tired I was I couldn't sleep during the day. I had to  
15 get ready to go to work, which was right down over the hill from here, which was maybe  
16 four mile, and I'd finally, I would finally fall asleep at ten o'clock and then I'd have to get  
17 up at eleven to go to work. That's how it worked. So anyway that's why, that, that's why  
18 my goal was steady daylight because of midnight.

19

20 1:11:25

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22 **INTERVIEWER:** I know you were just a child during World War II, but did you ever  
23 hear any stories about women who worked at the plant during the war years?

24

25 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, yeah. In fact, there were some that were still working there when  
26 I, when I, when I was employed. They were down in, uh, motor shop winding, uh, I  
27 don't know, coils or whatever on the motors, repairing motors. They were down there.  
28 There were a couple of 'em. Uh. And then I think after I'd left they started hiring women  
29 in the mill in certain, certain jobs. I don't know exactly what they were doing, but that  
30 was after, after I left. Then, when I came back they were gone, I think. Yeah, uh, I  
31 didn't remember seeing any.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Looking through, uh, company publications from the 1960s, it seems  
34 that there were very few if any African-Americans working at the plant at that time.

35

36 **TED SIMMONS:** Very few.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were working there, how would you characterize the, the  
39 racial mix and was there any, were there any efforts to recruit African-Americans?

40

41 1:12:53

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43 **TED SIMMONS:** When I went back there, I, uh, I worked with a fella, who's an  
44 African-American Harry Belm, Harry Bel, Harry Bellamy. And he also played golf with  
45 us too. So he was one and there were, there were a few more. I'm sure. I don't know

1 what, you know, if they were recruiting them or not. I don't know, I don't know how  
2 Harry got his job, but...

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** I understand Harry's mother and aunt were working at the plant.

5  
6 **TED SIMMONS:** Oh, they were? Oh, I don't know. I didn't know that. But Harry I  
7 worked with. Harry was on, he was on the utility gang. Daylight utility.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you have contact information for Harry?

10  
11 **TED SIMMONS:** No, I don't. He's... I think he lives in Freedom. That'd be a nice  
12 person to interview. Right?

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Is, what... Is Freedom a town or?

15  
16 **TED SIMMONS:** Town. Yeah. It's a town, uh...

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

19  
20 **TED SIMMONS:** Across the river. Maybe the phonebook would be the answer.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Are you aware of any efforts to hire or recruit veterans at the  
23 plant?

24  
25 **TED SIMMONS:** I don't know. I really don't know. I don't think they... See about  
26 the only, huh, the only company I, I knew of that, uh, uh, it's like, uh, if you're a veteran  
27 you can get a job delivering mail. You know. All, it seems like all the mailmen that, that  
28 have gone through here have been in the service, you know. And they, and I'm sure that  
29 there's, you know, they're, they're being in the service was probably pertinent to them or  
30 to the, to getting the job, you know, to get, you know, whatever the... I don't think St.  
31 Joe ever did that. I don't know.

32  
33 1:15:12

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** There was one interviewee, um, who mentioned in the late '70s there  
36 were refugees from Vietnam who, um, obtained jobs at the plant. Do you have any  
37 recollection of that time period?

38  
39 **TED SIMMONS:** I started in '63.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** This would've been late '70s.

42  
43 **TED SIMMONS:** Late '70s. I left in '79.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

46

1 **TED SIMMONS:** It might've been after in fact cause I can't recall.

2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. All right. How was St. Joe integrated into the larger Beaver  
4 Valley Community? Or how were they contributing to the larger Beaver Valley  
5 Community?  
6

7 **TED SIMMONS:** Well they always had the United Fund Drive, you know, every year.  
8 And I think every year they reached their quota and, uh... I don't know what else...  
9 What else... I know they would have issues on, uh, on their pollution aspect of the thing,  
10 you know, whether, you know, the water, the air... And it did, you know, it did affect  
11 some of the trees, you know. The, uh, smoke and whatever.  
12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what steps did the company take to remediate that?  
14

15 **TED SIMMONS:** Well, they put, uh, they tried to clean the, you know, the output of  
16 what, you know, what they were sending out the stack. They would, you know, try to,  
17 they have, uh, dust, dust bags and things like that, you know, to eliminate the pollution  
18 as, you know, as much as they could.  
19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part about working at the zinc plant?  
21

22 **TED SIMMONS:** Well... Probably aside from taking care of my family is the people  
23 that you, you meet and, uh, have lifelong bonds with. You know, you share something  
24 working down there, whether it'd be, uh, good or bad, but it's something that you, you  
25 know, you would both have together as a friend... It's kinda strange that, uh, you could  
26 go into that plant nice and clean, huh, when you made your way to the change house to  
27 shower you'd be black, you know, black. And you had to think even though you do wear  
28 a respirator, you know, some of that had to get in your lungs and if you took that  
29 respirator off to smoke that was, you know, that was something bad too. Fortunately I  
30 quit smoking, uh, when I was 30, 31 I think, 31. And, uh, maybe that helped me out.  
31

32 1:19:30  
33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?  
35

36 **TED SIMMONS:** I don't know. Uh. That's a hard answer because how could it be  
37 better? It was good enough to provide for my family. I sent three of my four children,  
38 three of 'em went to college. Uh. My daughter works for IBM. One daughter works for  
39 FedEx. My son is a district manager of Beaver County for PennDOT. So and St. Joe had  
40 a big part of doing that. You know. So what more can I ask? They were fed. My kids  
41 were fed. They went to school. They had college degrees. The youngest one was  
42 spoiled. She didn't do anything so... But we still love her. But that's it. St. Joe couldn't  
43 have done any more than they did.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?  
46

1 **TED SIMMONS:** Haha. The way I was feeling. Uh. My heart rate was... Well that's  
2 what triggered my bypass. The situation I was working and it was hard work, you know,  
3 and it was hot and probably all of these things combined caused me to have the problem  
4 that I had. My heart rate increased. I went into atrial fib. So my cardiologist  
5 recommended that I have a quadruple bypass and fortunately I had that in '96 and, uh,  
6 that was when the, uh... What was the team in Pittsburgh? A heart cardiologist. I can't  
7 remember it... Well it was a group anyway of cardiologists. I had, I had the procedure  
8 and it was, uh, that was done and I was done. That was the end of it. You know. That  
9 was the end of St. Joe. And, uh, you know, I thought about it quite a bit and I, you know,  
10 you miss it in a way. But I had enough activities and things that I could do that, uh, you  
11 know, it wasn't, it wasn't a big problem. I'm, I'm, I've known fellas that for, even from  
12 St. Joe that worked beyond their time of 65 years. Uh. There was in the, the fella in the  
13 township. Bob Gearhart. He worked past 65. He worked till 70. Then he decided he  
14 was going to retire and when he retired I think he lived six months and he died. But that  
15 was his choice. I was fortunate that I left, that I was 58 years old and I'm 70 right now.  
16 So that's 20 years I have been retired. And my family and, uh, we... We didn't want for  
17 anything. You know. We, we were, you know, we were... I like to say I had, I had  
18 more money being retired than I did when I was working. It seemed like it anyway. I  
19 don't know why, why that would be. But, uh, that's what it seemed like.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** One last question. What do you think about Shell coming to the  
22 area?

23

24 **TED SIMMONS:** I think it's a great thing. It's, I think it's a great thing that they're  
25 coming. They are going to provide. Hopefully, they are going to provide employment  
26 for some local people. I hope they just don't fill all of their... I'm sure they're going to  
27 fill or hire, uh, jobs of people that they have in different locations. But I hope, uh, they  
28 provide suitable employment for local people, that they have an opportunity. So... And,  
29 uh, I hope that they keep the river clean and the air, you know. So I, I'm all for it. You  
30 know. I know there's, there's a lot of people there, and I think there was a busload that  
31 come in that were objecting, you know, from Pittsburgh, Sewickley and different areas  
32 that come in and they had a meeting down, maybe yesterday, down the, uh, township  
33 building opposing Shell. Well how you going to oppose Shell when they have all this  
34 stuff, you know, laid out? All the roads are in. They're doing this and they're doing that.  
35 The engineers all have a plan because boy I can't make heads or tails out of what they're  
36 doing down there. So... I'm sure they'll be good for the county, and I'm sure they'll be  
37 good for this state. The only thing that my wife, my wife was a tax collector in this  
38 township for 40 years and Shell's getting a tax break, a tax break for like twenty-some  
39 odd years and the sad part about it is, huh, they bought PGT, the trucking company down  
40 there. So that tax base is leaving, leaving the township and there was, uh, when I was  
41 chief of police in this township there were three bars and right now we're like the Sahara  
42 Desert. We're dry. We have no. Midway is gone. Kubota Hotel is gone and Red  
43 Rooster is gone, and I hit all of those when I was... And the next township. So it's dry  
44 also. So Center Township is the only place. Not that I drink, but, uh... Things change.  
45 Shell just bought all these home. They're knocking 'em all down. You know. I don't...

1 I tell my wife I just I hope they keep coming up the hill. [Laughs] I don't know. I think  
2 they'll be good for the township truthfully.

3

4 1:27:14

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6 **INTERVIEWER:** Well, thank you very much for your time.

7

8 (END)

**Gary Specht**  
**Interview @ November 16, 2016**

## **GARY SPECHT**

### **Summary**

The interview with Gary Specht took place on November 16, 2016, in the basement of his home in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, where he shared a treasure trove of St. Joe photographs, slides, employee newsletters, and a meal ticket book from the company cafeteria. Gary worked at the zinc plant from June 1974 to December 2015, but his stories go back to his childhood as a St. Joe kid. He comments upon relationships among coworkers and among the children of coworkers, family life with a St. Joe parent (see interview with Herman Specht), expectations to work at the plant, and experiences working alongside his father's peers. He shares memories of the auditorium, gymnasium, Hank Davenport (athletic director), picnics at Idora Park, Christmas parties, the cafeteria, ball fields, the school on the property, and the County Home (0:11:16-0:14:40). Gary talks about the expanse of "Josephtown" and the company farm and livestock.

After starting his St. Joe career as a general laborer, Gary worked in nearly every position in the furnace plant, as well as in the refinery prior to the 1979 shutdown. He describes the operations of the furnace plant; the Weaton-Najarian condenser and Najarian himself; how workers moved among different jobs; and the impact of younger, less experienced workers replacing the older ones who retired. Gary also explains how the roaster and sinter plants fit into the operations of the furnace, as well as the production and sale of byproducts like sulfuric acid. Of interest, he mentions the thaw house for parking railroad cars full of ore shipped from New York State mines during the winter. Gary explains how molten metal moved from the furnace plant to the refinery, the process in the refinery for taking out more impurities and making high-grade zinc oxide, and the different grades of zinc oxide and the commercial uses/customers for them. Gary compares his personal experiences of working in the furnace plant and in the refinery.

Gary's joining the company in 1974 coincided with the vote to unionize. He explains the impact of the union on shift schedules and hiring needs. Gary touches upon formal and informal safety training at the plant, protective clothing, and additional precautions as the company became more lead conscious after the 1980 reopening. He also talks about wage increases and bonus incentives.

In 1989, Gary began working in the power plant, rising to supervisor of the utility workers. He talks about the challenges of being a supervisor and the pros and cons of being a salary versus an hourly worker. Gary provides insight into environmental concerns that had an impact on the power plant, the operation of the power plant as a profit center that outsourced power, and the causes of its shut down. He compares the drive for innovation within the context of St. Joe, ZCA, and Horsehead ownership.

Gary's interview provides anecdotes about coworkers, women working in the mill during World War II, plant security, job reassignment for injured workers, Plant Manager George Weaton's farm, and the company's contributions to the community, including use of the property by the Beaver County Humane Society.

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4 **GARY SPECHT**  
5 **INTERVIEW - 11/16/2016**

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7 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
8 GARY SPECHT

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10 **INTERVIEWER:** Interview with Gary Specht. November 16, 2016. Gary, please state  
11 and spell your full name.

12 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. Gary L. Specht, Sr.

13 **INTERVIEWER:** And your date of birth and your full address please.

14 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. [REDACTED]. Uh. [REDACTED], Aliquippa,  
15 Pennsylvania.

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?

17 **GARY SPECHT:** I'm working part time.

18 **INTERVIEWER:** And where are you working?

19 **GARY SPECHT:** I work for Veolia Water. Actually before I got out of, um, say, and  
20 I'm going to use St. Joe. [Laughter] I, um, I had a water license with the state of  
21 Pennsylvania and Veolia got a hold of me and asked me if I cared to go to work for them.  
22 So I did part time.

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

24 **GARY SPECHT:** It's great.

25 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did you grow up?

26 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. Center Township, not far from here.

27 **INTERVIEWER:** And what education did you complete before working at St. Joe's?

28 **GARY SPECHT:** High School, 12 years of school. I got out of high school and went  
29 right to work.

30 **INTERVIEWER:** So in what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and when did  
31 you stop working for the company? And we will fill in everything in between as we  
32 move forward through the interview.

33 **GARY SPECHT:** I started there the exact date was, uh, June 24, 1974. And the reason  
34 I know that is cause it was the day after I turned 18.



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**INTERVIEWER:** Why didn't you start earlier?

**GARY SPECHT:** Cause they wouldn't let me. You had to be 18 because Joe Nard said because of the insurance coverage.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who was Joe Nard?

**GARY SPECHT:** He was the personnel director at that time. He was the guy that hired and did all the hiring and stuff back then. Everybody knew Joe Nard. [Laughter]

**INTERVIEWER:** Is that N-A-R-D?

**GARY SPECHT:** N-A-R-D. Correct.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh. What did you have to do in applying for a job?

**GARY SPECHT:** Uh. It was a big help. My dad worked there. That did seem to be the gist of things back then with that plant. It was so family kind of oriented, but no in all actuality, you know, if you had a high school education back then. I mean the mills around here were. I mean, that's what you did if you didn't go to college you went to work in the mill, and at that time, you know, everybody thought you went to work there and you retired from there and that was the end of it. And I mean you were, it was a good living. You bought your house. You sent your kids to school. A lot of guys had a cabin up in the mountains and stuff like that. So.

**INTERVIEWER:** From what I've been hearing from other, in other interviews how did anybody have more than like 12 hours off to go to a cabin in the mountains?

**GARY SPECHT:** Uh. It amazed me because my, when I got in there it was right when the union did and things changed and they put, went from three shifts of men to four shifts. So you had actual two days off and I look back at it and, uh, honestly I don't know how my father did it cause, uh, yeah, he had pretty close to 40 years down there and those guys did though. They, they worked hard and they played hard. [Laughter] [Coughs] Excuse me.

**INTERVIEWER:** As you're aware, I've interviewed your father, Herman Specht, about his experiences at the plant starting in the 1950s. What stories did he tell you about the plant or his coworkers that left an impression on you when you were a kid?

**GARY SPECHT:** Well, it's funny because he, he was involved with so much stuff down there and it seemed like at that time you did stuff with the people you worked with more so than now. I mean, just for an example, uh, you know, guys would, if they found out you were putting a garage up, the whole shift would show up and do stuff like that.

1 And, and, so, from a young age, and I mean as far back as I can remember, I was with  
2 him, you know, when these guys were doing this together or doing that together. So I  
3 knew, you know, them and their stories and all that stuff from, like I said, as far as back  
4 as I can remember between the Christmas parties and tagging along to softball games and  
5 then when I got a little older to golfing with those guys and stuff. And, so, like you said  
6 earlier you talked to Vic and those guys. And I mean I knew all of them. I grew up with  
7 them. Really, I did.

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9 (0:04:45)

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11 **INTERVIEWER:** Did it ever occur to you that you wouldn't follow in your dad's  
12 footsteps into the plant?

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14 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. No, I don't think it did. Uh. Honestly. I, my uncles and, uh, my  
15 grandfather on my mom's side were all in the fitters union. They were all steamfitters.  
16 And actually they tried to get me, steer me in that direction kind of, but there, the way  
17 their apprenticeships worked and when they started stuff, you know, it just, it didn't jive.  
18 And I mean that, uh, just walked into the mill and went to work and 40 years later here I  
19 sit. [Laughter]

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21 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about family life with your father working the  
22 various shifts six days a week?

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24 **GARY SPECHT:** [Laughter] Christmas morning when he was on night shift.  
25 [Laughter] And having to wait till he got home. I mean I'd be laying in that bed and I  
26 remember he gave me, I don't know, one of his old pocket watches and I'm laying in  
27 there waiting for eight o'clock for him to get home from work cause we couldn't open the  
28 presents up. Or else I would go out there and you're looking at everything under the tree.  
29 "Come on mom just let me open one, one please." "Oh, you'll wait till your father gets  
30 home." But I will say this, as tough as it was for those guys, I mean, you always made  
31 time. I mean, we always figured it out somehow, you know. The, the holidays or what  
32 have you. And I went through the same thing. So when I, you know, first started a family  
33 and that, I mean, there was a lot of Christmas Eves and stuff that I spent down there when  
34 I had worked shift work and it was hard. Shift work was tough. I tried to get out of that as  
35 soon as I could, but every time I did there'd be a cutback here and this there and I'd end  
36 up back on it again.

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38 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Do you have siblings?

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40 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. I have a brother who passed away.

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42 **INTERVIEWER:** Did he work at the plant as well?

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44 **GARY SPECHT:** No. Nope. Just me and I, I wouldn't let my kids work there.  
45 [Laughter] Honestly, I did. My sons, well you know, were looking for summer jobs and I  
46 tried to steer them clear of that place. It was not nice.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Um. Describe some of your experiences growing up as a St. Joe kid in addition to tagging along with your dad to a softball game or a garage building.

**GARY SPECHT:** The auditorium. Uh. The gymnasium down there was some place where we spent a lot of time. I mean they would let you use it on nights when the mill guys weren't using it and you could take a guest. So I'd hurry home from school those days and get my homework done cause at six o'clock the guy, Hank Davenport, that ran it would open the doors and we'd be in there playing basketball and shooting pool and stuff all night. It was great. Uh. The family picnics. Uh. There was a park in Youngstown, Ohio, Idora Park and that was something I really looked forward to, but the, the Christmas parties were great too. I, the presents that they gave out was as good as anything your parents could afford to get you and you'd go into the auditorium and they would put on a little magic show and do their things and then they would take a kid from each section and go up there and, uh, make you eat a cracker and try to whistle to see whose section would go first to go downstairs and get the presents. You always got a box of chocolates and then you got to pick your presents.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was your favorite present that you got?

**GARY SPECHT:** Probably, I got this model airplane one time, but it wasn't the typical little model airplane. I mean, this thing was huge. It had these battery engines on it. It didn't fly, but it made noise like a jet and stuff. I really liked that thing. [Laughter]

**INTERVIEWER:** Um. Were a lot of your friends from school the kids of St. Joe employees as well?

**GARY SPECHT:** Uh. There was. There was a smattering. Uh. With Center Township being kind of in the middle, there was a lot of J&L people too from, uh, the Aliquippa Works, but yes. Uh. There was.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you sense any bond among your, your schoolmates cause your, your dads both worked at the plant?

**GARY SPECHT:** You know it was something that was always mentioned and, you know, yeah, there was. I think you could say, say that for sure. And then when we went to Idora Park at the picnics those guys would be there, you know, that I'd went to school with.

**INTERVIEWER:** When, uh, when people say Josephtown, how is that defined to you?

**GARY SPECHT:** The plant. [Laughter] That area down there, and I understand there used to be a small community down there called Bellowsville or something before.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** That's right.

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3 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. St. Joe got in there, but really from where that plant sits all the  
4 way out here into Potter. Between the company, all the property that they owned and, and  
5 Mr. Weaton's farm and stuff. I mean, that's basically what that whole valley was except  
6 where, you know, Nova sits now. That was all St. Joe's farm or the mill.

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10 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you, um, clarify what Mr. Weaton's farm was versus the  
11 company's farm?

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13 **GARY SPECHT:** The company farm was actually they would, uh, they would actually  
14 butcher the meat and stuff for in our cafeteria and that. They had, they had fulltime guys  
15 that they were butchers, you know, meat cutters. That was their jobs. And they also had  
16 people that ran the farm. There was a couple houses down there and those guys stayed in  
17 there and that's what they did. Uh. Mr. Weaton's farm was separate from that. That was  
18 his personal. I, you know, from everything I've seen or learned about him he was really  
19 into that agriculture and stuff, you know. And I had heard like St. Joe livestock was really  
20 sought after like it was, you know, prized stuff back in those days from, you know, so  
21 many other old farmers telling me. So, I think that was kind of a big hobby of his or  
22 something.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the, uh, company farm produce a surplus of livestock such that  
25 they were selling it to places in addition to using it at the cafeteria?

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27 **GARY SPECHT:** From what I've heard, uh, yes, they did because I know guys like  
28 that. Now whether it was just breeding stock or whatever, but they would buy, you know,  
29 that. It would be in the auctions occasionally. And that's just from what, you know, old  
30 time farmers telling me that.

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32 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about the County Home?

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34 **GARY SPECHT:** It was a neat place. [Laughter] I used, we used to get in there some  
35 times on the off shifts and it, uh, back pre-shutdown before '79. Because after '79, a lot of  
36 the stuff in there kind of disappeared. Like there was real ornate woodwork, for example,  
37 or the, um, the showers were real heavy, thick marble. I mean it was just palatial I guess  
38 would be a good explanation of it. And a lot of that stuff left when the plant closed in '79.  
39 Whoever took this and took that. But when we used to get in there, I was like in awe  
40 because it was, um, huh, I can't. The name escapes me. The person that designed all those  
41 like, um, like Dixmont and that stuff. There was a name for that. Killbride type building.  
42 Uh. And there was actually, they had their own farm there and everything and those  
43 people, you know, that were in there would actually work on the farm and do all that  
44 stuff. But, uh, once or we were in there one night and down in the basement there was the  
45 jail cells and stuff down there they had. There was a big huge autopsy table down there  
46 too. I mean just everything. And I'm down there walking around and me and my buddy

1 got separated and I walked around this one corner of this hallway down in the basement  
2 and I'm like face to face with this other guy. And I mean we both like, "Ah!" [Laughter]  
3 Well here he was a boiler inspector. He was in there inspecting, you know, doing the  
4 state inspections during the off hours, and I scared him something terrible and he scared  
5 me too.

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9 **INTERVIEWER:** So you bumped into the guy who was checking the boilers.

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11 **GARY SPECHT:** Oh, God. Yeah. We scared each other [Laughter] something terrible.  
12 He said, "I heard those footsteps coming down that hall." And it was pretty creepy. I can  
13 remember them guys telling me like they used to, the guards used to have to do a fire  
14 walk at night or during, you know, uh, anytime during the day. And they had those old  
15 wind-up. I don't know if you've ever seen those. Like there would be keys at different  
16 stations and the guard would have a device that almost looked like a clock, and he would  
17 have to go to each station and that was to verify that somebody actually was doing their  
18 jobs and they said some of those guys would not go in that building at night. [Laughter] It  
19 was a spooky place.

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21 **INTERVIEWER:** What were you doing in there?

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23 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. Actually [Laughter] looking around at the jail cells and stuff.  
24 But we found these parts down there one time when I was in there when I was supposed  
25 to be in there and they were actually these blowers that we used for venting stuff. And, I  
26 don't know. It was a year later or whatever we're on our job and we could not find one of  
27 these and the fellow I worked for at that time, "I don't know where we can get them."  
28 And I said, "I know where we can get 'em." So that's where they were. There was a pile  
29 of 'em down there. He said, "How did you ever find this?" I said, "Don't ask Perry. We're  
30 good." [Laughter]

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32 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall anything about a school?

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34 **GARY SPECHT:** Oh, yeah.

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36 **INTERVIEWER:** On property?

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38 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. Yeah, actually that's, the ball fields were around there. So when  
39 I was a kid and we'd be down there at the ballgames that's where it was right there at the  
40 red light.

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42 **INTERVIEWER:** In our earlier conversation, phone conversation, you had mentioned  
43 that in the spring of 1974 St. Joe had a massive hiring.

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45 **GARY SPECHT:** Yes.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. What was going on at that time such that the plant needed to  
2 staff up?

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6 **GARY SPECHT:** That, the union. That's the time when the union got in. Um. They  
7 were going to, from three shifts to four shifts. So the guys were actually getting days off  
8 and, and like that. And they were starting a big apprentice class also that, that spring. But  
9 they did. There was a lot. They hired a lot of guys that year.

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11 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know how they were actively recruiting people?

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13 **GARY SPECHT:** No. I don't. I mean at that time everybody did everything in house.  
14 Like now I know a lot of companies will go through job services or whatever. But  
15 actively recruiting, I, I couldn't. I know that they did, um, like they had college students  
16 that they would pay, you know, for their engineering and stuff like that and they would  
17 work and, and while they were going to school, but I don't recall actively coming around  
18 or advertisements or anything.

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20 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they ever tell you, you know, "Guys, we need to hire people. Do  
21 you have a friend? Do you have a brother?"

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23 **GARY SPECHT:** Oh, yeah. That did, did work like that back then.

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25 **INTERVIEWER:** To hire from within.

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27 **GARY SPECHT:** They, they. Yes. There was a lot of that. [Laughter]

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29 **INTERVIEWER:** So what position were you initially hired for in 1974?

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31 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. I started as a general laborer for about 2 days and then I got the  
32 privilege of going to the furnace plant. [Laughter] That's generally what happened.

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34 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that your choice?

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36 **GARY SPECHT:** No. [Laughter] They just took me over there and said, "Here you  
37 go."

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39 **INTERVIEWER:** And did that become your first permanent position there?

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41 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. Yeah. I was over there off and on until the plant closed in '79.  
42 You know, in some capacity or another. I did work some in the refinery, but they were  
43 kind of altogether. Those ones were. The furnace plant and the refinery. The oxide was  
44 separate and the feed group, the sinter plant and roaster plant, they were kind of separate.

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1 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your first day on the job in the furnace  
2 plant?

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6 **GARY SPECHT:** A fellow that ran the, uh, clean-up crew and the laborers and such by  
7 the name of Rab Thompson and God, I can't remember what Rab's first name was.  
8 Everybody just called him Rab. But, uh, we had a little talking with him and then we  
9 walked out of the clean room where his, where the laborer's lunch room was, and we  
10 proceeded to this door that was actually an airlock down to the basement. And above that,  
11 somebody had wrote "Entrance to Hell." And Rab said, "You see that. That's where  
12 you're going." And down them steps we went. And it, oh my God. [Laughter] You know,  
13 for an 18-year-old kid, I was like, "Whoa!" At that time, the guy that was Rab's boss was  
14 Joe Strupek, and I don't know you probably heard that name a few times.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** I met with, I met with Joe.

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18 **GARY SPECHT:** I like Joe. He's a pretty cool guy. But anyway there was five of us.  
19 Now, while we're down there, Joe comes walking by and Rab, uh, you know, "Hey, Joe.  
20 These are the new guys." And he introduces us to Joe and Joe to us and, um, Joe says,  
21 "Do you guys have any questions?" And this one kid says, "I do." And he said, "Well,  
22 what do you need?" And he said, "Is there any chance I'm gonna have to work down  
23 here?" And he said, "Yeah. You're a new guy starting out. There's a very good chance  
24 you're going to work down here." He took his hardhat off, dropped the safety glasses in  
25 'em and went back out the door and that's the last I ever saw him. [Laughter]

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27 **INTERVIEWER:** So then you did have to wear hardhats?

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29 **GARY SPECHT:** Yes, at that, in '74. Yeah. Hardhats and safety glasses, and hardly  
30 anybody wore a respirator. I mean, they, they were available, but nobody. I, you'd tie a  
31 bandana around your face or something and that was about the end of it.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** When were people required to wear the respirators?

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35 **GARY SPECHT:** Oh, gosh. I would say that wasn't until after the shutdown and  
36 startup in most, you know, most of the departments and that's, you know, when they  
37 became real lead conscious and stuff that, that you had. They, they went through the lead  
38 program and they had to start supplying those guys in certain departments with their work  
39 outfits. You weren't allowed to take your stuff home and launder it anymore.

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41 **INTERVIEWER:** And that was my next question. When did they start wearing the, the  
42 green work suits?

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44 **GARY SPECHT:** About the same time the respirator stuff went down.

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46 **INTERVIEWER:** So like early '80s, you think?

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2 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. Well actually we wore the fire retardant stuff prior to the  
3 shutdown. Certain jobs did, but you, you were still responsible for cleaning your own  
4 stuff. You didn't.

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8 **INTERVIEWER:** So did you take those dirty?

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10 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. [Laughter]

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12 **INTERVIEWER:** Work suits home and did you have one to then wash overnight and  
13 bring back the next day?

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15 **GARY SPECHT:** No. No. They generally. Well when I started, I mean, all you wore,  
16 uh, only flame retardant thing you had on certain jobs on the utility gang and such in the  
17 furnace plant was a green flame retardant jacket. But generally like, uh, pants and that we  
18 just wore, you know, blue jeans or what have you, and I know when I got married, uh, as  
19 a, when I first got married and I brought them clothes home my wife would put 'em in our  
20 washing machine and she is a nurse and her nursing uniforms would come out gray and  
21 dingy. So it was off to the Laundromat with them furnace plant work clothes. [Laughter]

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** And so when you started in the furnace plant, what kind of training  
24 did you get about what you were supposed to do and what you weren't supposed to do to  
25 stay safe?

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27 **GARY SPECHT:** We had a little walk through with Rab that day and he went through  
28 so much stuff, I mean, your head was spinning. You know, don't touch this. This is  
29 electrically hot. Don't do that. Don't, you know. We did have, and I should, there was a  
30 guy whose last name was Lindsey and we had two days of just sitting in the auditorium,  
31 you know, listening to him. But as far as the on-the-job stuff or the stuff that really  
32 helped me it was because of some of them older hands were really, would look out for  
33 you. Some of 'em you were a nuisance. They didn't want anything to do with you, but I  
34 had a lot of guys and, you know, looking back at it a lot of 'em were guys I knew from  
35 when I was a kid, you know, growing up that worked with my dad and stuff and, and they  
36 helped you out a lot. Kind of took you under the wing. But I learned real quick that you,  
37 you didn't take any chances. Uh. At least I didn't.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Were, were people ever let go because they weren't following safety  
40 protocols?

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42 **GARY SPECHT:** Boy, pre-shutdown in '79, man, that was. Not that I could recall. I  
43 mean things got after a couple of fatalities we had, in the mid '80s got a little tighter with  
44 some stuff, you know, that they kind of kept an eye on, but I can't recall anybody really  
45 being, you know, maybe getting the day off or something like that, but not getting fired.



1 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you describe for the layperson what took place in the furnace  
2 department and how that fit into the overall operations of the plant?  
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4 **GARY SPECHT:** The furnace plant at that time when St. Joe still had their own mines  
5 and they made everything from the raw materials from the ore and, uh, you know, that  
6 they, they had taken from those mines. I mean, they'd take the ore and the coke and the  
7 sinter and all that would go into the top of the furnaces. There was two banks of  
8 electrodes on the way down that would electrically charge and heat everything up on the  
9 way and then on the, um, metal furnaces there was the zinc condenser part way down in  
10 it. Uh. There was an area between the two electrodes floors called the vapor ring and  
11 that's where, uh, from what I, yeah, but, uh, I mean it gathered the, um, the fumes  
12 basically or, uh, the vapor off of this and sent it to the condenser and, and that's what  
13 turned it into the actual zinc metal. The, the oxide furnaces you turned that vapor in, in,  
14 into zinc oxide without the, the metal process and, uh, but the end result was everything  
15 ended up down in the basement, which that was a real fun place down there. And, uh, you  
16 just took it out and the charge just kept moving. Now they tried to maintain a certain  
17 charge height and electrode length and that stuff and that's where the job I worked for a  
18 few years on the utility gang, that's what we did. We took care of resetting the electrodes  
19 and, and, and stuff like that. But the whole thing was the Weaton-Najarian system, which  
20 there again is Mr. Weaton's name. Well, oh, by, when I first started there that Najarian  
21 guy was still alive. He was about I don't know five feet tall cause I can remember being  
22 in this furnace plant, and I'm like who's this guy? He's got a suit and tie on and I don't  
23 know how old he was back then. And like I said he probably didn't weigh 100 pounds.  
24 I'm like, who the heck is that? They said that's Mr. Najarian. But that was, that was really  
25 the design that, that got that place where they needed to be as far as metal goes and what  
26 those guys did.  
27

28 (0:25:26)  
29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** And how did the roaster and sinter plants fit into the workings of the  
31 furnace?  
32

33 **GARY SPECHT:** They processed the ore, the raw materials and, uh, that's something I  
34 always thought was pretty neat when I started there was how they took byproducts such  
35 as the acid, the sulfuric acid and stuff and, and there you go. You're processing this ore  
36 and that and now you have another product to sell. You know and, and, but that's what  
37 they did. That, that was basically all prep work for the feed, for the furnace plant. We  
38 didn't make our own coke there. That's stuff they, they bought that, but the ore and stuff  
39 they processed right there. They used to send the ore cars in from that, uh, mine was up in  
40 a place called Balmont, New York, uh, up around Watertown and that and I know in the  
41 winter time sometimes those cars would come in. They had, they had a thaw house. It  
42 was enormous, and they would have to park those railcars in there for a while and let 'em  
43 thaw out basically. I, I can't imagine what the electric bill and stuff was for that place.  
44 That's probably why they built their own. Probably one of the reasons. It was huge. That  
45 building was huge.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the various jobs within the furnace plant that you held?

2  
3 (0:26:51)

4  
5 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. The only two I didn't hold was a furnace operator, and I don't  
6 like using that term because back in the old days they always called you a condenser  
7 operator. You weren't a furnace operator. You were a condenser operator. That and the  
8 basement on the cam retractors. Thank God I never had to do that. But the other ones,  
9 um, the casting machines. The various utility jobs, the shift utility and daylight utility. I  
10 did the top floor. I worked, you know, some up there, and I actually worked on the oxide  
11 furnaces as a, well, they called 'em punchers, but that was the furnace operator on the  
12 oxide furnaces. Poking the tuyeres.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** T-U-Y-E-R

15  
16 **GARY SPECHT:** [Laughter] Yeah. The tuyeres.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you or anybody advance, uh, or move into different jobs  
19 within the furnace plant?

20  
21 **GARY SPECHT:** Time. That especially back then. It was, you had to be there a long  
22 time to make it to be a condenser operator. So, I mean, those guys, you might've got done  
23 a little in with 10 years or something like, but they had, you know, you were there a long  
24 time and that was something that happened. When we started back up and they brought  
25 back guys that, who they wanted to and everybody was still walked in. You know. Like,  
26 uh, they were guys. They were all old hands, experienced hands. Well as they started  
27 retiring and now you're replacing them with these new guys, I mean, at the end they had  
28 guys down there that probably didn't work there six months and they were running  
29 furnaces. And you lost that continuity there, you know, between the old hands and the  
30 young ones because everybody left, you know, they, they had a lot of retirees at the same  
31 time and stuff and you didn't have to go through, like I said, that all them years and all  
32 that to get the jobs and that really made it tough. It did.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** So after you worked in the furnace plant for how many years, you  
35 went to the refinery? Is that right?

36  
37 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. The, um, I was over in the furnace plant until about '78, from '74  
38 to '78. And there were some issues over there and stuff and I got over to the, uh, refinery  
39 and I was probably over there maybe about a year or so when the plant actually closed in  
40 '79.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened in the refinery?

43  
44 **GARY SPECHT:** They basically carried the zinc process a step further taking more  
45 impurities out, the, the lead and the cadmium and stuff and that was the byproduct that  
46 we had over there. They also had oxide, um, columns over there too that we would take.

1 They would send the metal from the furnace plant over to the refinery in big, in ladles  
2 that was still molten. They would tap it in the furnace plant. It would go upstairs and then  
3 there was a walk, well it wasn't a walkway, but a, a thing to ship the ladles across over to  
4 the refinery. Uh. They did, like I said, they made oxide and because we could run 'em  
5 through them columns and stuff it was pretty pure oxide. They, they actually had food  
6 grade oxide and oxide that they'd use, you know, in your different medicines and stuff  
7 like that too.

8  
9 (0:30:27)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** So am I correct in that the oxide was produced in the refinery?

12  
13 **GARY SPECHT:** When prior to the shutdown they made oxide in the refinery and in  
14 the furnace plant. They had furnaces in the furnace plant that could make oxide.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** But was the oxide that was made in the refinery a higher grade  
17 oxide?

18  
19 **GARY SPECHT:** Yes. Yeah.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** And what would've been the commercial use of the higher grade of,  
22 um, zinc oxide than say the, the regular grade or?

23  
24 **GARY SPECHT:** They still had some oxide that was made over there that they would  
25 use. The, the tire industry and the petroleum industry were big buyers of that, of our  
26 oxide. Um. They would still sell some to those guys, but as I said they could process stuff  
27 that was actually food grade oxide that would be used in like sunscreens or medicines or  
28 you know and just stuff like that too that just carries it a step further. You're taking the  
29 lead and cadmium out, you know, more so than what we used to do in the furnace plant.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What was done with the cadmium?

32  
33 **GARY SPECHT:** They actually made cadmium balls and I don't know who sold that  
34 or where that stuff went to. I really, uh, I don't know what the use of that was.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you compare your experience working in the furnace  
37 versus working in the refinery?

38  
39 **GARY SPECHT:** The furnace, uh, in a nutshell, the furnace plant was dirtier and the  
40 refinery was a hell of lot hot, hotter. [Laughter] It was. It was bad over there. It was hot.  
41 So you had [Laughter] dirt or heat. But actually, you know, before the plant closed in '79  
42 the furnace plant, I mean, you had a huge cleanup crew over there. You know. I mean  
43 there was a lot. The place was a lot cleaner than when it started back up. I mean, that was  
44 something that went by the wayside, you know, the, the cleanup. I mean, you used to be  
45 able, there was places in the furnace plant where you could actually work and walk out of  
46 there without, you know, looking like you were working in a coal mine [Laughter] down

1 in the basement or something, but when it started back up, I mean, that was one of the  
2 things that suffered big time I really think was, you know, the housekeeping and that. Just  
3 to cuts in that and they, they didn't have the staffing.

4  
5 (0:33:04)

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7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you sense any difference in the camaraderie or the, the culture of  
8 the men who worked in the refinery versus those who worked in the furnace?

9  
10 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. I think there was somewhat. Um. Boy, it seems like though  
11 whenever you went to another department some of 'em, it was, uh, it took a little while to  
12 be accepted by those guys, you know, and I, the refinery wasn't as near as big as the  
13 furnace plant as far as the staffing goes there wasn't that many people over there and I  
14 guess I, I, uh, I don't know how to say this. Uh. I did feel a little closer with the guys in  
15 the furnace plant I think. Like there was just, I don't know. I guess it's like being a grunt  
16 or something. [Laughter] You're all in it together.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** In, in 1977, St. Joe built a zinc dust plant.

19  
20 **GARY SPECHT:** Yes.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk about the purpose of that?

23  
24 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. Yeah. We sent metal down there, uh, they would take it in slab  
25 form. And they would run it through a process. It wasn't a really big place. I mean, my  
26 gosh, I think there's only, only three guys that worked on a shift down there. And what it  
27 did is it made that, um, took that molten zinc and made it into a real fine granule or  
28 powder almost. We, prior to that zinc dust plant being built, they used to try to do that in  
29 the, the refinery. They had a real crude set up there. I mean all it really was, was, uh, this  
30 little bowl type thing, and you would dump molten zinc in it, and then it would drip out  
31 of there and there was an air hose underneath there with comprised air and it would blow  
32 this stuff into this little shack and, and that's how you made your zinc dust. Well I guess  
33 there was a market for that stuff because then, um, they put that, that, the zinc dust plant  
34 there. I can remember they used to, it was called Wright's Folly. A guy, John Wright, was  
35 there at that time and that was a big project of his and they didn't think it was gonna  
36 work, but they, they had, it did actually, you know, uh, it was still running until the end.  
37 They were still producing a lot of zinc dust.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** So, who would want zinc dust and for what purpose?

40  
41 **GARY SPECHT:** I know they, a lot of galvanizing industry bought a lot of it. Um.  
42 They also had and I wasn't that familiar with this one because it was shut down after  
43 whenever I had any dealings with there, but there was, uh, I guess the photography  
44 industry cause there was a process down there called a Kodak process or something  
45 where they would make zinc dust for them. And, uh, like I said, I'm not sure what they  
46 used it for.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In the 1980s was it they, they bought, brought in Larvik processes?

**GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** How does that fit into the zinc dust story?

**GARY SPECHT:** That time. The, the Larvik furnaces, I, I always thought they kinda took the place of the oxide furnaces in the furnace plant. Because when they started back up that whole little end of that furnace plant, a guy call it the little end, it was defunct. They weren't running them anymore. Um. And it was actually capable of making zinc oxide or zinc dust. They had a zinc dust process there too at the Larvik. But it made it out of, um, scrap basically from different galvanizing plants and stuff. What they called dross. I mean, you'd get big globs of this stuff and you would put it in there in a bath, but it was high zinc content. And you were able to get that out of there and then it separated the iron. There'd be a lot of iron and, and stuff in there that we would run off the furnaces tap. We had iron taps and there was lead in it also, but, but they were able to reclaim the zinc out of it. Uh. They got the process from over in Norway. And, uh, it actually worked pretty good if they ran it, if they would've just ran it the way it was designed to, but [Laughter] they had their issues with that place too. Uh. It was I don't know if you had decent feed to put in them, them furnaces they did okay. But they tried putting more junk in 'em and turning the power up on 'em, more power, you know, and they, they didn't work right. I think finally after a while them Norwegians told 'em to quit calling 'em. [Laughter] If you're not going to run it the way it's supposed to don't call us no more. I can't remember what that guy's name was. Ah, Olie or Olaf or something. He was mad.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why did the plant shut down in 1979 and do you think the shutdown could've been avoided?

**GARY SPECHT:** Yes and no. My personal opinion why it was shut down, I, honestly, I saw some things going on down there as far as sabotaging equipment, purposely damaging stuff, uh, it was out of hand. It, it, it was, uh, I, I, I've witnessed these, some of these acts and it just escalated and escalated and escalated. Now, I hate to say it was all related to the union getting in there, but some of the guys that were doing this stuff thought they were union, you know, because of the, the company this or the company that. And I know I've had people tell me that that wasn't the reason, but honestly I, I really think that was a big part of it. There was never any place that shut down that offered a severance pay. You know, generally, they would lay you off or do this. They offered a severance play plus a bonus. And there was only a handful of people in that plant that didn't take it because they thought this place is done. But once you took that severance pay, you had no recall rights. You were severed. Then, they could just bring back who they want. And the other thing was you were bringing back this workforce that was severed. The guys you were bringing back, say they had 20 years' experience and 5

1 weeks vacation. Now they got one week vacation. They had to go start all over again.  
2 Myself included. So, I, I do think there was a number of things, but I think that was a big  
3 one. Uh. I witnessed some things there I don't want to say on camera.

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5 (0:40:31)

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7 **INTERVIEWER:** So somebody came back without the seniority they had before...

8  
9 **GARY SPECHT:** Right. They let it count for your retirement, but not your vacation  
10 and stuff.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** What did that do for morale?

13  
14 **GARY SPECHT:** Actually, when that place started back up, the morale was good down  
15 there. It really was. There, they were, everybody was wanting to work, you know. I, uh,  
16 uh, most people went above and beyond, you know, to get the jobs done and there wasn't  
17 a lot of this, "Well that's not my job. I'm not doing this or doing that." I mean we did it to  
18 keep the place, to get it going.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did it stay feeling good like that?

21  
22 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. Uh. Probably about five years or so by the time they beat that  
23 into the ground. [Laughter]

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened?

26  
27 **GARY SPECHT:** Well, it, it just kept. Okay. Bear with us guys. Bear with us. Times  
28 are going to get better, you know, blah, blah. And it, it didn't. Uh. They just kept taking  
29 and taking and it just, you weren't getting back, you know, like you were used to and it  
30 was hard. And then when, um, Zinc Corporation took it over then we went through a  
31 bankruptcy with them and it seemed like that was back to square one all over again and  
32 then Horsehead came in on their horse and [Laughter] that's all another subject.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Which we'll get to.

35  
36 **GARY SPECHT:** [Laughter]

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** What did you do when the plant shut down in 1979?

39  
40 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. You know what. Actually, I, I had only been married about five  
41 months. Thank God I didn't have any kids. And my wife had, she had a good job. Uh.  
42 She had just got out of nursing school prior to our, you know, us getting married. So, I  
43 mean, we were able, it wasn't a big burden for me and I got involved with, uh, this gun  
44 smithing school and I, that's what I did. I went to the, that school. Um. I actually had  
45 some [REDACTED] Down there but they were out of the area and her parents were  
46 elderly and she didn't want to move. So I deferred going back to work at the plant when

1 they first started back up because they asked, and I'm like, I, I wanted to finish that  
2 school. I wanted to get that done, and I said, "Then, we'll look at this down the road." So,  
3 that's what I did. I got done with the school and then went back in '82.

4  
5 (0:42:59)

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7 **INTERVIEWER:** And when you came back, what position was that for?

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9 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. I was in the furnace plant mainly on shift utility, working shift  
10 work. Back to the old my, uh, my beginnings.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the same? What was different when you came back?

13  
14 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. What was different, man, there was not as near as many people  
15 there. Um. The same is it's the same old furnace plant. [Laughter] But that, you know  
16 what though, compared to way, the way it was towards the end there in '79 it was a lot  
17 better working with the guys that, you know, I, I guess you, uh, I, I mean you could  
18 almost say it was their hand-picked crews. You know, it was the guys they wanted. I  
19 mean, when Mr. Strupek called me in for, uh, you know, to offer me the job and stuff  
20 and, uh, when I went into his office and he told me, "Gary, you know, I'm going to tell  
21 you things are different now." And I said, "They ain't no different for me, Joe." I said,  
22 "You know I always show up for work." He said, "That's good. That's what I want to  
23 hear." [Laughter] So.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Was Joe a good boss?

26  
27 **GARY SPECHT:** I liked him. I did. A lot of guys didn't, but I, I still see him  
28 occasionally. Actually he has a camp up around ours and I run into him up there once in a  
29 while. I, I always got along with him. I did. He, he was somebody that if you had an issue  
30 and, and, uh, it was, it was here today and gone tomorrow. He wasn't somebody that  
31 seemed to me to carry a grudge or anything like that, you know. Uh. I, I, I got along with  
32 him. I did.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** If you had an idea about something that could maybe be done better  
35 in the way you were working in the furnace plant or wherever you worked, did you feel  
36 you could approach your, your foreman or supervisor and, and propose something?

37  
38 **GARY SPECHT:** Most of 'em I think were, you know, pretty receptive. Some of 'em  
39 might've said no and then told 'em it was there. [Laughter] But no, yeah, I, uh, I never felt  
40 like I, you know, was, the door was closed as far as that was concerned. They, actually, I  
41 know that they used to have those programs, you know, for that if you had an idea or  
42 safety idea or whatever and they'd hand out awards.

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Was any of that going on in the 1980s?

45

1 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. Yeah. There was actually. Not, I don't think it was to the, that,  
2 that same extent, but yeah there was some guys that got, you know, some pretty good  
3 chunks of change with some of the ideas they had.

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5 (0:45:43)

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7 **INTERVIEWER:** So in 1989 you started working in the power plant?

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9 **GARY SPECHT:** Yes.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Why the switch?

12  
13 **GARY SPECHT:** I wanted out of that, uh, like at the furnaces and that it just kept  
14 getting worse with the respirators and all that stuff, you had to wear. Now, uh, in '77, I  
15 bid on a job down at the power plant. It was a temporary job just for the summer vacation  
16 relief and that was just for June, July and August, and I went down there and got out of  
17 the furnace plant for a summer. It was nice. And it took me from then until 1989  
18 [Laughter] to get back down. When the plant closed down in '79, the power plant did not  
19 close. Those guys kept working and they kept their seniority and there was no job. There  
20 was no turnover down there. Like those guys were there, most, lot of 'em even when I  
21 went down in '89 were guys that started there when they started the power plant in the  
22 late, you know, mid to late '50s. They had been there from, from ground zero. And it was  
23 tough. Uh. Well the guys, well, they, they used to call it the country club down there and  
24 I'm talking, I spent some bad days down there as far as, you know, working wise goes,  
25 but the environment and stuff was a lot nicer. It was, uh, so that's, then that's where I  
26 stayed until things closed up.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** What were your responsibilities in the power plant?

29  
30 **GARY SPECHT:** Um. When I first went down there I filled in on the shift jobs, I, I  
31 was, uh, a power plant utility and I would fill in from on vacation relief and stuff, which  
32 kind of sucked because those guys would all take their night term week. So, I might be  
33 working four or five weeks of night shift in a row. But maybe that was easier than  
34 swinging shift. I don't. But, eh, I, I stayed on the daylight on the utility job. So, now that  
35 these guys, these older guys that were there from the get-go were retiring and there  
36 started to be a pretty big turnover I was able to stay on the daylight job and, and that's  
37 what I did. I stayed on the utility job until '99 and that's when I took the salary position.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** What did it mean to be on the utility job in the power plant? What  
40 did you actually do?

41  
42 **GARY SPECHT:** I loved it. Cause it was, it was all over the place. You weren't doing  
43 the same thing every day. They had their own sewage treatment plant you took care of.  
44 They had, uh, you know, just routine maintenance. There was, well, we would, um, clean  
45 the fly ash out of the boilers and, uh, and stuff like that and, uh, you would help the guys  
46 with the coal handling and the coal cause we got our coal in by barges and stuff, you



1 know, helped those guys out and that and I, I really liked that job. I did and when I first  
2 got it, me and the other guy, I worked 10 days of daylight cause there was a steady  
3 daylight job and then I'd get four days off. So every other weekend I had a Friday,  
4 Saturday, Sunday, and Monday off. And I, that was the best schedule I ever worked the  
5 whole time I was down there. I loved that. Every other weekend, uh, I'd get a long  
6 weekend. You'd finish up at 2:30 on Thursday and you didn't have to be back till 6:30 on  
7 Tuesday and it worked out great.

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9 (0:49:14)

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11 **INTERVIEWER:** So, when did you get that position in the, the daytime utility gang?

12  
13 **GARY SPECHT:** When I went down there in '89, it probably took, mm, I want to say  
14 two years before I was finally cleared of shift work, you know, having to fill in and stuff.  
15 I would get it once in a while prior to that, uh, after the first year or so I was down there I  
16 would get stuck with it once in a while. So, there was extra guys off sick or something  
17 like that, but probably after about two years I was pretty safe with the daylight job,  
18 probably early '90s. Uh. It worked out well because my kids were coming along and I  
19 was able to coach this and do the scouts with that, you know. It was like working a  
20 normal person stuff. I'd never wanted to stay on the swinging shifts down there. That was  
21 my goal. It took me a long time, but I didn't want to do that for the rest of my life. I don't  
22 know how those guys worked that stuff. A lot of them liked it because the money was  
23 better, but, uh [Laughter] it wasn't any fun.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay and then you were promoted to?

26  
27 **GARY SPECHT:** The salary position. And that's what I was. I was the boss of the  
28 utility guys and the coal handling department and the laborers. And I really, that first five  
29 years or so I had that job were probably some of most rewarding of all my time down  
30 there. I mean I had a crew of very good people. Those guys were great. Uh. Everybody  
31 got along and I, you know, I mean honest to God, I hate to say, use the cliché I didn't  
32 mind going to work, but I didn't and there was times when we had outages or stuff down  
33 there and you'd spend the weeks getting all this stuff prepped for, you know, taking the  
34 boilers offline and stuff and I'd have to draw up all these schedules and plans and I liked  
35 that. I really did. I mean we would work 12-hour days during those outages and we'd  
36 bring a grill out and food and stuff and it was a good time. It was fun.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you get any kind of, um, management training or supervisor  
39 training when you were promoted to that position?

40  
41 **GARY SPECHT:** No. Not really. I mean they had me with, um, my previous boss. The  
42 guy whose job I took. They had me with him for a couple months cause they knew he  
43 was going, but that was the extent of it. I mean, the company used to make us go to safety  
44 classes once a year or something, but back in the old days I guess there was formal  
45 training for management people. They used to go to Dale Carnegie classes and all this  
46 other stuff, but that wasn't. They were just looking for bodies. [Laughter]

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**INTERVIEWER:** Who was the supervisor you replaced?

**GARY SPECHT:** Uh. Bob Caplinger. Great guy. I still keep in touch with Bob. He retired down Florida. As a matter of fact I buy his Steeler tickets off of him every year. [Laughter] So we keep in touch. He is a good man.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were the biggest challenges you faced as a supervisor in the power plant?

**GARY SPECHT:** When I first went on there, man, it was, like I said, it was a piece of cake. Those guys and, uh, if I rattled off those names anybody you talked to would tell you they were some of the best people in that, not in the power plant, but in the whole plant. But as they started leaving and you were getting these new guys in and these were guys off the street. It was really tough cause they didn't know the job. Some of, uh, some of 'em didn't care to learn the jobs. It was just a different mindset from what it was years ago with what, what you're dealing with. I mean, my gosh, I can remember if you had a personal phone call they, who, uh, the, whoever was in the office would answer the phone and ask whoever was calling, your wife, your mom, your pop, whatever, if it was an emergency and if it wasn't, he'll call you on his break. Click. Now, I'm down there trying to show guys jobs and dealing with them. "Oh, wait I got a text message." Oh, God, those old bosses I had they would've smashed that phone in a thousand pieces. [Laughter] You'd a been looking for another job in a hurry. So that was the biggest thing. But before, you always had guys coming and going, coming and going and there was like I said that continuity there from training, you know, people from this and that, that, that, that they didn't do that anymore. It was lost. And they, they didn't care. I mean they, they would take you and then put you over there and say, "Okay. You're going to be a, uh, uh, a utility person in the, in the power plant." And they'd take you around for two days and that'd be the end of it. So that, that really made it tough. As the old hands left, I guess.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was your biggest accomplishment as a supervisor in the power plant?

**GARY SPECHT:** I, whenever I took that job, I just kinda over at that time, 30 years down there, I kind of tried to take the best from everybody I ever worked for and I looked at the good bosses I had. The Bob Caplingers and, uh, my dad was very well respected down there. The way he treated people and, and some of the other ones I had in the furnace plant, and that's what I tried to do with my guys, you know. I mean, the fellows that would work for you, you, they were, I don't want to say rewarded, but, uh, I mean, if you, you didn't bother them as, you didn't have to bother them. And I think, uh, when some of those older guys when they retired and stuff and told me that I was, uh, the best supervisor they ever had, I mean, that made me feel very, very good. I mean, you're talking guys that had 40 years down there and, and stuff and I, you know, we'd throw a retirement party for 'em and stuff and I, I liked to think that they liked me even when I

1 had to tell 'em because I, I mean I wasn't, I knew bosses that were mamby pamby that  
2 wouldn't say, "Okay. Come on. We got to get this done." They would just whoosh, be  
3 whooshy washy or go do it themselves. I mean I wasn't going to do that. I had to  
4 supervise you, I supervised you. But you know you, those guys, that made me feel good.  
5 Like I said, I thought I was, you know had a little bit of respect there, which as time went  
6 on that all went out the window. It, it really did. And that's one of the things that  
7 Horsehead did to us. As they kept stomping their salary people into the dirt, these, um,  
8 hourly guys they thought, you know, they thought you were joke.

9  
10 (0:56:20)

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you mean by Horsehead stomping the salary guys?

13  
14 **GARY SPECHT:** They, at one time, the salary people had better this, better that, better  
15 pension, better hospitalization, you know, they didn't and all this stuff. They, they kept  
16 picking away this till the hourly guys. Let me put it this way. If Horsehead would've been  
17 there when I went on salary, I would've never took that job. No way. No way. I mean by  
18 that, I was stuck. [Laughter]

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Why were they cutting back on?

21  
22 **GARY SPECHT:** Cause they could.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, just a cost savings?

25  
26 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. Yeah. Yes. So, they could shove more in their pocket. But  
27 because they could with the salary people. You had no choice. You don't like it leave.  
28 You know, and, and that's what it ended up. I mean the hourly guys, my God, they were  
29 making more money than us. And we had to put up with the phone calls in the middle of  
30 the night cause this isn't working or that's not doing something, uh, like I said, if it  
31 would've, if they would've been there in '99 I'd had never took that job.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** What new technologies, regulations, or environmental concerns  
34 affected the running of the power plant during your time there?

35  
36 **GARY SPECHT:** Our, our biggest one, our number one was that we did not have any  
37 scrubbers on our units and our sulfur emissions. We had to use low sulfur coal. And the  
38 low sulfur eastern coal was very hard to find. It was getting harder to find and, and they  
39 had to start buying this, um, Potter River basin coal which was out of Wyoming and that  
40 was cheaper. They were able to make the emissions, but it didn't have but half the BTUs  
41 of the eastern coal and that just created a ton of problems down there. I mean that, at that  
42 time, the writing was pretty much on the wall for that place. Uh. We couldn't have ran  
43 like that. Uh. I, you, we used to shut units down like once a year. You'd take one down  
44 for an outage and then you would take another one down for an outage. Uh. We couldn't  
45 keep them things running for a month without stuff plugging up and, you know, it was  
46 just they weren't made, designed to run like that. And, uh, when that started happening,

1 it, it just, like I said, the writing, uh, anybody that didn't think that plant was going to  
2 close somewhere along the line with Shell or not, you know, uh, the writing was on the  
3 wall. I was just glad I was where I was with my life and child raising and all that stuff  
4 when it, when it came down. If I would've been somebody with young kids or whatever  
5 I'd have been scared. [Laughter] But I was glad. [Laughter] I really was. My wife's even  
6 told me that. She said, "You are so much different." I said, "Yeah, I know."

7  
8 (0:59:28)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Since you retired?

11  
12 **GARY SPECHT:** Oh, yeah. I don't get those phone calls at three o'clock in the  
13 morning that this ain't working or that ain't working. It's a lot better. A lot easier on me.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** So, uh, I understand the power plant produced enough power not  
16 only for St. Joe, but there was surplus?

17  
18 **GARY SPECHT:** Yes.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** To sell elsewhere. Um. Who were the customers that the surplus  
21 power was sold to and do you have some sense of what percent of the power was needed  
22 for St. Joe and what percent was sold?

23  
24 **GARY SPECHT:** We, when we had our good, when we had the good coal our plant,  
25 um, our output down there we could get about, oh, let's say 60, maybe 120 or 150  
26 megawatts out of those units. Plant load was, uh, in the 70s, the low 70s megawatt-wise.  
27 So, you know, we're probably what 25-30% that we could put out on the grid. Now,  
28 before, right before all this PRB stuff started and, um, and, and things just totally got out  
29 of hand, we had a really hot summer. I mean there was days where we were making six  
30 figures selling power in a day. They actually had a cutoff for the pricing that if it got so  
31 high, they would cut power to the furnaces cause they were making more selling power  
32 than they were making zinc. But that all, I mean, my God, there at the end we couldn't  
33 even make plant load with those poor things. I mean, we were lucky to get 40 or 50  
34 megawatts out of both units, where before that was, one could easily do that. That was  
35 bad. Uh. They weren't made to do that. But they did, I mean, they made a lot of money  
36 selling power. Now, we went through a Duquesne Light, but as things went on and I  
37 don't know the whole gist of power sales, but there was PJM, it was called. And it was  
38 some public utility things. I mean, cause we would have, we had computers in the control  
39 room and you could watch and see in the summertime it getting red along the east coast  
40 and how the power prices were going. Now, how can they tell that your little 110  
41 megawatt power plant here's electrons are getting out to Philadelphia. I don't know. But  
42 that's the way it worked. And my God, uh, the prices sometimes, they would go sky high.  
43 Just for an example, I mean, you might be sitting there and paying 30, uh, \$30 a  
44 megawatt and all of a sudden six hours later it is up over 800. That is a lot of money.  
45 [Laughter] You know, uh, you know, real fast, but they did. They, they, they did make a  
46 good bit out of that until they ran it into the dirt.

1  
2 (1:02:31)

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** In, uh, in 1987, St. Joe Resources Company and New Jersey Zinc  
5 combined and formed Zinc Corporation of America...

6  
7 **GARY SPECHT:** Zinc Corporate. Yeah.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Which was owned by Horsehead Industries. How would you  
10 compare working under ZCA to what was before and what was still to come?

11  
12 **GARY SPECHT:** Right in the middle. [Laughter] Before, uh, as I said, well, when,  
13 when, uh, even though it was still St. Joe it was owned by Fluor Corporation, but it  
14 seemed like they were still putting money in the place, you, you know, like the Larviks  
15 for example. Uh. [Cough] That was when we were still owned by Fluor. Um. Zinc  
16 Corporation wasn't near as bad as Horsehead. They were there not, you didn't see the  
17 innovation and stuff that you did with old St. Joe, you know, the research and  
18 development and, uh, everything you know, where they were trying to do something  
19 different to develop the product or, you know, looking at new facets of it, but, uh, that,  
20 that was the big difference between Zinc Corp and St. Joe and, and Horsehead they were  
21 just taking whatever they could get and that was the end of that.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** From your perspective of having advanced from a laborer to a  
24 supervisor from an hourly worker to a salaried, uh, employee, who would you  
25 characterize the rapport between management and laborers at the plant?

26  
27 **GARY SPECHT:** From '74 when the union got in till '79, that was terrible. I can't  
28 speak of before '74, but like I eluded to earlier the, the, the issues they had with guys  
29 purposely sabotaging equipment and stuff, uh, I just, it was, it was, uh, totally out of  
30 hand.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** In your opinion, what were the most significant innovations at the  
33 plant, whether they were technological, organizational, or product-wise?

34  
35 **GARY SPECHT:** Well, uh, I mean a lot of people will tell you, uh, uh, that that power  
36 plant going in in the late '50s was the savior for that, for them. And there was a lot of  
37 people that had, that said if that power plant ever closes down this plant is going to close  
38 down and that kinda held true, but I don't think that was the entire reason. Um. And that's  
39 something like I eluded to. When St. Joe was there it seemed like they were. Like the zinc  
40 dust, you know. They put that in, in the, in the mid-'70s there. And the Larvik furnaces.  
41 They were just always looking at. The most significant I would have to say would've  
42 been the power plant in the timeframe that I could remember. Cause that place used a lot  
43 of electricity. [Laughter]

44  
45 (1:06:07)

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What system was in place for evaluating employees for raises and  
2 promotions?  
3

4 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. I honestly when the union got in there we all got 'em the same.  
5 Now, before that, those guys told me jobs had three rates. And that was one of the  
6 complaints the guys had, you know, prior to the union getting there. Like you had a  
7 starting like if you were a learner and then you had the rate and then you had top rate.  
8 Well unless you were the friend of the boss's you never got the top rate or anything. But  
9 as far as how they evaluated that whether it was just on your foreman or what I'm not  
10 sure, but I do know that's the way those old guys told me it was.  
11

12 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you aware of any, uh, bonus incentives if production goals were  
13 exceeded or, or costs were, production costs were kept down?  
14

15 **GARY SPECHT:** We did have that for a short period of time and then they think, we  
16 had a couple that were pretty good and then I don't know what happened to that. I think  
17 they figured out how to cook the books or something, but prior to the salary people had a  
18 lot. They had a lot of incentives like that. But the hourly guys didn't prior to the  
19 shutdown. Um. I mean the salary people they had, they got their share of the stock and  
20 stuff like that. I mean, you worked, but you got, you were compensated for it. Um. But  
21 the, yeah, the hourly guys there was no, at least not that I'm aware of.  
22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** You have a couple of artifacts on that table behind you.  
24

25 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh-hmm.  
26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you maybe turn around and, and grab the, the meal ticket book  
28 and the security badge? Okay. Talk, talk to me about security at the plant.  
29

30 **GARY SPECHT:** Security. [Laughter] Uh. They chased me around a few times when I  
31 was a kid. [Laughter] Well that whole farm area along Raccoon Creek down there, that  
32 was our swimming holes and stuff down there and it was funny because when I started at  
33 the mill and I got to know some of those guards and I'd tell 'em, "Yeah, they, yeah."  
34 Cause they would laugh about it. Yeah. We'd see those kids down there. They had a truck  
35 with a red light on top like they were the police or something. Because that was actually  
36 separate from the mill. So they would drive down there. Um. And they did. They had  
37 their own security force. Now, there towards the end they did not. They, uh, they hired it  
38 out. You know, they farmed it out. But it was a good deal. I mean a lot of the guys were  
39 guys that maybe they had a plant injury or something and they could not work in the, in  
40 the, in the mill anymore or whatever. And they would give them jobs like that. I mean, it  
41 seemed like they always found room for somebody somewhere, you know, to try to, to  
42 keep them working. But there was an old fellow, now he was gone by the time I started  
43 there, but I heard stories about him. This fellow's name was Everett Ryan and I guess he  
44 was [Laughter] like a Marine drill sergeant or something. But he was head of security and  
45 the yard department. I'm sure in some of those old books, you know, you, you'd see his  
46 picture, but, uh, like I said, they did not just patrol the café or the, the plant itself. They

1 did all the farm and all the, the property around there that they own. I guess actually  
2 during the war they carried guns I heard.

3  
4 (1:09:41)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they have access to guns other than during the war time even if  
7 they weren't on them all the time?

8  
9 **GARY SPECHT:** Not that I'm aware of. Now I know a fellow that bought actually and  
10 this was probably back in the late '80s or so a shotgun that was company property. That  
11 was still laying around there, but that, I never saw 'em, you know, armed.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Have you heard any other stories pertaining to World War II and the  
14 plant's involvement? Um.

15  
16 **GARY SPECHT:** Uh. Just the, the number of women, you know. Naturally they had a  
17 lot of those in there. Um. There are pictures in some of those *Catalysts* of those getting  
18 the, those awards. I can't remember what they were called. V awards or something.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, the E award.

21  
22 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. Yeah. For production and that stuff. Um. And, uh, in the  
23 auditorium there used to be a plaque up there, you know, this guys that served and, uh, all  
24 the ones that lost their lives and stuff. Uh. I always wondered what happened to that  
25 thing. I've looked around for it. It was sitting in the old credit union for a long time, but I  
26 don't know where it went. I hope to a good home.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Any idea what roles women were playing in the plant during the  
29 war?

30  
31 **GARY SPECHT:** They worked in the mill in the plant from what I heard, you know.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** When, when you say the mill, like what departments?

34  
35 **GARY SPECHT:** The furnace plant and all that stuff. Yeah. Yeah. Actually, I, uh,  
36 when I started there, there was still a few of them left. Not in the furnaces. [Coughs]  
37 Excuse me. But there was one out in the, in the maintenance that made bombs. Now has  
38 anyone mentioned to you about the furnace bombs?

39  
40 (1:11:20)

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Yes. I've heard about the bomb maker.

43  
44 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah, that's what she, she would weld these pipes up and make these  
45 bombs out of 'em.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember her name?

2

3 **GARY SPECHT:** No, I do not.

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** She's a legend.

6

7 **GARY SPECHT:** [Laughter]

8

9 **INTERVIEWER:** Here.

10

11 **GARY SPECHT:** The cafeteria. [Laughter]. It was great. Those ladies took care of me  
12 so, oh, especially when I first started and I was a kid. You know. You're Herman's boy. I  
13 mean, you could go over there for a dollar and I mean to tell you, you had, you had a full  
14 belly when you left. And it was nice because it, it was open 24/7. They never closed. So  
15 if you got stuck working a double or, or whatever. You know. Well they actually would  
16 write you a meal ticket out, uh, it was, might've been for \$2 at the start or something. You  
17 know. And you could go over there and get \$2 worth. They sold, they sold cigars and  
18 stuff like that over there too. Chewing tobacco, razor blades, socks, whatever, you know,  
19 you wanted to buy. Uh. The ladies, like I said, most of them were really super. And the  
20 guys in the individual departments would have coffee pots and, uh, I mean, you know, set  
21 up and stuff and, and guys would pay for, you know, if you wanted a cup of coffee, it  
22 might've been a nickel. You could use this just like your, your money. And there were  
23 other guys they would go, these were \$10 meal vouchers. You filled out a paper and it  
24 came out of your paycheck. There was a lot of fellows they would take this \$10, go over  
25 to so and so in the furnace plant and get \$9 cash money for it and stop at the bar. But I  
26 can't remember what it was, the limit was, because I think some of the wives were yelling  
27 these guys, uh, well you know, you'd have \$40 or \$50 missing out of a paycheck and  
28 you're only making \$3 or \$4 an hour that was a lot of [Laughter] money, so they'd, they  
29 cut back on how many you could get in a, in a pay period.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you just open it up so we can see what the tickets look like?

32

33 **GARY SPECHT:** Sure. We have 50 cent tickets, good, says good, good for value  
34 shown in the company cafeteria, and we had 25 cent tickets and we had 5 cent tickets.  
35 And, uh, as I said you could go over there, and, and they, well they would make  
36 sandwiches too. The breakfast sandwiches they made. I have never had a ham and egg  
37 sandwich like that in my entire life. I don't what those ladies did, but those sandwiches  
38 are legendary. They were so good. Uh. That was, uh, uh, it was a good place. And I, I  
39 actually heard that the railroaders and stuff would actually stop and go in there and eat. I  
40 mean, they made all their own pies and, and, and stuff like that. So it was, it was a pretty  
41 good deal. I was disappointed when they didn't open it back up. [Laughter] Back to the  
42 vending machines.

43

44 (1:14:34)

45



1 **INTERVIEWER:** In addition to providing employment to a lot of people in the Beaver  
2 Valley area, how did St. Joe's contribute to the larger community?

3  
4 **GARY SPECHT:** United Way. Oh, my God. The United Way drives. They were big  
5 into that. Um. They also on their property, the Beaver County Humane Society was there  
6 for years. They charged them a dollar a year rent for the property and I mean that just  
7 ended here, I don't, you know, with Horsehead's pullout or whatever. They were still, you  
8 know, there. Um. But it, it did seem like and oh, Mr. Weaton, the property he had in  
9 Potter Township, I mean, where they put Potter Elementary School, he donated the  
10 property and stuff and they helped, you know, get that school built and stuff for the, for  
11 the township. They also, I know they had gave them an old, you know, they had  
12 firetrucks down there and stuff that they'd gave to the community and that and it was, it  
13 was a different atmosphere as far as that stuff goes. Being involved with the community.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Back to the power plant for a second. The power plant shut down  
16 before the plant did.

17  
18 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** So how did the plant? When, when did the power plant shut down?

21  
22 **GARY SPECHT:** 2000, September 2011. Yes. September 10th one unit went down  
23 and September 11th the other one went down. And part of the reason that that came about  
24 is because of the industry that shut down, uh, in this area and a lot of areas there's not as  
25 big of demand for power. So they were able to get a contract with Penn Power or  
26 whoever it was to supply them with power at a cut rate. And that's what happened and by  
27 that time, like I said, our place was so inefficient and, you know, they, they could get it  
28 cheaper on it like that. But since I took care of the sewage plant and some other water  
29 stuff and the landfill, Gary was the only one there. Everybody left and I was [Laughter]  
30 like the Maytag repairman down there.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** So when did you retire?

33  
34 **GARY SPECHT:** I was actually working for them still until December, last December.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, December of 2015? Okay.

37  
38 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah. I was still. I was taking care. They have, uh, a landfill down  
39 there by Racoon Creek and stuff. I was taking care of that.

40  
41 (1:17:22)

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So December of 2015.

44  
45 **GARY SPECHT:** 15. Yeah.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** So, uh, that's a year ago.  
2  
3 **GARY SPECHT:** Yeah.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
6  
7 **GARY SPECHT:** And actually, they, even after the power plant closed, like I said,  
8 because the sewage treatment plant was there, er, even when the rest of the plant closed  
9 they were still using that for a while. So, I was still taking care of that down there too.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** I had a few last questions.  
12  
13 **GARY SPECHT:** Go ahead.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?  
16  
17 **GARY SPECHT:** Wow! Once you got in, you couldn't get out I guess. [Laughter]  
18 You know, like I said, for the most part, I didn't have, I, uh, it wasn't a bad time down  
19 there, you know, my time down there. And then you start having a baby, you get married  
20 and start having babies [Laughter] you're done as far as a career change goes.  
21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part, a favorite memory or anecdote about  
23 working at the zinc plant?  
24  
25 **GARY SPECHT:** Hmm. Well, like I, the best part overall was the, like I, the time  
26 when I first got on salary. Um. Or, as far as you looking at just somebody that was funny  
27 or got character stuff, well, then we could go back to Mr. Willie Heinz, and I'm sure if  
28 you talked to other people that name will come about. Cause he, he actually did our,  
29 some of the magic show stuff and that at the, uh, the Christmas parties and that. He was a  
30 pipefitter by trade in the mill. But one thing Willie did is he was over, we had our own  
31 safety department. Our own first aid department. We had our own nurses and, and staff  
32 down there and actually that was staffed 24/7. And we would get tested for cadmium or  
33 whatever once in a while and, um, Willie went over there to do a urine sample. Well  
34 Willie took with him, uh, one of the things that they had at the café all the time was  
35 lemon blend in the big containers. He took a thing [REDACTED] in the urine sample and  
36 went out and drank it in front of a nurse. He, at first, he held it up to the light and he  
37 looked at it and he said that don't look too good maybe I'll run it through again and he  
38 drank it. And I guess there was some people involved with that that did not think that was  
39 too funny, but I thought it was hilarious. [Laughter] But that was pretty much him in a  
40 nutshell. But there was a lot of guys like that and I mean they made, uh, they made the  
41 day to day grind in a dirty, dusty, hot environment tolerable, you know, I mean they were  
42 a good bunch of guys for the most part. They really were.  
43  
44 (1:20:16)  
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46 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

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**GARY SPECHT:** I can't. Like I said, I kinda wished it would've stayed the same, but nothing stays the same. Uh. And as I said, the last 10 years were a real struggle under Horsehead. I, I think that would've been how it'd been better if would've just been under our own banner instead of the changeover.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

**GARY SPECHT:** It was funny cause I had two of 'em. [Laughter] Uh. When they were shutting the power plant down and they called me in there and Bruce Morgan, who was the hatchet man, he said, "Here do this and do that, and, uh, okay. You're done." Well before I got home, they called me because they forgot Gary took care of this. Gary took care of that, and so they got me back. So, I went back down there. Um. It was sadness. Uh. You know, because I, because the power plant closed in 2011 and I was still there and I still maintained my office down there until, you know, for a couple years after that, it was sad walking through the place, you know, and seeing that falling apart.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

**GARY SPECHT:** I, you know what, I, I'm fine. And, uh, honest to God and that's what I told people too. As far as that plant closing down, I, uh, that didn't bother me. It was just the way we were treated that bothered me. I mean things change. Nothing's there forever. Uh. The only problem I got with Shell is the damn traffic. [Laughter] Hopefully the roads gets fixed up. But no that's cool. That's a good deal. We need something around here for sure.

**INTERVIEWER:** Well, that's the end of my prepared questions, but is there something you'd like to add that we didn't cover?

**GARY SPECHT:** No. I think that's pretty much it. We're good.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much.

**GARY SPECHT:** You're welcome. I enjoyed it.

(END)

**Herman Specht**  
**Interview @ September 29, 2016**

## **HERMAN SPECHT**

### **Summary**

The interview with Herman Specht took place on September 29, 2016, in the kitchen of his home in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. Herman worked at the St. Joe zinc plant from September 1956 to February 1997. Other than 8-10 months in the refinery, he spent his career in the furnace plant, working in many positions, including utility gang, casting machine foreman, condenser foreman, shift foreman, and assistant general foreman.

Herman provides a well-rounded perspective of many aspects of the furnace plant. He explains how the furnaces and condenser worked, what it means to tap a furnace, and how environmental concerns were addressed. Herman describes the weekly shifts (evening turn, daylight, and night turn) and the friendships that developed within shifts. Other topics include safety training, meetings, and precautions; management training the company provided when he became a supervisor; and the management/staffing hierarchy within the furnace plant. He also highlights changes in staffing and operations in the furnace plant when the downsized plant reopened in 1980, and the role of women working at the furnace plant, including one known for making pipe bombs to break up materials choking the furnace.

Regarding social and recreational programs for St. Joe employees, Herman shares details about the auditorium/gymnasium—what it looked like and the events, amenities and activities there, including safety banquets, movies, the weight room, and shuffleboard. He also talks about sports teams, interplant softball games, and the golf league. Also noteworthy is Herman's discussion about the County Home after it closed and the company adapting it for offices and creating a picnic area and bocce courts for employee use.

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**HERMAN SPECHT**  
**INTERVIEW - 09/29/2016**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
HERMAN SPECHT

**INTERVIEWER:** Today's date is September 29, 2016. This is an interview with Herman Specht.

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Right.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um. Herman, um, thank you for participating in this. Could you please state your name and spell it please?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Herman Specht. S-P-E-C-H-T.

**INTERVIEWER:** And, uh, your date of birth and your full address please.

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Pennsylvania. My full address here or where I was born?

[Laughter]

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh, well first let's do your date of birth.

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Okay. 02/16/35.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And your full home address.

**HERMAN SPECHT:** [REDACTED], Aliquippa 15001.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. And you mentioned that you will be in Arizona for...

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Well, we, yeah, we, we kinda... My first wife passed away in 2000 and the wife I have now, she's originally from California. And her family is there. My family is here. So one year we spend Christmas there and one year we spend Christmas here. So this is the year we go out. So we're leaving in October.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Um. I'm trying to figure out when... Just to note that interruption was I was tracking down where, uh, where Herman's going to be located in Arizona for forwarding his transcript. Um. Are you currently working or retired?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** No. Retired.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year did you stop working for the company?

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3 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I started working for the company in September of 1956, and I  
4 finished up in February 1997.

5

6 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area?

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8 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, yes. All my life. Born and raised here.

9

10 **INTERVIEWER:** Did anyone in your family work at St. Joe's?

11

12 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Only my son after me, but nobody before me. No.

13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you find out about a job at St. Joe's?

15

16 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well, my friends... I, I'd been down to St. Joe when I was  
17 younger. You could go to the auditorium to the gymnasium if, if you had somebody that  
18 would take you down. You just couldn't go down and play basketball or whatever. But  
19 friends of mine, their father worked down there, so I went down and I kinda met most of  
20 the people. Basically the guy that ran the gymnasium. But, uh, I, the one guy that I ran  
21 around with, his, uh, father worked down there and we went to the service together. We  
22 volunteered for the draft and we came back, and he said, "What are you going to do when  
23 you get out?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Well come on down. We'll put our  
24 application in at St. Joe." I said, "All right." So I went down and put an application in,  
25 and they said, "Well come on down tomorrow and take your physical." And I said, "Well  
26 I can't. I still have a week to go before I get out of the service." Well they said, "As soon  
27 as you get out, you come down." So I went down and I got out of the service on the 21st  
28 of September, and I started St. Joe on the 27th. So it was... If you knew some people,  
29 you could get in there pretty easily. But it was, uh, it was a good place to work.

30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was that person who shepherded you in there?

32

33 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Ronald Patton. We called him Jay Patton. He passed away.

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** What were your other options for local employment at that time?

36

37 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, J&L, the American Bridge, everything. It was, there was so  
38 much going on around here in the '50s, the late '50s. It wasn't even funny. All the steel  
39 mills were buzzin'.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** In general, did your co-workers move to this area because St. Joe  
42 offered employment or did St. Joe employ people who happened to live in the area?

43

44 0:04:15

45

1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I think most of it was people that happened to live in the area.  
2 Maybe when they first started up, because they came from, uh, St. Joe, Missouri and they  
3 might've brought some people that was at St. Joe's Lead Company. They made, they, uh,  
4 had the lead mines out in Missouri, and then they came here to build this plant. So I  
5 imagine they brought some people with them, but I do some know older guys that were  
6 from the area that did work in building the plant. So, it was a little bit of both I guess.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** During your time with the company, did people refer to the plant as  
9 being in Josephtown or as being in Monaca?

10  
11 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Mostly it was Monaca. Yeah. Uh. Josephtown was when they  
12 first built the place. Yeah. It was that. I think, I think that was an address, but then that  
13 went to Monaca. So...

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** What position and what department were you initially hired for?

16  
17 **HERMAN SPECHT:** When I was hired, with, everybody started in the yard, what they  
18 call the yard, which just was a labor group. And they had Mr. Ryan. He was the, the big  
19 man. He did all the hiring. [Laughs] If you didn't get past him, you didn't get in the  
20 mill. And they had two, two, I think it was two labor groups through different, uh,  
21 pushers on the labor group, and they had 10, 12, 14 guys in the labor group. And as they  
22 needed people in the different departments, then they would take them out of the labor  
23 group and put 'em in the department.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there ever a day when somebody didn't need somebody from  
26 the labor group?

27  
28 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, yeah. We'd, we would just do, uh, regular. But when I first  
29 started they, they were building the power plant, and they were running water lines down  
30 to the power plant, and there's a lot of, uh, river rock in that area and you couldn't put  
31 those right down on a plate. So me and four or five other guys had shovels and we're  
32 putting dirt down there on the pipes so they wouldn't break 'em whenever they started  
33 filling that in. So it, uh, they always had something for us to do. You, you always  
34 worked, always.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** How long, how long were you in the yard?

37  
38 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I started in September. It was probably January, February, I went  
39 in the furnace plant.

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42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you get from the yard to the furnace plant?

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45 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Um. Like I said, we were backfilling a, uh, water line and Mr.  
46 Ryan came down one time, one afternoon, and he said, "Herman, after lunch, I'm taking



1 you up to the furnace plant." He said one of the guys got hurt in there and they need a fill-  
2 in to work on the utility gang, and I said, "Okay." And that was it. He come down in the  
3 afternoon, got me, took me up and introduced to my foreman, and that's where I was.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** And what were your job responsibilities when you started off in the  
6 furnace plant?

7  
8 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Mostly cleanup. [Laughs] You, you did a lot of cleanup  
9 until you got acclimated with what was going on at a place, but, uh, most of it was, was  
10 just cleanup at first.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Any one aspect of the furnace or were you cleaning throughout  
13 the levels?

14  
15 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well the utility gang was, they had different floors they had to  
16 clean and they had, uh, what they called, uh, washers. We had to clean washers and, uh,  
17 different, uh, just odd jobs that, that the utility gang did in the furnace plant.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was your work schedule like then?

20  
21 **HERMAN SPECHT:** You worked six days a week whether you wanted to or not. That  
22 was your schedule, six days and you were off one week Monday and the next week  
23 Tuesday and the next week Wednesday, next week Thursday and if you were lucky then  
24 one time you'd get Saturday or Sunday off. But that didn't happen very often. The utility  
25 gang wasn't bad. That was the, the daylight, but I didn't stay there very long. I ended up  
26 on the shift and that was, that was really different. [Laughs] Well we, when we went on,  
27 when you went on shift you were still working the six days and everybody, like I said,  
28 had a different day off, but in order to change from one shift to the other I worked, uh,  
29 evening turn Saturday. I worked. Back then we worked, evening turn was, uh, uh, six,  
30 two to 10. Was it that? Three to 11. Yeah, two to 10 was the evening turn. Now you  
31 worked Saturday evening turn two to 10 and then you went home. Then you had to come  
32 back on daylight, six to two. That's how you got onto your different shift and I did that  
33 for years. To get from one shift to the next, what they called a short change. Anytime  
34 you got a long change was when you worked daylight on a Saturday and you didn't have  
35 to go out until Sunday midnight. So that was, that was really a long change. Six days a  
36 week was pretty tough, but the pay was good. It was time and a half. So...

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40 **INTERVIEWER:** Did it change at some point from six days to five days?

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42 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, yeah. When the union started getting in. Yeah.

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44 **INTERVIEWER:** But up until that, which was 1974, you were working six days a  
45 week?

1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh. Yeah. '74, '70. See the union was when I... The union  
2 started coming around '74 I believe it was. But just before that they would, you know,  
3 they were trying to keep the union out. They would come around and say, "Look if you  
4 want to work six and five, you can work six days one week and five the next or you can  
5 work five." Whatever you wanted to do. I went, was working six and five, but most of  
6 the guys they wanted the money. They stayed on six days a week. So...

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** If they had the choice...

9  
10 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh-hmm.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Of working five days...

13  
14 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh-hmm.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** What were some of the reasons why they still wanted the union in  
17 there?

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19 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. That's... The biggest problem I think was, uh, uh, probably  
20 retirement. Uh. The retirement package that St. Joe offered wasn't, uh, it wasn't a whole  
21 lot. Of course, when you're young you're not worried about the retirement package. You  
22 want the money. [Laughs] But as guys got older, then they started, uh, they saw that  
23 most of the mills around here had, had unions so they, they finally voted it in. The union  
24 got in.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Backtracking a little bit.

27  
28 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Go ahead.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your first day on the job?

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32 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well you were kinda apprehensive and never been in a mill  
33 before, you know, and you're nervous and you don't want to mess up because you went,  
34 you need the job. So you kinda, just really do not know what to expect. Once you're  
35 there for a day or two, then it, it's pretty simple.

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39 **INTERVIEWER:** Was it easy to, um, make friends with your colleagues there?

40  
41 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, yeah. Everybody was really... Yes. Especially when you  
42 got on shift because you worked with these guys six days a week. The same guys and  
43 that was... If your furnace got, uh, a lot of metal in it, it got bad. The guy next to me  
44 would come over and help you, and it was a lot of friendship afterwards too. We'd  
45 always have parties and somebody was pouring concrete, but half of the shift was there to

1 help him pour concrete. So it was, it was really. It was really a homey atmosphere down  
2 there really.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** How long would someone typically stay in a certain shift schedule  
5 with that group of people?

6  
7 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Quite a while unless you were moving to a different job  
8 level. If a, if a... Usually we stayed right on our own shift. I stayed on the same shift  
9 gosh, for years, because as a job opened up if, as you start out, you were a skimmer, what  
10 they called a skimmer, then you would move up to what was a helper, a skimmer helper.  
11 But then you would move up to operating the furnaces. They had small furnaces and  
12 large furnaces, and so you progressed through the system, and you stayed right there.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of safety training did you get to be working in the  
15 furnaces?

16  
17 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. At first not a lot. You, you learn in a hurry to, to, of course  
18 the guys would, would, uh, clue you in as to what you couldn't do. You, you could put  
19 water on zinc, but you can't put zinc on water. You're in trouble when you do that. So,  
20 it's, uh, it... And we did have, we had, uh, safety meetings once a month. The shift  
21 foreman had to have a safety meeting with everybody and we would go over a lot of  
22 stuff. So they were, they were pretty conscious. Yeah.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you ever injured?

25  
26 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Burns. That's about all. Yeah. All the, the little white  
27 marks that's metal. [Laughs] You deal with these little pieces of metal and, and you get a  
28 lot burns.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you wear safety goggles?

31  
32 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, sure. [Laughs] We, we didn't wear face shields when I first  
33 went there. You wore safety goggles. You didn't have your face covered. So as you  
34 were tapping the furnaces, the metal just splashes. It... It would, uh, splash on you.

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38 **INTERVIEWER:** What does it mean to tap a furnace?

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40 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well, we had, we had a cooling well. Uh. I don't know if you  
41 know much about how the, the nomenclature of the furnace, but anyways it, maybe I can  
42 explain a little bit. The coke and the sinter was put in the top of the furnace, which was  
43 five stories up and it was heated before it was put in. And as it came down it would, uh,  
44 coke made it get hotter and it got down to where the electrodes were, where the power  
45 was to, to really jack up the temperature, and it would turn it into vapor and then when it  
46 got to the, the vapor ring, the floor level, where the, they pulled the vapor out of the

1 furnace and the vapor came out of the furnace and into a condenser. And the condenser  
2 turned that vapor into metal. Uh. Metal in that condenser would go into a cooling well.  
3 And it would keep circulating and you, you kept the temperature, uh, typically around  
4 500 or 495 degrees and in the cooling well and then whenever the furnace got to a certain  
5 point, you had to tap some of that metal out. You had a small hole that you tapped it out  
6 of the cooling well into a, uh, launder and down into a ladle. You filled the ladle up and  
7 you went down and you cast it. A lot of manual labor when I first started there. [Laughs]

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9 **INTERVIEWER:** How did the technology change over time or didn't it?

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11 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well the tapping process changed a little bit with what you plug  
12 the furnace off with. But other than that, from the time I left you were still tapping the  
13 furnace. It was easier because you had a continuous casting machine then. You didn't do  
14 a lot of the manual labor was, was kind of gone. Cause you. We used to dump those  
15 slabs that you saw in that one photo by hand. Those were poured onto a bench and when  
16 the metal solidified, you dumped it out. You caught it and you stacked it. That's how.  
17 So it was a lot of manual labor for years. Until they put the casting machines in.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** When were the casting machines put in?

20  
21 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Probably the late '60s, early '70s, they put, they started  
22 putting those in.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** How many people were on a typical shift in the furnace plant?

25  
26 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. We probably had 35, 40 people on each shift.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was your progression through the furnace plant?

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30 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well I started out in what they call the basement, which is where  
31 all, after this zinc was taken out all the residue went down it, and then you had to take  
32 that out of the furnace and I, I started out down there as a cleanup man. It would make a  
33 mess and you would clean it up. So I've worked down there for all of it. I kinda like the  
34 skimming because it was, uh, cleaner. You didn't get all the dirt. It was a little bit harder  
35 because you were working hard, but, uh, eventually I had enough time to where I come  
36 up on the furnace. And you, you would start out the, the youngest off, the youngest  
37 skimmer got the oldest operator. So you had, at that time, we had 13 furnaces. So the  
38 oldest operator was operating number 13, and he got the youngest skimmer. So you  
39 worked your way down from 13 down and when you got down to the little end then you,  
40 you could become what they call a 69S furnace operator, which was a smaller furnace.  
41 And you progressed up to the larger furnaces. So it was just, uh, it was kinda set down  
42 that that's what you, that's what you would do.

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1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you stay in the furnace plant for your entire career there until  
2 1997?

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4 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. I stayed in the furnace plant. One time it went for, uh, about  
5 eight to 10 months when they built the refinery. I figured, "Oh, I'm going to try  
6 something different." So I went over to the refinery and I ended up. I was doing the same  
7 thing I was doing in the furnace plant really because you cast metal over there too. And  
8 that wasn't my job, but whenever they needed somebody to do that job I'd do it. Well it  
9 was less money than I was making at the furnace plant and I'm doing the same job. I  
10 said, "No, I'm going back to the furnace plant. So until I went on salary I stayed, I stayed  
11 there in the furnace plant almost all the time.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** And once you went on salary?

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15 **HERMAN SPECHT:** In '74. I became a foreman in '74. But I stayed in the furnace  
16 plant. I was a casting machine foreman and then, then, you're what they call a condenser  
17 foreman, a guy that took care of all the operators and that. Then you had the shift  
18 foreman. But I did go out as, uh, assistant general foreman. I went over to the bag house  
19 when they first, that wasn't very, uh, it was the Larvik. Uh. It wasn't, the system wasn't  
20 in that long and it was, it was kinda tough because I knew zinc, but I, the foreman  
21 figured, "Well your, it, you know, this is, you're going to be an assistant general foreman.  
22 You can go ahead to the superintendent." He said you'll be, you know, it's a little bit of a  
23 raise. And all I knew of oxide was it was white. I knew nothing about oxide whatsoever,  
24 but the guys really helped me and I, I probably stayed over there for a couple of years.  
25 Finally I told them. I said, "If you have an opening in the furnace plant, I sure would like  
26 to go back." So I, I did get to go back to the furnace plant. I went back as a utility  
27 foreman. So...

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** When you wanted to change positions, how did that work out? How,  
30 how did you go about doing that?

31  
32 **HERMAN SPECHT:** The biggest thing was what happened was the, I was assistant  
33 general foreman and the general foreman was leaving. And I told the superintendent. I  
34 said, "You know, there's no way I can do either job. I don't know. This guy was college  
35 educated and I'm some guy off the road, you know, off the street coming in here." I said,  
36 "I don't know that much about this place and that if you have somebody that your really  
37 wanting to put there go ahead because I'd just soon come back." And he did. They found  
38 some other people that were there that they, they moved up.

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42 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any kind of HR or, or employment office or personnel that  
43 would place people where they wanted to go or announce job openings, or was it word of  
44 mouth through the plant?

1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Yeah. It was, it was a bidding system. If there was a job, uh, that  
2 came open then, then they would post it all through the plant and you could bid on it and  
3 then they would take the one, I don't know how they really worked it. Probably with  
4 experience or, uh, time and, time in the plant.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the process for placing your bid for a job?

7  
8 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well they had it just, they passed out a box and put your, fill it  
9 out and put it in. They'd take it over to the, the main office and turn it in. So...

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** What, did you have to present a resume on there or fill out?

12  
13 **HERMAN SPECHT:** No, no. Nothing. It was just especially when the salary jobs  
14 they, they picked who they wanted to put on salary, but the, the other jobs they had to  
15 post 'em if they were open. So...

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** So you ended up being a supervisor...

18  
19 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh-hmm.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** In the furnace plant. Did you get any training, management training  
22 about how to be a supervisor?

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24 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Yes.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk about that please?

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28 **HERMAN SPECHT:** They, they brought people in from, from Penn State, and they  
29 would have classes, what they call is we were trainees. And we would work with a  
30 different foreman, what we were gonna, our job was gonna be. Plus they had classes for  
31 us on different ways to deal with the union because the union was in now, and different,  
32 uh, different things to really wake you up. We had, we had, uh, they sent us to Erie to  
33 Behrand Center. It was, it's, uh, part of Penn State College. We was there for a week  
34 problem solving with, with a bunch of other people. There were probably 40 guys, 50  
35 guys and run by the professors from Penn State. It was in the summertime. But we did,  
36 we did, we did a lot of training. Yes. Going to the training usually lasted close to six  
37 months probably. It was nice.

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39 0:22:19

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41 **INTERVIEWER:** What time period was this for you that you did the management  
42 training?

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44 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Probably '74, '75, '76 anyway. You know on my own.

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46 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you assess your performance as a supervisor?

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**HERMAN SPECHT:** Huh. I don't, I didn't have any problems with the guys. It, it's just my situation was I did most of the jobs that I'm supervising. So I'd tell the guys. I said, "Look I know all the hiding places, you know. And I know what's going on. So don't. If I give you a job, do your job and I won't bother you." And that's, that's just about what happened. It's nice when you come up through the ranks and you can watch at the guys a little closer. You know what's going on.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did, um, co-workers in the furnace plant tend to spend their entire careers within the furnace plant or did they move around to other departments?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Most of the older guys once they got in the furnace plant, they kinda, they tended to stay there. We, we had so many guys retire out of there that was in there from the time they started. They just. I don't know. It's, it's, it was a hard job, but it was really interesting. I, I learned a lot in there. I could probably make some zinc now if I had to. So...[Laughs]

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there any rivalry, uh, between people from the furnace plant and people in the leach plant...

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, of course.

**INTERVIEWER:** And people in the packing plant.

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh of course. We always had, uh, some kind of contest going. It, uh, productions. We had, we had productions with, with, uh, with the shifts even. You know. We could produce more or they could produce more or we... One time, I can't recall for sure, the loads were supposed to weigh 3,200 pounds I think it was. And, and they had, on our shift, we would have a week-long contest on which operator could produce the most metal loads that was the closest to that, uh, particular poundage that they wanted or tonnage.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were there any merit bonuses for doing that?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Yeah. Once in a while. Well they, they might have some kind of a prize. Uh. We got jackets and they've always had something going on like jackets and tie tacks and pins and...

0:24:44

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you have any of that here at the house?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** I have tie tacks somewhere. Yeah. I can find you one.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. When we're done with the interview.

1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Okay. I can even give you a beer mug.

2

3 [Laughter]

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** How was working on holidays handled?

6

7 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. What they would do, what we did on, on our crew is we  
8 would cut the furnaces back as far as we could. You couldn't, you couldn't shut the  
9 furnaces down. They, they ran 24/7. So there was no way you could, you could idle 'em  
10 for a little while, but it was, it wasn't, uh, it was kind of frowned on. But we could cut  
11 the power back on 'em so they wouldn't make as much metal and some of the furnaces  
12 that had the high power had three guys on it. Well they'd cut the power back so you'd  
13 only have two guys. So they could leave as many off for the holidays as they could. And  
14 that was usually, some guys didn't want to, some guys wanted to work. You know,  
15 maybe they didn't have any children. Christmas didn't mean that much. So they would  
16 want to work. So they said, we didn't, you just had a raffle. They'd say don't put my  
17 name in. I want to work. So that's, we'd leave five guys off other than what's already off.  
18 Then, then, that's, that's what they would do. So they really tried to help the guys out.

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there extra pay for working the holidays?

21

22 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, yeah. Yes. You always got double time and a half or even it  
23 was your sixth day it was triple time. So that, that's another incentive for the guys that  
24 wanted to work.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** How about vacation time?

27

28 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Vacation time was kinda hard. Uh. Well, it, it went by seniority.  
29 It even went by seniority, uh, for the salary personnel. But what they would like to do,  
30 what they, they couldn't do it a whole lot with the, they did at first with the, uh, with the  
31 payroll people. Uh. Tried to only take, if you have four weeks vacation, try to only take  
32 two in the summertime so some of the younger guys can get off that had children and  
33 really needed the summertime. And that, that worked out pretty good. And what we  
34 would do is they would come around with a vacation schedule and it was mapped out  
35 according to your seniority. So the first guy got it. He picked what he wanted and he'd  
36 give it to the next guy and it just went down the line and come back around again when it  
37 was your turn. So it was, you didn't always get what you wanted to get but you would,  
38 you would take your first choice and then it came back around with what you wanted  
39 after that. Some guys liked hunting season and some guys wanted Christmas. So  
40 everybody had, uh, a little bit of different choice.

41

42 0:27:28

43

44 **INTERVIEWER:** When you started in 1956, how many weeks of vacation did you get?

45



1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh. I think I had to work a year before I got a week. So...  
2 [Laughs] That was another reason the guys wanted a union. They wanted more vacation,  
3 but...  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they, did they get it with the union?  
6  
7 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Probably, maybe a week or so, but I think they changed how  
8 many years you had to have in to get different, uh, levels of vacation. Different, different  
9 weeks.  
10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** And when you retired, how many weeks of vacation?  
12  
13 **HERMAN SPECHT:** About five.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Five.  
16  
17 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh-hmm.  
18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** From your perspective of having advanced from a laborer to a  
20 supervisor, how you would characterize the rapport between salaried employees and  
21 hourly laborers?  
22  
23 **HERMAN SPECHT:** It was, it was, it was very... On my standpoint, it was very good.  
24 I didn't, uh, like I said, I didn't have any problems with the people, but some of the...  
25 Oh, I'd hate to say it, but some of the guys that, you know, the position kind of went to  
26 their head. You know, I'm your boss and you're going to do what I say. Well, you can't  
27 do that a lot of times with people. You gotta. If a guy's having a hard time doing  
28 something you can't really get on his butt. You gotta help him or he's never going to get  
29 it done. So it's, it's just on how you handle people. And it, it, different people handled  
30 'em different.  
31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a formal review process? Were you to review your staff  
33 who worked under you?  
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35 0:29:00  
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37 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Not a formal one. No. We didn't. Uh. I, my boss had one for  
38 me, but I didn't have one for my men. So...  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** But how were raises based, uh, for your...  
41  
42 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Normally it was, uh, time and grade and, you know, how long  
43 you were on the job if, uh, you were on the job for, I don't remember what it was, but if  
44 you were on a job for a certain amount of time, uh, you automatically. Uh. I have my  
45 wage sheet here from when I started to when I went on salary. So I could show you that.  
46 And they would give us incentive raises. So, uh, general raises. But I'm not sure.

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**INTERVIEWER:** So if you had somebody who was were a really stellar worker was there any way that person might get an extra raise?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Well it wasn't up to me, but my superintendent, yeah, you could tell him. You know, "Hey, this guy really deserves something, you know. He's putting out and he should be getting something different." Then other times they would, but then once the union got in it was kinda cut and dry on who got what when. You know. It was, it wasn't, uh, "This guy's my favorite. I'm going to give him more money." You, you didn't do that then. But you had a, you had a, a wage scale and that's, that's what it was.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you just define for me the, the hierarchy of supervision within the furnace plant and who was at, at the top and what were, what were the levels of supervision down to the, the workers?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** We had. We had a superintendent that was in charge of everybody in the, in the furnace plant. And then he had a, a general foreman, and then the general foreman had four shift foremen. And then the shift foremen, the, at one time we had a top floor foreman, a basement foreman, condenser foreman, and the casting machine foreman. On, on every shift. So the, the shift foreman was in charge of those people. That's just about it for the, for us.

**INTERVIEWER:** And where were you in that hierarchy at your highest?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** Well different times I, I, I ended up. I was a shift foreman like I said. When I went over to the other department I was assistant general foreman. They did have one of those. But it was just, I think that was just the status that's all it was. [Laughs] Made a little more money, but that's about it.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you went back to the furnace department, did you go back as a shift foreman?

**HERMAN SPECHT:** No. I, well he told me. He said, "When you come back, you'll still be a general foreman, per se." But I ended up being the utility foreman. The gang that I started on when I first went in there that's the gang that I was supervising when I retired.

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**INTERVIEWER:** I've been hearing about the cafeteria. I'd like to hear what you have to say about that experience.

**HERMAN SPECHT:** It was. The cafeteria was, uh, they had, they had their own butcher. They had ladies that did the baking. And they had, uh, you could not find a, a nicer place to, to eat or better menu than what they had. And really reasonable. It, uh, I think that time they would, they had a little card that you could buy. I think you paid \$5

1 for it. But there was \$10 worth of meals of money on that card. And when you went to  
2 the cashier well she'd take little punch and punch some of it out. Then they come out  
3 with books, which had different denominations of money in that for you. But the  
4 cafeteria was, the ladies were fabulous and, and they had, they had a big farm. They  
5 raised a lot of their own stock and they raised their vegetables and that. It was, it was  
6 really nice, very nice.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** How far into a shift would you get your break to have a meal?

9  
10 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well, but what we would do, when we were working midnight,  
11 uh, we wouldn't even go over cause they, the ladies they kinda, I think they closed like  
12 about 11 o'clock until two or three before they, they had a little break and nobody was,  
13 well the ladies were baking. But then they would open like four-thirty, five o'clock in the  
14 morning. So we would just, we'd get a break and we'd go over for breakfast rather than...  
15 You didn't want a meal in the middle of the night. So but, uh, you made your own time.  
16 With the furnaces, we could make our, you didn't just, you didn't just take a break. You  
17 had to work the furnace to where it wasn't gonna produce any metal that you had to take  
18 out for if you wanted 20 minutes, half hour, you could, you could do that. You could tap  
19 the furnace down and, and then hurry up and go over there and hope there's not a big line  
20 so you can get your food and get back before your furnace went on and started smoking  
21 and raising heck. But, uh, we just made our own time. You could, well, they were pretty  
22 lenient like that. If you had, as long as your cleanup was done and your work was done  
23 then you could sit around for 15, 20 minutes, or half hour and BS with no problem.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were in the cafeteria, did you find that people from  
26 different departments were sitting together and mingling or did like the furnace people  
27 tend to stick together?

28  
29 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Yeah. Mostly because... Especially on daylight because you  
30 had a lot of office personnel coming in. And, you know, who wants to sit beside some  
31 guy that is full of sweat and everything else when I'm working in the office. It, yeah,  
32 they kinda segregated a little bit anyway.

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36 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have a favorite meal?

37  
38 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I loved their corned beef sandwiches. [Laughs] But the ladies  
39 made fabulous pies. They, they were, they were very good cooks. Very good. And you  
40 got a sandwich. When you got a sandwich, those ladies really, really fixed you a  
41 sandwich. Very nice.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** From its beginning in Josephtown, St. Joe had a very active social  
44 and recreational component for employees, things like athletic teams, picnics, holiday  
45 parties. What programs and events were in place during your years at the plant and what  
46 did you participate in?

1  
2 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well the Christmas party was one of the big things that I had two  
3 sons and that was, that was really a big thing for them. They, they really enjoyed that and  
4 they would have it in a gymnasium and they had, it was... The participation was so great  
5 they had two parties in one day. They had one in the morning and one in the afternoon  
6 cause they had so many children. And there wasn't that many employees. I don't know  
7 where all these children came from. But [Laughs] it filled the place up and they, the gifts  
8 were really nice. They, they gave the kids, uh, really nice gifts and, uh, the activities that  
9 went on in there, in that gym was really something. We, it was, uh, it was complete. It  
10 was a regular sized basketball court and you could play, uh, volleyball. They had four  
11 bowling alleys, two tenpins and two duckpins, which is something really, nobody has  
12 those anymore. And a weight room, uh, pool tables. It was, it was, and the big stage.  
13 They had a big stage and at one time they used to have their, what they called their safety  
14 banquets. They used to have those in there and the ladies from one of the local churches  
15 would come down there and cater it. Took care of it. Uh. The safety banquet was, uh,  
16 for recognition, most of that was for tenure, you know, 10 years, 20 years. They'd give  
17 you some little token. And for the plant there was, uh, the people, the, uh, departments  
18 that had a long, uh, no accident, no lost time accident. Uh. They got usually, uh,  
19 something for that. And that got to the point where that go so big we had to, I ended up  
20 on a committee that had that. It's, uh... We had it two nights and we had it in, I don't  
21 know, The Fez. Uh. You're probably not familiar with that, but it's, uh, a place where  
22 everybody has the weddings and that's a very big place. And we would have, uh, guest  
23 speakers and the, the company was really, really into this stuff. But we had sports figures  
24 were speakers and, uh, it was, it was really a nice affair. Very nice. And they always  
25 had, uh, the bowling teams. And Hank would set up a schedule of when your depending  
26 on how the guys were working, when they'd go up, when they'd, uh, bowl. And softball  
27 teams and we played this inter, interplant softball. Plus we played softball, uh, in the, in  
28 Beaver County. A lot of the... I think one time it was, uh, uh, the mills, each mill had a,  
29 had a baseball or a softball team, where we used to set up schedules and play. It was  
30 really a lot of fun and golf. Oh my gosh. I, I started to golf whenever they, uh, built the  
31 mall. That's when I started but they, they had golf teams and the golf league was so big  
32 we had, at one time I know we had a 120 people golfing on Tuesdays. That, that's a big  
33 league and we had field days once, once a month we had field days.

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37 **INTERVIEWER:** What's a field day?

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39 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. An outing where we'd got to a different course. All the guys  
40 would, uh, uh, they would make up teams with all the guys that were going. You'd make  
41 up teams. Then somebody would do the handicap stuff to make up teams. And go to a  
42 different course rather than what you were playing on, on Tuesdays so... But they had a  
43 lot of activities. There was always something going on down there.

44

1 **INTERVIEWER:** When you talk about bowling alleys, pool tables, when would you  
2 use those things? Um. For example, did you come off of a shift and go shoot some pool  
3 with somebody or did you come in when you weren't working to relax?  
4

5 **HERMAN SPECHT:** It was, it was usually your day off or a lot of times they would  
6 schedule. Uh. If you were on a bowling team, they would schedule you to bowl like  
7 from seven to nine and then guys would come down and bowl and go to work and work  
8 midnight. But that's how you would schedule it. Or if you're on daylight, you would, uh,  
9 come down to bowl later. You'd come back later. But that, the funny part of it is when I  
10 first moved out here. I lived in a town and I come out to the country. Huh. When I first  
11 moved out here in '49, like I said, some of the guys that, uh, their fathers worked down  
12 there. So I had an opportunity to go down to the gym a few times and I got to know the  
13 guy that was the athletic director pretty well and I ended up... One year I, when I was 15  
14 I was setting pins in there for him. I don't remember what I was making, but I was, I was  
15 setting pins for him.  
16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they ever make an automatic pin?  
18

19 **HERMAN SPECHT:** No. No. You always had to have somebody set up the pins for  
20 you.  
21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you describe what the auditorium looked like?  
23

24 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh.  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** How it was laid out?  
27

28 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Okay. Well when you first went in, you went up a few steps and,  
29 and that's where the, the auditorium was with a, the, uh, basketball court. It was a full  
30 sized basketball court. Regular hardwood floors with, uh, they had buckets that you  
31 could pick up and put down. We had different, you could have one, two, you could  
32 probably have six buckets that you could put down with basketball. And the bleachers  
33 folded back. And when you were having a function, you could pull the bleachers out and  
34 really had a lot of seating. And then you had a stage, a big stage. In fact, the stage was  
35 so big that a lot of times in the winter time they, they would set up a, a screen and well a  
36 net and you could go up and practice your golf swing to get ready for spring. And then  
37 up on the, uh, uh, the bathrooms there. Then up on the next floor was a weight room and  
38 they also had their photography up there. They had the, uh, cameras where they could  
39 show movies. Put the screen down over on the, uh, on the stage and they could show  
40 movies. And then downstairs is where the, uh, pool table was and oh they had a  
41 shuffleboard place down there, but I don't think anybody ever played that and that's  
42 where the bowling alleys were down there.  
43

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46 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever use the pistol range over at the County Home?

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2 **HERMAN SPECHT:** No. I wasn't into that. That was whenever they, uh, they did  
3 have a team. They were, they had, uh, uh, a team for, I don't know what you want to call  
4 it though. Oh geez. Where they would have, they would shoot, uh, clay pigeons. They  
5 had teams and they, they had some pretty good teams too. That, but I never got into that.  
6 I, I hunted, but I never got into sports past that.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** At least into the 1960s management adjusted the workweek between  
9 40 and 48 hours depending upon the financial situation of the plant, typically driven by  
10 economic forces.

11  
12 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh-hmm.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** During your years, were your hours ever cut back and if so what was  
15 going on at the time to make that necessary?

16  
17 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I had, I can't recall my hours ever been cutting back. I, I worked  
18 right on through until the end of '79 whenever they shut it down. So they were, they were  
19 having some problems. There was some layoffs. That was the first time they'd ever had  
20 some layoffs. And that was mostly because of the imports, what they said. They was  
21 having problems with the imports because when we got laid off we got unemployment  
22 plus we got TRA which was a trade, uh, relation agreement or whatever it was. Since,  
23 since things were coming in that were affecting our job then we got more money on our,  
24 uh, what we got for being laid off. [Laughs] They compensated us a little more. So it  
25 wasn't, for me it wasn't bad because I was on salary. My wife worked in the hospital so I  
26 didn't have any problems. But it was hard for some guys. It was pretty tough.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In the 1970s, um, we started seeing more stringent  
29 environmental standards and regulations. How did those affect the furnace plant and what  
30 you were doing there?

31  
32 **HERMAN SPECHT:** You watched your furnaces. The, the furnaces could, if they got  
33 too much metal in 'em or they weren't vented properly they would make a lot of smoke.  
34 And the smoke in the basement wasn't too bad because the basement was pressurized.  
35 But if you got smoking coming out of the top of the furnace plant and, uh, it was, it was  
36 bad. You were, you were called on it right away. In fact they had, uh, we had a, a  
37 foreman, a general foreman like he was, uh, took care of evening turn and night turn. If  
38 you had any problems you would, you would see him. And what he would do is he  
39 would come and get the shift foreman and maybe one of the furnace plant, other furnace  
40 plant foreman's and you would go over to Vanport across the bridge and look at the mill  
41 and see if anything was smoking. And if it was he marked it down and you went back  
42 and you better straighten it out or you were in trouble. So...

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46 **INTERVIEWER:** What could you, what could you do about smoke coming out?

1  
2 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well, you could cut the power on the furnaces, which was almost  
3 a no-no or you could put what they call a pull on the furnaces so that you were pulling the  
4 vapors out more and you would, and that, you could do that. It wasn't, it wasn't helping  
5 the furnace any in the longevity of the furnace. But, uh, if you could keep your metal  
6 levels pretty constant then it was, uh, there wasn't smoke that was even in 'em.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** For a brief period in 1979, St. Joe closed its Monaca smelter and,  
9 um, then in 1980 it reopened.

10  
11 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh-hmm.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the change from your perspective in the job you were  
14 doing in the, in that transition time?

15  
16 **HERMAN SPECHT:** It was. We ended up with a lot, uh, less employees, and they  
17 were trying to work, uh, more efficient and we had what we used to call deadwood. We  
18 had a lot of people that weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing and that was,  
19 that was one of the ways of really thinning those people out cause they did not get called  
20 back. And the foreman, uh, general foreman, general foremen that would get together  
21 and they kinda knew which people to, that they wanted to call back. Some they had to  
22 call back. They didn't have a choice. If, if some of 'em, whenever they shut down if they  
23 didn't, uh, take their pension, the older people didn't take their pension or take a, um, oh  
24 what do they call it. It is a, if you get so much for each week you had, so much money  
25 for each week. If you didn't take any of that, excuse me, they had to call you back. But,  
26 uh, if you took your separation and everything why they, they'd just call back who they  
27 wanted to.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** How were you able to do the same job with fewer people?

30  
31 **HERMAN SPECHT:** We didn't do, we didn't have as many furnaces on. They cut  
32 back on the number of furnaces that we had too. It, we started building back up. We  
33 ended up. Not quite because, uh, we had four, four small furnaces that we had, what they  
34 call small furnaces. They made the high-grade zinc, was almost pure zinc. They made  
35 the real good stuff. They did away with those. Those were completely knocked down  
36 and that end was filled up. The basement was filled. That was, that end of the furnace  
37 plant was shut down.

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41 **INTERVIEWER:** Why, why would they give up making the high-grade zinc?

42  
43 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well they were getting it over at the refinery. They could make  
44 the high-grade zinc in the refinery. What they did was they took metal from the furnace  
45 plant, shipped it to the refinery, put it down through their, uh, columns and they could  
46 take everything out and it would be 99.99 percent zinc. It's what they made. So we

1 really didn't have to worry about putting the sinter and all that stuff in the, in the smelter  
2 furnaces. Everything was sent over there.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** How did the culture of the plan change before and after the  
5 shutdown?

6  
7 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well like I said it was, it was so much different as far as, uh, the  
8 amount of people you had. I don't, I don't know if it, if it changed really that much. I  
9 don't, I don't really think it did.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you trust that it would stay open at that point?

12  
13 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I did. Yes. Whenever we started back up, I had. I was pretty  
14 sure we were going to go. Like when they shut down, I, I heard different people say,  
15 "Oh, they'll start it back up. They'll start it back up." They had a pretty good workforce.  
16 The guys knew what they were doing and, uh, but you'd get, get enough heads together  
17 you can make some zinc without, uh, not without, but with cutting back on a lot of the  
18 expenses too.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about the County Home?

21  
22 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. That is. Wow. That was a fabulous building. They ended  
23 up using it. Uh. Horsehead ended up using it as their corporate office after, after a while.  
24 But it sat right on the river. It had big pillars that you could look right out and it had a  
25 little jail in it. It had a little jail down below. What the company did was they went down  
26 there and tried to clean it up some and they put, made a picnic area for us. They had put  
27 in bocce courts. You could play bocce. You could play, uh, they had horseshoes. Put in  
28 a big, uh, barbecue pit. Picnic tables. And the shifts would have picnics in the  
29 summertime. We'd have, get a little, maybe two shifts together and go down and have a  
30 picnic. Drink some beer and get together and have fun. But that was a nice building, that  
31 was. A lot of people were scared of that building. [Laughs] Because of all of the old  
32 people that had been in there at one time. They, they said, some of the guards would say,  
33 "Oh, that place is haunted." [Laughs]

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35 0:50:37

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Ever hear any good stories about that?

38  
39 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Boy I've heard them say they heard, heard things that, uh...  
40 Nobody was supposed to be there, but they heard things, heard noises around in the  
41 building. Yeah. I, I never got down there that much.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** So when you started in '56, there were still residents at the County  
44 Home.



1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I, I think there were because there, I don't think they built the  
2 County Home yet. The one out on, on Dutch Ridge. I don't think that was. I can't recall  
3 when it was, but, uh, it was, it was still being used.

4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. They were there until '59.

6  
7 **HERMAN SPECHT:** '59. Okay. Oh.

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Have you heard any stories about women who worked at the plant  
10 during World War II?

11  
12 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Yeah. There were. Not stories, but they had, uh, one woman. I  
13 know she made what we called, we... It's going to sound stupid but, uh, we made bombs  
14 down there. [Laughs] Like that's supposed to sound stupid. But our furnaces, uh, the  
15 vapor rings in the furnace would get, uh, tight and you couldn't, you couldn't, uh, loosen  
16 'em up. So what they did was they made ports around the vapor ring and they made a  
17 bomb. They, they would take a piece of pipe, a small piece of pipe and weld one end, put  
18 water in it and fill it almost clear up and then weld, weld the other end. So when you  
19 heated that up, you had a bomb. And we used to use those in the furnace. We would put  
20 'em in the furnace and the heat in the furnace would break that, break what was, uh, break  
21 the sinter and everything that was choking in there it would break it up. But one woman  
22 that's what she did. She, she made those. Another lady was, uh, we had the metal,  
23 whenever we dumped the metal and caught it we had a hand pad that we put over our  
24 gloves. And it was a pretty good size pad. It was cut, but it was made out of different  
25 layers of material. And that's what she did. She sewed those out, sewed those up and cut  
26 'em. And the, the rest of the ladies, uh, down there I don't know what, what they did.  
27 But I know in, uh, oh, I forget what year it was when we started have to hire women and  
28 minorities. Uh. I ended up. I had, uh, I had two ladies on my shift. And they happened  
29 to be sisters. And they were two black ladies, and they were, they were great. [Laughs]  
30 They, they worked, they worked on a cast machine for me. They, they would skim the  
31 metal and take care of the cast machine. Usually we had three people up there and, and  
32 they got to the point where they would say, "Don't send him up there. Just. We'll take  
33 care of it by ourselves." [Laughs] That guy would go up there and goof off. You know,  
34 he was thinking, "Well these ladies..." But even today, I, I'm not in contact with that  
35 woman, but I golfed with her son here just last Saturday and I asked him how she was.  
36 And he said fine. Her, he said she asks me all the time about you. She's, she lives in  
37 California.

38  
39 0:53:46

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** What's here name?

42  
43 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Ruth Bellamy.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** And her sister's name?

46

1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Oh. Oh, that one. I can't. Right now I can't think of it, but  
2 it wasn't Bellamy. It was, uh, oh I can't think of her name now. And Harry, her son is  
3 Harry. That's who I golf with.  
4  
5 **INTERVIEWER:** Her son is...  
6  
7 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Harry Bellamy.  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did Ruth work in the furnace plant?  
10  
11 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. I think. I can't remember when she came in, but I think she  
12 was there until we shut down. Whenever they shut the place down.  
13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Did she start in the '70s though?  
15  
16 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I think it was. Yes. I think. I'm pretty sure it was in the late '70s  
17 when she started. It might've been after that. I, I'm not sure now.  
18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if her sister is still alive?  
20  
21 **HERMAN SPECHT:** No. I don't know.  
22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. If I wanted to try and reach either one of them or both of them  
24 would you be able to help me with contact or contact with Harry?  
25  
26 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Well, yeah. Harry, Harry doesn't live too far from here, and like  
27 I said he still golfs with us. But golf season is over now. But I just golfed with him a  
28 couple Saturdays ago. Yeah. He would...  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** If I could maybe get his contact information from you to try and  
31 track down his mother and his aunt.  
32  
33 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh-hmm. Oh. I can't think of her name. Darn it. I'll think of it.  
34 [Laughs]  
35  
36 0:55:33  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** The, the women that you were talking about working in the furnace  
39 during the war, um...  
40  
41 **HERMAN SPECHT:** That was before my time. So I...  
42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** But like making the bombs and the story about the...  
44  
45 **HERMAN SPECHT:** The hand pads.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Did those women continue to work at the plant after the war?

2

3 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, I think they did. I think. Well that, that job was something  
4 we did all the time. So we, we used hand pads up until I left. Well. Yeah. We still used  
5 them, but not as much cause, uh, you didn't have hardly any handling of the zinc when I  
6 left. It was all automatic casting machines.

7

8 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did, why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

9

10 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Good question. The money was good. The people were good,  
11 and you worked. I mean you, you worked, but, uh, I could've probably gotten into trades  
12 when I got out of the service. I had my father-in-law, two brother-in-laws, that are  
13 steamfitters. And I know I could've probably gotten on with them, but I would look and  
14 these guys would maybe work three or four months and they were off a month. They  
15 worked four or five months and they were off. They were always off and when you have  
16 a family and a house and car and everything you, you, you can't take two months off. So  
17 I figured, you know, this is really you get six days a week, but you're working. You're,  
18 you're going with the guarantee of the paycheck. So that was one of the reason I stuck it  
19 out.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Who were some of your most memorable work colleagues and why?

22

23 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh, boy. [Laughs] One guy, one guy that we had that was a, was  
24 a furnace operator I worked with him for a while. Clarence West was his name. How he  
25 got the name Cooney, I'll never know, but they called him Cooney West. He was a little  
26 short heavysset guy. Probably only went to school eighth or ninth grade. But he knew the  
27 furnaces and that man taught me more about the furnaces I think then just about anybody  
28 down there. He was, he was really, uh, you'd look at him and you'd say, "How's this guy  
29 know all this stuff." But he, he really knew is how to make zinc. A really nice guy. And  
30 there were a lot of, everybody down there, mostly the older operators would really teach  
31 you how to, how to do things and even some of the guys, you know, if, uh, like me when  
32 I went over to the, uh, to the Larvik, I didn't know anything about, uh, oxide, but the guys  
33 kind of took me under the wing and pushed me a long a little bit. If it wasn't for them I  
34 probably, I'd been out of there a lot sooner, but they, a nice bunch of guys.

35

36 0:58:31

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

39

40 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Oh. Geez. I don't know. I don't know if it could've been any  
41 better. It's, like I said, I had, I made a lot of friends. I, I'm still golfing with, with a lot of  
42 the guys that, that, that I worked with. I just golfed with a couple of 'em Tuesday. Uh. I  
43 don't, I don't really think it could've. I was really pleased.

44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Great. What do you recall about your last day on the job in 1997?

46

1 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. It was. I mean, before you get, before you get to that point  
2 you're counting the days, you're counting the days. But when it comes around to that,  
3 you know, then the guys had a retirement party and me and another guy retired at the  
4 same time. So we had a retirement party. And to see all the guys that come to your party  
5 and it really makes you feel good. It, uh, must've accomplished something. You got a lot  
6 of friendship that's for sure. But you're kinda sad too. I, I, I miss the guys. I, I probably  
7 didn't miss the mill that much when I retired, but I sure missed all the guys and got to see  
8 'em when I went golfing or, or like now we have the breakfasts. So we get to just see a  
9 lot of the retirees.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

12

13 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Uh. Not going to affect me that much. It's probably not going to  
14 affect me at all. But, huh, it's sure changing the, the landscape for one thing. [Laughs] I  
15 think it's gonna, I think it's gonna be good for the, for the county. Uh. It's going to create  
16 some jobs. I don't think it's going to create all what they're talking about. I think it's  
17 going to be a lot of technical jobs. It's not gonna be a lot of. At first, it's gonna be a lot of  
18 manual labor jobs, but it's going to be a lot of, uh, uh, technical people who's probably  
19 gonna be working there. It's, it has to be. You know, St. Joe left. So, uh, Horsehead left.  
20 I'm glad that they put something in there. It's nice.

21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there something else you'd like to add about your experiences that  
23 I haven't covered with you?

24

25 **HERMAN SPECHT:** I think you've covered practically everything. You were really,  
26 really educated on what you were gonna ask. Uh. No other than, like I, like I've been  
27 saying other than the, uh, the friendship and the, the people, uh, it was a nice 40 years, 41  
28 years. I, I enjoyed it.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** This concludes our interview.

31

32 **HERMAN SPECHT:** Okay.

33

34 1:01:23

35

36 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much.

37

38 **HERMAN SPECHT:** You're welcome.

39

40 (END)

**Joe Strupek**  
**Interview @ November 10, 2016**

## **JOE STRUPEK**

### **Summary**

The interview with Joe Strupek took place on November 10, 2016, in his home in Clinton, Pennsylvania. Joe displayed St. Joe artifacts including tie pins, a key chain, his first pay stub, and a credit union deck of cards, as well as company newsletters and the *Josephtown Story* (1956). He also shared a color photo of the plant to be donated to the Senator John Heinz History Center. Joe worked at the Monaca zinc plant from October 1963 to January 2005. Most of his career was spent in the furnace plant, where he advanced from cleanup crew to general foreman and eventually, superintendent; Joe also worked in the bag house for zinc oxide department.

Joe's interview is most noteworthy for the level of detail he provides about various operations (furnace and zinc oxide plants): technical components, products made and their commercial uses, personnel responsibilities at each floor of the furnace plant, and the shift schedule required to run it. Joe discusses the dangers of the furnace plant and the company's growing attention to safety precautions over the years. He highlights safety equipment, programs and incentives. He also explains the bagging process in the bag house of the zinc oxide department.

Joe talks about the informal training workers got on the job from older operators and the foreman's training program that prepared him to be a supervisor. He explains the role of the shift foreman and general foreman, the supervisory structure in the furnace plant, and the challenges and responsibilities as superintendent.

Joe touches upon environmental standards and efforts to control smoke emissions through collecting and recycling zinc dust. Having been part of the group tasked with bringing Larvik furnaces into the oxide department to make zinc oxide, he describes how the Larvik process differed from St. Joe's traditional method of producing zinc oxide.

Reasons for workers voting to unionize are covered, as is the impact of the union in the plant on his job as a supervisor. Joe explains causes of the 1979 plant shutdown, and the options for separation pay and job placement assistance that the company offered. He conveys the sense of family that characterized St. Joe Lead, and how that changed with the several changes in ownership that started in the 1980s.

Other topics include: working holidays, female employees in the furnace plant, profit sharing, the cafeteria, and social and recreational activities and amenities, including the golf course St. Joe owned where the mall now sits.

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**JOE STRUPEK**  
**INTERVIEW - 11/10/2016**

**SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
JOE STRUPEK

**INTERVIEWER:** Today is, uh, November 10, 2016. Interview with Joe Strupek. Joe, could you please, um, state and spell your name, give us your date of birth, and your address?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. My name is Joseph Strupek. My date of birth is [REDACTED]. My address is [REDACTED], Clinton, PA 15026.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?

**JOE STRUPEK:** I'm retired.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area or did you come here because of employment opportunity at St. Joe's?

**JOE STRUPEK:** I, I was born and raised in Washington County, and I married my wife. She lived in Washington County, and then we bought a house out here in Beaver County. And that's, uh, when I, right after, right after I started at St. Joe we bought the house.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you came to this area because of St. Joe then?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Yes, I came here because I was driving from Burgettstown. It was like 30 mile and here it cuts in half, 13 mile.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uh. What education did you have before working at St. Joe's?

**JOE STRUPEK:** I graduated from high school.

**INTERVIEWER:** And that was in Burgettstown?

**JOE STRUPEK:** No. I graduated at Washington County. It was Fort Cherry High School.

**INTERVIEWER:** Fort Cherry?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Fort Cherry. Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead and in what year did you stop working for the company?

1 (0:01:41)

2

3 **JOE STRUPEK:** 1963 and I retired in 2005.

4

5 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you find out about and apply for a job at St. Joe?

6

7 **JOE STRUPEK:** My neighbor was a millwright, and he worked down there. And I had  
8 just got laid off from the job I had. So he sent me down there and spoke for me and that's  
9 how I got in.

10

11 **INTERVIEWER:** What was your neighbor's name and what job did you have before  
12 that.

13

14 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I worked at a small stamping mill down by Weirton. Uh. His  
15 name was Jack Davis.

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** And what did you need to do to apply for a job there?

18

19 **JOE STRUPEK:** I had to go down there and put an application in and wait until they  
20 called me and, uh, my neighbor Jack Davis kept going in there and prodding them to call  
21 me. So finally they called me.

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** How long a wait was it?

24

25 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, I bet you two months maybe.

26

27 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you start the next day after that?

28

29 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, when they called me down there I think I started either the next  
30 day or the next week or whatever. I started right away.

31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** What other, what were your other options for local employment in  
33 the early '60s?

34

35 **JOE STRUPEK:** There wasn't too many. Like I said, I, I looked all around and I took a  
36 job at the stamping mill. It didn't pay much, but I had a, I had a wife and a baby already  
37 then. So I, I needed the job. There was very few jobs around back, back then it was either  
38 J&L or American Bridge or it was St. Joe.

39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** Were those other companies hiring in the '60s?

41

42 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I think J&L hired a few, and I think AmBridge would hire a few  
43 too. There were a lot of guys from the area where I lived in out in Washington County.  
44 Oh, we lived in Burgettstown. There was a lot of guys from that area that went and  
45 worked at J&L. A matter of fact they had a bus that would take 'em everyday back and  
46 forth.



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(0:03:31)

**INTERVIEWER:** In general, uh, did your coworkers move to this area because St. Joe Lead offered employment or did St. Joe employ people who happened to live in the area?

**JOE STRUPEK:** I think a lot of 'em lived in the area, but there would be a few that came from way away, but I don't think St. Joe brought 'em. I think they just came to this area and would come down there and put an application in.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you first came on board in 1963, the plant was referred to as Josephstown, a name that started in the 1930s.

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** At what point did people stop thinking of this as Josephstown?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh, uh, I, I really don't know. When I started, everybody kept telling me St. Joe Lead. St. Joe Lead. Most of the people called it St. Joe Lead. There were very few people called it, uh, Josephstown. They called it St. Joe Lead.

**INTERVIEWER:** What position and what department were you initially hired for?

**JOE STRUPEK:** I hired in as a basement cleanup in the furnace plant, but I never, I never started there. They started me on the top floor. My title was basement cleanup and the top floor was cleanup and tried to learn some of the jobs up there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you, um, describe the various processes and products that were created in the furnace plant?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. They, they made zinc, uh, molten zinc slabs. They made zinc ingots. They sold 'em to, uh, galvanizers mostly, and some of 'em went and this molten zinc in the furnace plant and they made it into oxide. And they had an oxide plant where they packed it. And oxide was sent for, uh, tires. They made tennis shoes. They made medicine of it. As a matter of fact, it was in corn flakes. Uh-huh.

**INTERVIEWER:** What were the various job positions that were needed to run the furnace?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. I'll tell you what. There was, uh, there was a basement, a condenser floor, and a top floor. And there was a daylight utility gang. The basement I think there was about four they called them cam retractors and they worked the charge out of the furnace. There were four of those. There was a crusher man, two cleanup men, and a foreman. And the condenser floor, there was a foreman, there was a furnace operator, each furnace had an operator, and they had a skimmer and on the, if you had a high-powered furnace, they had a helper that went from one furnace, four hours on one

1 furnace and four on another. The higher powered furnaces they had, uh, uh, they had the  
2 second man to, uh, the skimmer plus the helper. And the top floor, there was, uh, I think  
3 there was 17 furnaces up there if they were runnin' 'em all. And there was a, uh, they  
4 called it the little end and the big end. Some were smaller furnace and the other ones were  
5 the big ones. Each area had an operator. They had a dross man, who ran a buggy and  
6 dropped dross in the top of the furnaces, and they had a cleanup man and they had a  
7 helper.

8  
9 (0:06:28)

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** What is dross?

12  
13 **JOE STRUPEK:** It was, uh, when they sent the metal out to, uh, uh, galvanizers and  
14 they put metal in the pot and melted it. You had dirt, uh, toppin' that. They'd scoop that  
15 dirt off, but there was zinc in it. So they would, they'd make ingots or whatever, send it  
16 back, and then we'd dump it back in the furnace to reclaim the zinc.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the, what were the shifts for the furnace?

19  
20 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. There was a 42-hour schedule. I think it was. It was six days a  
21 week. You had one day off and I think your long change was from daylight to night turn.  
22 Cause then you, you had a day off, unless you didn't go out to night turn the next day.  
23 And the weekends were short changes. You worked, uh, night turn, went home for eight  
24 hours and came back and worked the eve turn, and when you were on evening turn going  
25 to daylight you worked evening turn to 12 o'clock, went home got eight hours sleep, and  
26 come back in the morning for eight hours on daylight. It, it went backwards like, night  
27 turn, evening turn and daylight.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** How did that impact family life?

30  
31 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. It, it. My wife took care of my kids mostly. I worked a lot. I  
32 worked overtime anytime I could get it cause I needed the money. So I worked overtime.  
33 Worked my days off. Get doubles and everything else. Yeah. Back then everybody did.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your first day on the job?

36  
37 **JOE STRUPEK:** It was hot and dirty. [Laughs] It was real hot. A zinc smelter is hot  
38 and dirty. It was really hot and dirty. That top floor was worse than the basement.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** What time of year was it that you started working?

41  
42 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I started in October. And when I started in October, I started on  
43 the top floor, and what was funny is, uh, after I worked on the top floor I went down to  
44 basement cleanup again. Well, it was like October or November and, and it was snow  
45 blowing in some of the louvers and that if it snowed and it was still so hot that them guys  
46 used to tell me, "You wait until winter comes. It will freeze down there." And you had all

1 these furnaces with all the heat coming off. They were right. The wintertime you froze.  
2 You were over there up against the furnace trying to stay warm.

3  
4 (0:08:30)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** What was your job on the upper level?

7  
8 **JOE STRUPEK:** You mean, uh, after I went from basement foreman?

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** No.

11  
12 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, on the top floor?

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

15  
16 **JOE STRUPEK:** I was cleanup. I started as cleanup. And, but I learned the jobs, so  
17 later on I did the other jobs too.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** I, I'm trying to understand what the different jobs were at each of the  
20 levels.

21  
22 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Of the furnace.

25  
26 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** So basement was cleanup?

29  
30 **JOE STRUPEK:** There was, two guys were basement cleanup. They cleaned. Each,  
31 each shift, there were three shifts. Each shift had a section that they had to clean. [Clears  
32 throat] So there was two cleanup men that would do the cleanup in that section and there  
33 were two, uh, camo operators that worked the charge out of the furnace. As a matter of  
34 fact, on the big end I think there was two and there was two on the small. So there was  
35 four of 'em. And they had what they call a slag man. He would take. They had a long bar  
36 with a curve in it and he would go up and knock the, you'd get growth around the furnace  
37 coming down and he'd knock that out with that bar. And they, the operators knocked the  
38 slag out. The crusher man, all the furnaces dropped into a conveyor on the north side.  
39 They'd all came down and went down two conveyors to the, to the crushers. And that  
40 crushed up the slag so it would get small pieces to they could send it over to the sinter  
41 plant to reclaim it. On, uh, the top floor, like I said, the two operators they controlled the  
42 feeds and they watched if you got a plug up going into the furnace or what they had to  
43 take care of that. And, uh, the, uh, dross man, he, like I said, he dropped dross in. And,  
44 uh, cleanup man up there. He cleaned up. He would have a section to clean up and that's  
45 what he did. And he helped out. They used to, they used to take a measurement of the  
46 charge height every half hour and they had a phone, PA system, and they called it down

1 to the basement. So they knew what the level was in the furnace. They knew how much  
2 to take out or not take out. Well, I can tell you about the condenser floor too. Like I said,  
3 they cast the slabs. Now, the operators, uh, they had to tap out the molten metal out of,  
4 they had what they called a tap out hole and they had a plug of asbestos mud. And they  
5 would open that hole with a ladle hanging in front of the spout. The metal would fill that  
6 ladle then they'd take that plug and plug that metal off. Then, they'd take the ladle and go  
7 down a bench and pour the metal in the slabs. And, uh, I think the whole bench was like  
8 26 slabs and that would cool while he was getting another a ladle. So when that cooled,  
9 uh, the condenser helper and the skimmer would dump 'em. And you dumped 'em on a  
10 buggy. You met two pallets were the first things on that bench. Those went down on the,  
11 on the forks of the buggy. Then you built the stack up with it. Two taps were a stack and  
12 you took the buggy around and set it up on the rail where the shipper would come and get  
13 it.

14

15 (0:11:06)

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** How heavy was one of those slabs?

18

19 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. About 50 pound.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did it take to cool?

22

23 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I don't know 10 to 15 minutes. They had water spraying up  
24 under, under the things. You had to watch cause if you dumped it too quick the inside  
25 wouldn't be hard and when you dropped it, it would bust open and run all of the load and  
26 you had to clean all that off.

27

28 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any way to, to test if it was hard enough to pour it out?

29

30 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. The top would get a hard surface on it. Yeah. But, uh, I guess  
31 there was water spraying up so it cooled pretty quick. But a lot of times it cooled on the  
32 outside, it wasn't completely cool inside. You had to watch when you threw it on. If you  
33 threw it on and it broke you had to clean it off. If you threw it on, that load would cool,  
34 but it would take a long time for that load to really get cool enough where you could  
35 touch it. It stayed pretty hot.

36

37 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there anyway of, of calculating when that middle part was hard  
38 enough so you weren't pouring off something that was still liquid on the inside?

39

40 **JOE STRUPEK:** No. I never did it. We, we'd dump the slab and throw 'em on the  
41 buggy. Like I said, if they didn't break, they just stayed on there and they cooled on there  
42 and solidified. But like I said, the load stayed real hot. You didn't want to touch a load  
43 until was way cold. Yeah.

44

45 (0:12:13)

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** So where did you move next in your career path either within the  
2 furnace or beyond the furnace?

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Okay. I, I, at that time, I had, like I said, I had a family so I looked for  
5 any job that paid more money than I was making. So I had basement cleanup. I'd been on  
6 the top floor. I'd been on the condenser floor. I worked condenser floor, and I bid on the  
7 oxide. I worked oxide furnace. I worked all the jobs in the furnace plant, and that's when  
8 they had a little zinc dust unit out there. So I, I was out there. It was one time I applied for  
9 zinc dust operator's job and then I was going to go up on the condenser floor. But back  
10 then, eh, it took a long time to get moved up there. Somebody had to retire or quit or  
11 that's the only way you'd get into condenser floor. So a job came open in the baghouse  
12 packing oxide, and a lot of people didn't like that cause it was a steady job. You had to  
13 stay there for eight hours and pack. Uh. But it paid more money. So I bid over there.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Wait when you say you had to stay there for eight hours. Does that  
16 mean you didn't get a break for eight hours?

17  
18 **JOE STRUPEK:** Well, yeah, you, you'd get a break. You, you, they had a packer that  
19 you stuck a bag on and hit a lever and it filled up with 50 pound and then you pulled it  
20 off, adjusted it, and threw it on a load. And it, it had a light up on top and it had, uh, like a  
21 cylinder going up. And when that filled up that light would come on. Then you had to  
22 pack it down. If you got it packed down, you could go in the clean room there for five  
23 minutes or so and have a coffee or whatever. Then go back out and keep packing cause as  
24 soon as that light come on you had to pack it out. And you, like you did that all. You  
25 could shut down for, uh, they'd shut down for a break in the morning. They shut down  
26 for, for your lunchtime, and they shut down for a break in the afternoon.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that also a 24/7 operation?

29  
30 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. They were. Every job, every job in the plant at that time  
31 was, uh, 24/7. Yeah. Every job.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** So was packing then what you did in the zinc oxide plant?

34  
35 **JOE STRUPEK:** That's what I did in zinc oxide. Yes. Well I, I did packing and I  
36 worked as a group leader over there too.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about the process of what was  
39 happening in the zinc oxide plant?

40  
41 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** And how that related to the furnace?

44  
45 (0:14:07)

1 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. Okay. Like I said, uh, they made molten zinc at the furnace  
2 plant. Okay. And, uh, there's a couple of furnaces they didn't make molten zinc. They  
3 had these tuyeres on 'em. So the zinc would melt and turn into vapor and they would pull  
4 it off and ship it over to the baghouse. They had, uh, big fans and over there they had a  
5 collector and that collector had, uh, cloth bags going up. Well they'd blow it in there and  
6 the air would go out and the oxide would stay in the bottom and they had a screw going  
7 out that'd send it up the different bins. So the oxide furnace, like I said, the metal furnaces  
8 they tapped molten metal and made molten metal. They had a condenser that made  
9 molten metal. But the oxide furnace they have what they call tuyeres. They had a, oh,  
10 they'd go up like three floors. They had opening on each one of 'em coming out and they  
11 had a big fan that would pull that vapor out and the vapor was oxide is what it was and  
12 they'd pull it, uh, ship it over to the, to the oxide department by way of a big fan. And it  
13 would go in, like I said, a collector. The air would go out and then they'd put it in the bins  
14 and then the packers would pack it out. They made different grades. Some of it was  
15 lighter. Some of it was a heavier.

16

17 **INTERVIEWER:** You mentioned something called, it sounds like tuyeres?

18

19 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. That was on the furnace.

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you, could you spell that? I'm not quite sure what the word is.

22

23 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. I'm not sure how to spell it either. Twre maybe. I don't know. It,  
24 but it was, it was. What it was, was the duct line come down and attached to the top of  
25 'em and they come all the way down the furnace like three floors and had an opening into  
26 the furnace and each floor had a cut, the second floor had a couple openings. The top  
27 floor might have one. The bottom floor might have one. And, uh, the oxide would get  
28 pulled out of the furnace. They'd grow up and you used to have to cut 'em out. But you  
29 every, about every two hours you had to go around with a bar and knock the whiskers off  
30 in there to make sure it didn't plug off so the oxide was coming out.

31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** And what were the different kinds of oxide that were produced and  
33 for what purposes?

34

35 **JOE STRUPEK:** They made. They made different grades for different companies. A lot  
36 of 'em, like I said, a lot of 'em, some of 'em went to the rubber industry to make rubber.  
37 Some of 'em went to, uh, uh, uh, medicines. Like I said, some, some of 'em went to, uh,  
38 make different, uh, cornflakes and stuff like that. There was all kind of, anything with  
39 rubber, tennis shoes, golf balls, everything had oxide in it.

40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did the same thing that went into making rubber go into  
42 cornflakes?

43

44 (0:16:20)

45

1 **JOE STRUPEK:** I don't know. They went into an ointment, into a zinc ointment. And  
2 they claim that was great for cuts and bruises or whatever.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Describe the dangers of the furnace plant and the safety precautions  
5 that were taken.

6  
7 **JOE STRUPEK:** Well, when I first started there wasn't a lot of safety gear. Uh. There  
8 was hot metal you were dealing with all the time. If the metal, if there was any water in  
9 anything and metal hit that water it would blow up. It'd just throw the metal all  
10 everywhere. And when I started they gave you a little respirator called a dustfoe, and it  
11 wasn't real good. All it took was some of the dust out. And a matter of fact when I first  
12 started they didn't even wear safety glasses. They didn't wear hard hats and a lot of the  
13 guys, the older operators, they'd have shirts on that was full of holes from when they'd tap  
14 the metal it would splash and burn the holes in there. And, uh, uh, the big dangers in there  
15 was getting burnt with the molten metal or one of them blowing and the basement when  
16 they raked that charge out of them big furnaces. They used to have furnace blows, and  
17 what that would do that would just kick that hot charge out. It might cover a whole area  
18 and it burnt. It was hot charge, molten, hot and zinc and everything else there was, uh, to  
19 melt down it was really hot. It would catch everything on fire. Burn everything around  
20 there. So you'd have water lines burnt. A lot of the electric would be off. You had to  
21 clean it all and fix it. That was a big danger in the basement was the blows. Uh. Now,  
22 some of the other places, the top floor was getting, getting, uh, shocked. Because the  
23 furnace was hot. It was electricity going in there. There was eight electrodes on top.  
24 There was eight electrodes on bottom and there was power going into all those electrodes  
25 down to the bottom. A lot of the metal around the furnace and it was hot. Downstairs, the  
26 basement table was hot. If you bumped into that and the floor was wet, you got a heck of  
27 a jolt. And that was the biggest thing I think getting burned with the molten, uh, zinc or  
28 getting shocked or downstairs with a blow. Yeah. The blow was bad. They used to ride  
29 the cam retractor with a long bar to knock a charge out and a lot of them. The camo, the  
30 guy would know it was going to blow, start to blow, he'd run and that camo tractor could  
31 get burnt up. Everything would get burnt up in there.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you see many fatalities?

34  
35 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. No. No. I, I think maybe, maybe when I was there, maybe one or  
36 two in the furnace plant. Yeah. But, uh, but there was more before, before I started I  
37 think. Yeah. There was a lot of accidents before I started. I remember one guy he had  
38 been walk, they . . had that big bar and it's a big square bar. It'd get red hot when it come  
39 out of the furnace. He was coming around the furnace and the guy hit him right in the  
40 stomach. Well it went in there to where's his stomach, but it cauterized so he lived. Yeah.  
41 But, uh, there was, I think there was one or two got caught in a blow. But everybody was  
42 afraid of 'em and they took really, like I said, it was a safety thing. And, uh, the guys used  
43 to ride those buggies and it got so bad, uh, I think, uh, Jim Singleton I think was plant  
44 manager then and they were working on a system where you worked it with a remote  
45 control and you weren't on that buggy. You were back away from it and you could work  
46 that in there and take the furnace out. And we had a blow. But guys kept saying it wasn't

1 no good because they couldn't get the feel when they were working the furnace. But Jim  
2 Singleton had a blow and after that Jim Singleton said, "That's it. You get all the other  
3 buggies out of here. Nothing but remote control." And they went to remote control  
4 buggies. It was a lot better then. A lot safer for the guys cause they wasn't on the buggy.

5  
6 (0:19:46)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm sorry. When did they switch to the remote control buggies?

9  
10 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. I, I can't remember. It's back a ways. Cause I think, uh, that time I  
11 was working in the furnace plant when they started, when they switched over.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** So in what year would that have been just to get a ballpark?

14  
15 **JOE STRUPEK:** It, well, it was after, I know it was after '80 after we started up. Cause  
16 before we shut down I was, uh, uh, I was a shift foreman. I was responsible for all the, all  
17 the foremen on the floor and I was responsible for the shift. And after we come back,  
18 they made me a general foreman. And I worked that job for quite a few years and then  
19 my, my superintendent retired. I took his place.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** When you were a shift foreman?

22  
23 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-huh.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you actually doing the jobs?

26  
27 **JOE STRUPEK:** No.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** With the workers or what are...Please describe what you do as the  
30 foreman.

31  
32 **JOE STRUPEK:** I'm, I'm, I'm supervising it. I had a basement foreman, a condenser  
33 foreman, and a top foreman. The three foremen. And, uh, they would take care of their  
34 jobs down there and they would tell me or whatever and I'd tell 'em what to do and what  
35 not to do. They'd tell me the things that needed done or whatever.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you in the furnace plant with them throughout, throughout the  
38 shift?

39  
40 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. I stayed right there. As a matter of fact, I stayed right there  
41 and if I wanted, I made changes. I'd watch the furnace. If the feed was wrong or  
42 something, I thought something was wrong, I'd change it. And, uh, back then it was  
43 funny because you had a book. You had to figure the feeds out. Later on they got a  
44 computer. I could do it. Just hit a button and spit it out. But back then, you used to take a  
45 book, you'd sit up at the top. Uh. The top foreman always did it. You'd sit there and you  
46 figured out all, how much sinter goes in, how much coke goes in, how much dross goes



1 in because they rated that on how much power was going in that furnace. They put  
2 enough feed in for that power. If the power went low, then you lowered the feed upstairs.  
3 If it went higher, then you raised it up.

4  
5 (0:21:37)

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did anybody train you to do that?

8  
9 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. Like I said, I started out like on cleanup. So I knew all the  
10 jobs and I was working oxide and I think it was 1972 and my superintendent called me at  
11 home and asked me if I wanted to go in foreman's training. So for six months I was on  
12 training and I trained in the furnace plant. So I trained on with the condenser foreman,  
13 with the basement foreman, with the top foreman and I trained over there with them.  
14 Then after I learned how to do it, my shift foreman would make me relieve them guys  
15 when they were off. Then after, I think it was six months, they called you over to the  
16 office, and I think it was Bill McCullough at that time would ask you, "Do you accept the  
17 foreman's job?" You never knew where you was going. Because they figured once they  
18 train you to be a foreman at the furnace plant you could work oxide, you could work the  
19 roaster plant, anywhere. So you had to tell 'em you either accept it or not and they  
20 wouldn't tell you where you were going. Well, when I accepted he told me I was going  
21 back to the furnace plant.

22  
23 **INTERVIEWER:** Is that where you wanted to go?

24  
25 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. That's where I, I trained and all that. Yeah. I didn't think I  
26 would though cause they had a, they had a general foreman that used to pick on me all  
27 the time. His name was Mike Harich, and he would come through all the time and say,  
28 "There's something wrong up here." He'd always. I'd go through every morning. He come  
29 in about 6:30 or 7 o'clock and make a round, and he always found something. And he  
30 always, uh, he'd go down and talk to the operator. If there was something wrong with that  
31 operator, he wouldn't even say nothing to him, but he'd get on me. So whenever I went  
32 over there I figured well, Harich's not, uh, because he was, uh, he wasn't superintendent I  
33 think he was, uh, general foreman over there. I said, "He's not going to want me back."  
34 But he's the one that asked for me.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** What was his name again?

37  
38 **JOE STRUPEK:** Mike Harich. Yeah.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you spell the last name please?

41  
42 **JOE STRUPEK:** Harich, I think. Yeah.

43  
44 (0:23:15)

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Just backtracking a little bit.

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**JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** About safety.

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** What training did the company provide its employees?

**JOE STRUPEK:** They had a, a safety program. And like I said, if you were on foreman's training you had a safety program and all that and as time went on, uh, like I said when I first started there wasn't a lot of safety gear. As time went on, it was safety glasses. It was a better respirator. It was face shields. It was helmets. And then they started buying flame retardant clothes.

**INTERVIEWER:** When was that?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. I can't. Uh. It's been a long time ago. It was before we shut down in '79. I know that. Some of them dates I don't, I don't remember anymore. It's been a long time. But it towards the end there, there was all kinds of safety things going on. There was safety programs. Uh. Back then too, they had, uh, different programs like, uh, they'd watch the hours. How many safety hours the furnace plant? How many the refinery had, the sinter plant and that. And you had a goal to meet and if you made them hours without an accident they had a gift or something to give you. Some little thing, like a little knife or something like that. And then they had individual ones. If you didn't get hurt for a length of time, you got something out of that too. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did that incentive program for safety. . .?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, sure. It helped a lot of guys. Well see, well they said it helped but, but they blamed a lot of guys. It didn't help because they said that guy get hurt. He, he wouldn't, he wouldn't go to first aid cause he wanted to keep his hours. He didn't want to lose his hours and guys, guys were saying if you get hurt the rest of the plant, the rest of the department is going to be mad at you, you know, because you're getting hurt. Yeah. So it was pretty good.

**INTERVIEWER:** How long did that continue the, uh, the incentives and awarding safety?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I think it continued for a great while. And then I'm not sure when they stopped it or why they stopped it. Back then I, when they did all this when I first started there was no union in there. They had, oh, they had everything. They had a cafeteria that was great. They had a farm down there and made their own pigs, beef and stuff. They had, uh, uh, the office building over there, there was office upstairs but they had a bowling alley in the basement. They had, uh, a, uh, basketball court and it got

1 softball fields all over. And they had a golf course up there where the mall is at, but I'm  
2 not sure if that was still there when I started or not.

3  
4 (0:25:33)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that golf course owned by St. Joe Lead?

7  
8 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yes, it was. They owned it. Yes. And, uh, they had all kind of things.  
9 They had a 10-year club. If you, when you hit like 10 years, you were in the 10-year club.  
10 I got some things here to show you, like a little thing that says 10 years. Another one says  
11 20 years and 30 years. And that 10-year club did a lot. They had, they'd do the Christmas  
12 party for the kids. They'd have a party around Christmastime and they'd give a gift out for  
13 each kid. And what you would do is turn in your kids name and age and that's how they  
14 knew what to get 'em. And they would have a party with Santa Claus and stuff like that,  
15 but they did a lot. Then they had dinners and everything like that. And, uh, the plant  
16 manager had some of them too. He had, uh, dinner meetings and that, like safety  
17 meetings for, he'd bring the family in and have that.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Is this, did this go on after the unions came in?

20  
21 **JOE STRUPEK:** A lot of that stopped. Uh. I think the 10-year club might've went for a  
22 while. The cafeteria went because they said it was too much money. They were losing  
23 money there. And they let the bowling alleys go. They let the gym go, and I think some  
24 of the softball fields they built something on 'em or whatever.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you clarify something? Uh. The bowling alley was that in the  
27 basement of the auditorium or in the basement of the administration building?

28  
29 **JOE STRUPEK:** The bowling alley was in the basement. There was an auditorium and  
30 the offices were upstairs and there was three, I think it was three lanes in there, uh, in the  
31 bowling alley.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** So that's different than the main building, the main administrative  
34 building?

35  
36 **JOE STRUPEK:** That was the main building over there. No, no. That's right across and  
37 the main building, the main office was up from it. A little bit up from it. But that, that's  
38 like I said, they had a couple of offices upstairs and they had, uh, I think they had a big  
39 meeting room, like a conference room or something. I think that's where they used to  
40 have the Christmas parties in that.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** But the bowling alley was actually in the same building as the  
43 auditorium and the gym?

44  
45 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. It was downstairs in the basement. Yep.  
46

1 (0:27:31)

2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** In, um, in 1943, the company had established a management training  
4 program, which trained supervisors and hourly employees in basic management  
5 principles and emphasized industrial relations and leadership. You had mentioned in  
6 1972 you received foreman's training.

7  
8 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yes.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that part of that management training program?

11  
12 **JOE STRUPEK:** I don't know what the program was. But I, I know everybody that  
13 went to be a foreman there that they were selected out of the hourly group. You went  
14 through that training. It was six months. You had classroom. You'd go to different classes  
15 in the afternoon and morning and then you did on the job training.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk more please about the classroom part of that training?

18  
19 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, it was like, uh, safety and there was like human relations and  
20 things like that.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was running the courses?

23  
24 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I think, uh, Dorothy Soose was over in personnel. She ran some  
25 of 'em. And, uh, the safety, whoever the safety man was he'd run 'em. And, uh, they'd  
26 have maybe a foreman come in there and stuff like that. They'd bring safety people from  
27 outside and do safety courses. I think also during that six months you had a course with  
28 Dale Carnegie for speaking in, in front of, uh, audiences in front of people.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Was all your training done on site?

31  
32 **JOE STRUPEK:** Except for Dale Carnegie. Okay. Now also, uh, I think, uh, towards  
33 the end you had to go up to Behrand Center in Erie and they had a week up there you  
34 spent and there were all kind of different classes. College classes almost up there. And  
35 that was there I think that was, that was the last, their last training before you became a  
36 foreman.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Was the foreman training on, during normal Monday through  
39 Friday?

40  
41 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yes.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Business hours?

44  
45 (0:29:21)

46

1 **JOE STRUPEK:** Well, yes, it was. It was. If you were working shift, you had to stay  
2 over daylight and go to class. Let's say you were working nighttime. You stayed over. If  
3 you're working evening turn, you came out early and went to it and then you went to  
4 work after that.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** So when you were doing the foreman training, were you also still  
7 working in the plant?

8  
9 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. It was like on the job training. Okay. It was on the job training,  
10 but if I was working night turn training over there and the daytime class was then I stayed  
11 over and went to class.

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Were these hours of training in addition to your 40 or 48 hours a  
14 week of, of working in the plant?

15  
16 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yes.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** So how many...

19  
20 **JOE STRUPEK:** If you were on daylight, okay, then you didn't, you didn't go to work,  
21 you went to class. But if you were on evening turn, you came out in the morning and  
22 went to class and then you went to work on evening. If you were on night turn, you  
23 finished up night turn, come over there and went to class.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** It doesn't sound like they gave you any time to sleep.

26  
27 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. It gives you eight hours between. If you're on evening turn, you  
28 come out daylight and work evening turn, then you go home and sleep. Uh. If you were  
29 working, like I said, evening turn, if you go to work in evening turn, you get eight hours  
30 before you come back out in the morning for class.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** But the weeks that you had an evening shift, you had to be in for  
33 your morning classes.

34  
35 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yes. You come in early. Well like I said, at, at every weekend when  
36 you changed except going to night turn you, you started out on night turn and when you  
37 went to evening turn, you went home at 8 o'clock in the morning from night turn. You  
38 were back out to work at 4 o'clock that afternoon, evening turn. And then going from  
39 evening turn to daylight, you worked evening turn, finished up at 12 o'clock. At 8 o'clock  
40 in the morning you were back to work daylight. So you had eight hours in between.  
41 That's all you had.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** To what extent do you think people being so exhausted from these  
44 hours contributed to accidents at the workplace?

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46 (0:31:07)

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**JOE STRUPEK:** I don't think there was that many back then when they, when they worked them hours. Guys just, you got used to getting a few hours' sleep. As a matter of fact, one night I was so tired I just, I think I worked a double and had a short change after the double, so I just slept on a bench in the shower room. Uh. But it, well that's, well that's one of the reasons I moved closer. A big reason. Cause I had to get off and had eight hours drive clean to Burgettstown. That was 45 minutes before I got home. And then I had to leave 45 minutes early to come back. So I didn't get a lot of sleep. So we moved here. I could leave and 20 minutes I was home.

**INTERVIEWER:** In the 1970s, we start to see more stringent environmental standards and regulations.

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** As well as fluctuations in the automobile and construction industries. How did these factors affect furnace operations and your responsibilities as a foreman?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Well, we had to make sure there was no smoke going out mainly in the furnace plant, cause that's, that's what was your biggest polluter was smoke. You did, if you had a furnace smoking upstairs they had a big burner going into to heat the charge. It could be smoking. You have smoke going out the top of the plant. As a matter of fact, when I was foreman then we would have, when you came in on evening turn, the first thing you did before it got dark the, uh, the night super, he was in charge of the whole plant for evening turn and night turn. He would come over and he'd bring a truck over and you'd get in it and you'd take a ride across the bridge and all around to make sure there was no smoke coming out of anywhere in the plant. And if there was you'd come back and corrected it. If it was bad, you had to give a reason why that was smoking.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where was the smoke supposed to go?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. They had a collector. Uh. All that was supposed to go into a collector, but the collector only takes so much. So if you have a problem or it's not going in there, it's going out. And if it goes out too bad, then the DEP would fine you. So we were responsible to make sure everything we could so there was nothing going out.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where did the collector take the smoke to?

**JOE STRUPEK:** It would take it into a collector and, uh, the air, a big fan would pull into a collector. They had bags in it and so it'd, uh, the air would go through the bags and out in the air and the dust would accumulate in it.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was done with the dust at that point?

(0:33:25)

1 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. They, I think they maybe recycled it or send it back through cause  
2 there'd be some zinc in it cause there was smoke in the zinc oxide, you know, normally  
3 what it is. So they'd send it back to the furnace or the sinter plant or over there and feed it  
4 back into the sinter.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** That takes us back to a conversation about zinc dust operations and  
7 the new furnace.

8  
9 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please talk about, about that?

12  
13 **JOE STRUPEK:** The zinc dust, the new plant, I, I never had much experience down  
14 there. I never, never worked down there and I didn't know, but up in the furnace plant we  
15 had a small zinc dust plant. It had a, uh, it's called a crucible like a bottle and you put  
16 molten zinc in there and it had burners on it. It heated that up and vaporized it and it went  
17 into a collector and made zinc dust and then you packed it out. It had drums or a little  
18 screw with drums under it and you just filled the drums up. When they got full, you took  
19 it off. I think whenever, I forget how many hours it ran. It ran some many hours and it  
20 would boil all the zinc out, so then you had to recharge that bottle. So you'd have to get a  
21 fork truck with a little thing that held a ladle so it set, a ladle set underneath. They'd go  
22 over to the furnace plant and they filled the ladle. You brought it back and dumped,  
23 raised it up on a crane and dumped it in. And it, like it boiled off and made zinc dust.  
24 That's the only thing I did was zinc dust. The new plant down there that they built I had  
25 no idea what that did.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. The Larvik furnaces.

28  
29 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk about what those were for and your involvement with  
32 those?

33  
34 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I was general, I was general foreman in the furnace plant and  
35 they, I think they bought the rights to the Larvik furnaces from Larvik, Norway. So they  
36 sent me and the bricklayer foreman and a couple of other foremen over there to look at  
37 'em to see how they ran, what they made, and whatever. And, uh, we came back. They  
38 built 'em. The built 'em over in the oxide department. And they made oxide. A different  
39 process, and they had a furnace. It was like a big square pot instead of the type of  
40 furnaces over in the furnace plant, and they made oxide the same way. It boiled it off and  
41 went into a collector and they also made zinc dust. They made it and went into a  
42 collector. It had pulled off the zinc vapor and they made zinc dust with it.

43  
44 (0:35:52)

45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What distinguished the operation of the Larvik furnace from the way  
2 you were operating before that?

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Okay. Over in the furnace plant, you made zinc out of sinter and coke.  
5 It was a steady feed into the furnace and you heated that and boiled off the zinc. In a  
6 Larvik furnace, you had to use metal. So they would or they had a big bath in the front  
7 and once you got that bath filled with melted out, you had molten metal in there. So as it  
8 was going down as you're making the oxide, it's going to use up the zinc. You just re-  
9 melted more zinc. You put slabs in there or ingots or whatever. You had a crane to let 'em  
10 down in there. You used molten zinc in the Larvik furnaces. Over in the furnace plant,  
11 like I said, it was zinc sinter and, uh, coke and the zinc sinter in that was made at that  
12 time. They had mines up in New York. That's where the ore came from. That's where it  
13 went through the roaster plant, was roasted, made into sinter at the sinter plant and sent to  
14 the furnace plant.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Am I correct then in saying it was a more streamlined process?

17  
18 **JOE STRUPEK:** It was a different process. I don't know if you'd say streamlined. It  
19 was just a different process, where, I'll tell you what. I think it was mainly it was less  
20 pollution because you don't have that sinter going in with the coke and all the smoke  
21 going out the top. You had molten metal in there. The rest of it was sealed. So the only  
22 thing if you had something go wrong with it, you might have some smoke coming out,  
23 but mostly it was that, I think it was to cure that. And where you melted the metal they  
24 had a big collector, uh, like a hood, like a range hood overtop of it. It would collect  
25 everything going up. I think that was the big thing. It was a lot cleaner.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** In December 1979.

28  
29 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** St. Joe closed its Monaca smelter.

32  
33 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Instead of converting it to an electrolytic process plant.

36  
37 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** What triggered the shutdown at this point in time?

40  
41 (0:37:36)

42  
43 **JOE STRUPEK:** I think it was the, the market. I think you couldn't make zinc cheap  
44 enough to make a, to have the plant operate cause I think the zinc price was so low you  
45 couldn't make it for that price. So I think that's the big thing. And it could've been a lot  
46 of the environmental stuff. Uh. Well that's all I think combined. But everything you had



1 to do for environment. You had to pay in the price of zinc. It wasn't worth it. I think  
2 that's why they talked about electrolytic, they talked about building that there, but  
3 electrolytic it had to be high-grade ore. It couldn't be what we used, uh, when we shut  
4 down. Yeah, I think we were using sinter. But, uh, when we started back up they changed  
5 that. That's why they sold the mines after that. But I think when they shut down that's  
6 what it was. It was all the other things that it wasn't feasible to operate the plant.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** How were the closings and layoffs presented to the workforce and  
9 what if any efforts were made to help employees and their families through this  
10 transition?

11  
12 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. They had, uh, training program. I think it was called TRA or  
13 something. They'd go in for meetings and they'd look for jobs where you could put an  
14 application in. They showed you how to make a resume and things like that. But they  
15 had, I know they had programs. If you had to move, there was a program to help you pay  
16 your moving expenses and whatever. And, uh, I think that when they shut down they  
17 gave a separation pay and a lot of people took the separation pay. If you didn't take the  
18 separation pay, you just went on as an employee. If they started back up, they had to call  
19 you back cause you never took the separation pay. Most of the guys took the separation  
20 pay. A few of 'em didn't.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** And you?

23  
24 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah, I did. I think I did get something. Yeah. I took the separation  
25 pay. Yes. Uh-hmm.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you use the job placement assistance at all?

28  
29 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. I went on interviews. As a matter of fact, I went to Morenci,  
30 Arizona, and I was thinking of going, taking a job out there and moving out there. And I  
31 think that was in June of, uh, '80 and, Bob Sunderman, he was at that time trying to get,  
32 uh, something started back up in the plant. And he called me and asked me if I would go  
33 to work down there in the, in the refinery and the furnace plant wrecking furnaces and  
34 they would pay me \$100 a day. And he was working on getting something started up. So  
35 when I went down there, he came to me and asked me to stay. Cause he said, "We're  
36 going to start this place up. Don't go to Morenci. Stay here." And I stayed. So he was  
37 right. They started it back up.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Going back to the assistance that was being offered to employees to  
40 help them find other jobs. Did, did many people take advantage of that and do you think  
41 it, it was useful?

42  
43 (0:40:33)

44  
45 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. I do. I think a lot of people did. I did and like I said there  
46 was always a bunch of people there whenever I went. There was always people there. Uh.

1 The hourly and the salary they were different I think. They, uh, the salary, hourly went  
2 somewhere else. Salary went somewhere else. But I think a lot of people took advantage  
3 of it. A lot of people used it. Like, uh, that job in Morenci. I didn't take it but a couple  
4 guys from the plant did. And they helped move 'em, helped pay to move 'em out there  
5 and the whole works. Yep.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the union also help you find other jobs?

8  
9 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I would have no idea. I would imagine they did. I'd imagine they  
10 did. But I, I wasn't union. So I wasn't involved in it. So I don't know.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you union at any point?

13  
14 **JOE STRUPEK:** No. Well, no, no because I was on salary when the union came in and,  
15 uh, I went on salary in '72 and the union came in after that. So I was already on salary. I  
16 was never in the union.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** What was your position in the plant when it became operational  
19 again after the 1980 restart?

20  
21 **JOE STRUPEK:** I was general foreman. A general foreman in the furnace plant, and  
22 that was my, that was my job until I became superintendent.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** What were your responsibilities as general foreman?

25  
26 **JOE STRUPEK:** Okay. I had responsibility of the whole furnace plant. I had the shift  
27 foreman and, uh, shipping and, uh, maintenance. The whole works. I had, I had to deal  
28 with all of that.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you also responsible for the staff scheduling?

31  
32 **JOE STRUPEK:** No. They took care of that, the shift foreman would make out the  
33 schedule for his people and whatever. The shift foreman he would make it out for the  
34 foremen, for the basement foreman, the condenser foreman, the top foreman. They had a  
35 relief man, and he floated. If there was a basement guy was off, he floated. If that guy  
36 was off, that's the way it worked.

37  
38 (0:42:21)

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** How did it work if you woke up sick one day?

41  
42 **JOE STRUPEK:** You just had to report off. And they, most of the time they accepted it  
43 unless you, so many times you report off and then they weren't going to take it. Yeah.

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you get paid for sick days?

46

1 **JOE STRUPEK:** No. No, there were no sick days.  
2  
3 **INTERVIEWER:** How about when the unions came in for union workers?  
4  
5 **JOE STRUPEK:** No. There was still. I don't think there. I don't think they ever  
6 negotiated sick days in. One time I think they negotiated a personal day in. The guy could  
7 come up and ask for his personal day. And, uh, I think there was something there if he  
8 needed a day off, uh, I think they negotiated something where he could come up and  
9 work, uh, work for somebody else and they would work for him. They could trade. But  
10 there was, I don't think there was ever sick days.  
11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** If somebody was injured on the job.  
13  
14 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.  
15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Would they get paid for the time they were recovering?  
17  
18 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. Uh. They had Worker's Comp. So when you got hurt you  
19 got paid Worker's Comp for that. And the medic, I think the company if you're hurt on  
20 the job they took care of the medical bills and that. Yep.  
21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** How were you evaluated for promotions?  
23  
24 **JOE STRUPEK:** Your, your foreman would evaluate you. Like a shift, shift foreman,  
25 he evaluated all his condenser foremen, basement foremen, or whatever, and then, uh, the  
26 general foreman would evaluate the shift foreman and the superintendent would evaluate  
27 the general foreman.  
28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** How often did these evaluations take place and from these would  
30 you get a raise?  
31  
32 **JOE STRUPEK:** Some of 'em. Depend on where you were at in the rate, rate structure.  
33 If you were there right at the top of the rate, you weren't going to get a raise. But if you  
34 weren't, then you'd eventually get to the top rate.  
35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** That was...  
37  
38 (0:44:04)  
39  
40 **JOE STRUPEK:** I, I, I'm not sure if it was six months or a year they'd reevaluate you.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a ceiling at what you could be paid for a given job?  
43  
44 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. Each, each job had like a rate. It wouldn't, it  
45 wouldn't go no higher than that rate.  
46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** So even if you did that job for 40 years?  
2  
3 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. The only, only way you'd get that if there was a general  
4 increase I think. Once you made the top rate in there, you were there.  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** At some point, did you become assistant superintendent of furnaces?  
7  
8 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah.  
9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that after you were general foreman?  
11  
12 **JOE STRUPEK:** General foreman to assistant superintendent, and then I went to  
13 superintendent when he retired.  
14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** How did those promotions come about?  
16  
17 **JOE STRUPEK:** They, the superintendent needed more help because at that time back  
18 when I, when they made me assistant superintendent he had the furnace plant, the oxide,  
19 the refinery, and zinc dust. So he had all of that and he couldn't keep up with all of it.  
20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** And who, who was that superintendent?  
22  
23 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I think it was Dave Heiser. Then when I took it over what  
24 happened was I ran the furnace plant.  
25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** How long did you work as an assistant superintendent?  
27  
28 **JOE STRUPEK:** Um. I think until Dave retired, but I'm not sure when that was.  
29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** And what did you do after that position?  
31  
32 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I was superintendent when I retired. But when I became  
33 superintendent they cut things off. They changed. I just had the furnace plant after. At  
34 first, when I first took over I had everything. Then they changed it and I was  
35 superintendent of the furnace plant. Somebody else had the refinery. I think the guy, the  
36 superintendent of Larvik he had the, the Larvik and the refinery and the zinc dust I think.  
37  
38 (0:45:48)  
39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did they change it?  
41  
42 **JOE STRUPEK:** Cause it got to be too much for one guy.  
43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** Was it ever manageable for one guy?  
45

1 **JOE STRUPEK:** It was hard. It was very hard. It was, that was a lot to deal with if you  
2 had all those departments. Yeah.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What were the biggest challenges you faced as a superintendent?

5  
6 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. Probably safety and absenteeism. A lot of people, you were  
7 missing people because it's a 24-hour job. So somebody had to do that job. And if you  
8 went through the list and nobody wanted to, then the youngest guy was forced to work  
9 that job and as a double. And then the next time, you skipped him and went to the next  
10 guy.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there a shortage of employees to fill these shifts?

13  
14 **JOE STRUPEK:** You never had like a bunch of spare people. You had enough people to  
15 do the job and that was it. If that guy reported off, you had to fill it and there was nobody  
16 to say, "Well we'll move this guy up." There was nobody to move up. So you had to fill  
17 the job. They never had a quota. You never had like a labor pool doing the shifts and that.  
18 On daylight, they might've had cleanup men and that. When you, but you still you go to  
19 ask 'em to work overtime, but you couldn't like if you had a, a skimmer that reported off  
20 you needed a skimmer. You could, if one of them guys was qualified and nobody wanted  
21 it, you could ask him. But if nobody wanted it, then that, that guy stayed till his whole  
22 double shift until the other guy come in. You had to wait on your relief on that job.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you ever pull somebody from the yard to fill in a job?

25  
26 **JOE STRUPEK:** Like I said, the only way you could do it. No. Well I'm not sure when  
27 they got it. They, they got a cleanup crew. And they had a group leader on that cleanup  
28 crew. Well some of them guys had been on the cleanup crew were experienced with other  
29 jobs in the furnace plant. So if you needed overtime and you couldn't fill it through your  
30 regular people on your shift, then you could go to them if there was a qualified guy there  
31 and he wanted to work, he could work. But if there was nobody qualified there, then that  
32 guy had to stay. But the yard we never were allowed to pull from the yard.

33  
34 (0:48:13)

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

37  
38 **JOE STRUPEK:** Now, vacations, that's where the people would come from. The  
39 cleanup crew mostly to fill in. Uh. Mostly what would happen is say it was in the  
40 basement. Say a basement, uh, guy was on vacation. The guys in that line, like the  
41 basement cleanup would move up to, uh, cam operator or whatever and the, the guy  
42 picked out of cleanup crew would go into the bottom. He'd do cleanup. And it was almost  
43 all, almost all like that all around. That's the way they did it. You had to have experience  
44 to fill the job if somebody's on vacation. So you moved up the line and you filled in at the  
45 bottom.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What was a, a typical day in the life of a superintendent? From the,  
2 the minute you showed up at work in the morning.

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Um. Well the first thing in the morning, I, I used to have a meeting  
5 with the, with the shift foreman, the one that was on duty on night turn. I'd go up to the  
6 office and talk to him first thing to see if there was any problems that needed taken care  
7 of during the day or whatever. And then I'd, either then I'd maybe talk to the one coming  
8 on daylight so I knew all the time what was going on. I'd make sure all they were having  
9 safety meetings and all that was turned in and so forth and that. The shift foreman would  
10 collect. They used to have safety meetings once a month and the shift foreman would  
11 have that. And he'd write it up, and he'd give it to the shift foreman, the hourly, the  
12 regular foreman, the basement, top, and they'd have their safety meetings. Then they  
13 would give it to the shift foreman and he would pull all of it together and he would give it  
14 to me. Well he'd give it to the general foreman, and then he would give it to me to make  
15 sure it was being done.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** How did your position change your relationship with coworkers  
18 whom you used to work alongside and now you had to supervise?

19  
20 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I didn't have any problem with it. I never had. They never gave  
21 me a problem, back when I first started, the people that worked there were different.  
22 Okay. Uh. When you, if you come in and you were sick, they'd tell you to go sit down  
23 and a couple of guys would go do your work if they had to. And as time went on that all  
24 changed. They started to feel like, "Hey, that's not my job or whatever. I ain't helping  
25 him. If he can't do the job he needs to go." But when I first started there, there was no  
26 problems. Same, like I said, when I became supervisor, there was no problem. I worked, I  
27 worked with all them guys before I went to the oxide. I came back in training. They never  
28 gave me a problem. I never had a problem with anybody.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Why do you think attitudes were changing?

31  
32 **JOE STRUPEK:** I think the whole society has changed. Cause I saw that whenever, uh,  
33 uh, before I retired for a while I was going over to help interview people to hire 'em. And  
34 kids would come in there that just got out of high school and they never did anything.  
35 They never cut the grass. They never did anything. And some, the kid would come in  
36 there and he's 20 years old and he'd been out of school for two or three, and I'd say,  
37 "What've you done?" Well, I, I've been looking for work. And some of 'em would come  
38 in there and so, "Oh, I worked at McDonald's and so forth." They had little jobs. But a lot  
39 of 'em they just didn't want to work. So I think that whole attitude, everything has  
40 changed. But when I first started, oh, it was just great. Them guys. All of 'em over, great  
41 to help, help anybody. You know, a new guy would come in and everybody was eager to  
42 train you to help you. Like for instance, dumping slabs. They were 50 pound and they  
43 were in, uh, uh, like a mold with a hinge on it. So you, you picked the mold up like this  
44 and flipped it so that zinc would come flying out of there and you had to have your hands  
45 right up there close to that 50 pound, if you had your hands down low that 50 pound hit  
46 you and almost take you to the floor. Well, when I first started that's the first thing them

1 guys would show you. Keep your hands right up here. Keep your hands, and they had  
2 hand pads over your gloves cause that was hot. But you keep your hands right up  
3 underneath it. As time went on, they changed. They'd let a guy sit there and catch 'em all  
4 day like that and never say a word to 'em. Yep. And they'd come in and say, "Well he's  
5 not doing this and that. It ain't my job, and I ain't helping him do this." When I first  
6 started, none of that was like that. Everybody would help everybody.

7  
8 (0:52:13)

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** How did you address it when you were the, the superintendent?

11  
12 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, I tried to, I tried to get 'em to work together to help everybody. I'd  
13 try to get 'em to do what it used to be. But a lot of times it was hard. It was hard to do it.  
14 Yep. Like I said I think it's, it's the whole attitude has changed. Well you see that in the  
15 whole country. The attitudes changed. As a matter of fact, I think when I first started it  
16 was like family. It was like a family. And when I first started, uh, they'd all, uh, guys  
17 would tell you about things and that, you know. They used to do all kind of things for the  
18 guys down there too. They used to have a party in the summer. They'd go to Idora Park or  
19 Kennywood or something like that. There was all kind of things going. Always some  
20 things going on for the family, and a lot of that changed. That all went. Yeah.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** There used to be a lot of families where the sons or the brothers of,  
23 of employees would end up working at the company.

24  
25 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** Did that family connection disappear in later years too?

28  
29 **JOE STRUPEK:** I don't know if the family did. Maybe the family might've stuck  
30 together and that, but, uh, it, uh, that part disappeared. But I think the family part  
31 might've. You know, the dad took care of the son and whatever and make sure he'd talk to  
32 him or come over and see him and make sure he was doing alright and that. I don't think  
33 that part disappeared.

34  
35 (0:53:40)

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** So you still had the sons of people working there come in even in the  
38 later years?

39  
40 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. Because, uh, a lot of people like their, their dads and  
41 that worked at St. Joe and they weren't going to college. They wanted a job there at St.  
42 Joe because that, that was steady work. I, I don't think, uh, we might've had a small cut  
43 back or something and laid a few people off, but they never had a big layoff or anything I  
44 don't think.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Did any of your children work there?

1  
2 **JOE STRUPEK:** No. Well my son he thought about not going to college and coming to  
3 work down there. So I got one evening turn and got a pass to take him in and show the  
4 furnace plant and stand in the heat and that. He decided to go to college right after that.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** There were several changers, changes in ownership starting with the  
7 Fluor Corporation...

8  
9 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** In 1981 and then in 1987 St. Joe Resources Company and New  
12 Jersey Zinc Company...

13  
14 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Combined to form ZCA, owned by Horsehead...

17  
18 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Which filed for bankruptcy in 2002, etc. What were some of the ups  
21 and downs at the plant during the '80s and '90s when a lot of these changes were going on  
22 in the ownership?

23  
24 **JOE STRUPEK:** Well, they changed a lot of the policies and that and guys were, well,  
25 uh, a lot of the guys didn't like it and whatever. Some, some of the things they brought in  
26 were good. Okay. It was all good until Horsehead took over, and then it was bad. I'll give  
27 you for instance, before Horsehead took over when I retired, my insurance was supposed  
28 to be paid until I died and my wife's. That was the first thing they chopped. The profit  
29 sharing they kept that for a while and then they didn't pay for two or three months and  
30 then they stopped it and I never did get what they owed me. But that whole, that's the  
31 whole thing. And Horsehead, they didn't know how to make zinc, but they had people  
32 down there that didn't know. So they would look at something and they wanted more  
33 zinc going across the bridge, and they would look at something and say, "Well if we  
34 throw more dross in or do this, it'll make more zinc. You couldn't do a lot of that. And  
35 my job, I was superintendent of the furnace plant and my boss would call me at nighttime  
36 and tell me to do this, up the dross or whatever. And I would tell him it's not going to  
37 work, the furnace is going to plug overnight. The next morning it'd be down and they'd  
38 call me and ask me why did it go down. And I'd tell them the same thing. I told you last  
39 night don't do it. And that was, that was their attitude and a lot of, a lot of the guys are  
40 the same way. They thought, "Hey, they don't care for us. You know, why should we  
41 care for them? Why should we hurry up and do this or whatever?" So it was, it was bad.  
42 Yep. But the other ones Fluor and that they all had different programs, different ideas and  
43 that, so some of 'em were good. I forget which one came in and they had a, a 401  
44 program. That's the only way I was able to retire. I was glad they had that.

45  
46 (0:56:29)



1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** So that didn't go away then.

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah, that stayed. That stayed. Once you had that, it was in there  
5 cause your, that's a separate plan. If, if Fluor, if Horsehead would've said, "Well we're  
6 done." You still had that. They couldn't take that from you. So they never, they never  
7 bothered that. It was still there. Uh. They had a profit sharing plan, where if they made so  
8 much you got so much. They never matched it, but if you made, they made profit for the  
9 year, then you added so much, you got so much profit in their profit sharing account. As  
10 soon as some of these other companies come in, they stopped that. Yeah.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that profit sharing just for salaried employees?

13  
14 **JOE STRUPEK:** I think they did it for a while for hourly people too. When they, when  
15 they had a good year or whatever or they had a lot, uh, production, a record or something  
16 they gave the union money too. They gave 'em all a bonus. Yep. When I first started, they  
17 told me a lot of the foremen used to get stock in the company. When I started there, that  
18 was gone. But way back they said a lot of guys used to get, the foremen used to get stock  
19 in the company.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** How was working on holidays handled and how much time did you  
22 get off for vacation and holidays?

23  
24 **JOE STRUPEK:** Um. Well, uh, to get off for a holiday or for deer hunting, there were  
25 the older guys that had first choice on their vacation. And so each shift, like they couldn't  
26 let too many furnace operators off. So they might let, each shift down there might let one  
27 furnace operator off, one basement guy off, and one top guy off. So them older guys in  
28 that area would take up Christmas, take up, uh, hunting or whatever holiday they wanted.  
29 Then, they'd go to the vacation list. If you were down at the bottom, you didn't get to  
30 pick very much. And if they didn't take all of that, they took the summer. So you were in  
31 between taking that. Holidays, a lot of guys didn't have kids they would say, "We'll work  
32 Christmas. Let so and so off." [Coughs] But they, it was the same way. You had to run  
33 the plant. You couldn't let too many guys off, but a lot of guys would have a day off on  
34 Christmas. But a lot of guys had a day off, didn't have any kids. They'd trade somebody  
35 that had kids and work for them and they'd work for them.

36  
37 (0:58:50)

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Would they get paid extra for doing the Christmas shift?

40  
41 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yes. If you traded somebody and worked, you didn't gain anything.  
42 All you did was doing that guy a favor and he's doing you a favor. You didn't gain no  
43 overtime or nothing. If you worked doubles, you got time and a half, but if you just  
44 traded you never got, you never got any more money for it.

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** How much vacation time did workers get?

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**JOE STRUPEK:** I think when you first started you had a week, and I think it was after three years or something or, uh, yeah, I think it, oh, it was after five I think you got two. And then it went on up. I think the most you could get back then was four. Uh-hmm. It took a while to get up there though.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you retired, how many weeks were you up to?

**JOE STRUPEK:** I think I had five. Yep. I think the union had six when I retired, but salary had five.

**INTERVIEWER:** From its beginning, um, St. Joe had a very active social and recreational component for employees.

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** What programs and events were in place during your early years at the plant?

**JOE STRUPEK:** That, that were in place?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**JOE STRUPEK:** Oh. Like I said, there was a 10-year club and they had, uh, banquets and dinners. Uh. I'm trying to think of some of the other. Oh. Like I said, the, the company would sponsor, uh, a picnic in the summer either Idora Park or Kennywood or something. They had Christmas parties, and they had safety banquets. All of that kind of stuff. Uh. Softball fields all over. A lot of the guys, older timers played softball. A lot of 'em. And the auditorium with the basketball court, they played basketball. They had a bowling league in the basement. And, uh, oh, it was all kind of things for the people. They had a credit union too. And also they had gas pumps out there. You could buy gas there.

(1:00:43)

**INTERVIEWER:** Discounted?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. Yeah. It was cheaper than anywhere else you could get it, and also when you bought it, uh, you used your clock number and it was deducted out of your paycheck. You didn't have to come in there with cash or whatever. On that same lines, they had what they called meal tickets. You could go in the cafeteria and buy a book of meal tickets for dinner and all that, for lunch, dinner, breakfast and that. And, they would take it out of your pay and a lot of guys drank and before payday they run out of money. And there was a little bar down the road, the Midway Bar. Well they would go over to the cafeteria and get a book of meal tickets and they would take it down there and drink with them meal tickets, and the Midway Bar would take 'em. They'd bring the tickets back up,

1 uh, every so often when they piled up down there and get 'em cashed in and say St. Joe  
2 would give 'em the money. Oh, yeah, and also they had throughout different areas they  
3 had coffeepots for during the day and during the evening night shift or during the work  
4 you wanted coffee. And they had can there, if you didn't have a quarter or dime or  
5 whatever it was, you threw a meal ticket in there. They'd take the meal ticket. And the  
6 guys, whoever run the coffeepot would go cash 'em in for cash. But the meal tickets, like  
7 I said, they come out of your pay. So a lot of guys that's what they would do. If they  
8 owed somebody five bucks, they'd go get a five dollar meal book and give them the five  
9 dollar meal book.

10  
11 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember some of the women who worked in the cafeteria?

12  
13 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, they were all nice. They were all nice. Yeah. Yeah. I can't  
14 remember. I think there was one her name was Bertie. The older one she was in there.  
15 But there was a lot of women in there. Oh. They were nice. They treated you real nice.  
16 And they, they had good food over there.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Any favorites come to mind?

19  
20 **JOE STRUPEK:** Women?

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** No. Food.

23  
24 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, the food. [Laughter] The food. Yeah, she's upstairs. Yeah.  
25 [Laughter] I ain't gonna say nothing else. Uh. The food every morning on daylight I  
26 would stop in there and get what they called a hoppy tea. It was a big container of tea  
27 with milk and sugar in it and, uh, a ham and egg sandwich. And they were thick ham,  
28 thick eggs, uh, a big thick sandwich. Yeah.

29  
30 (1:02:41)

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** Was that ham made from the companies hogs?

33  
34 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. It was from the farm. That's where they raised the hogs and that  
35 down there. Uh-hmm. All their food was delicious. You know that. And the hours were  
36 pretty long too that they were over there. Cause you, you, a lot of guys on night turn  
37 would go, they'd go all, they had women working on night turn. They'd go over to eat  
38 lunch on night turn and then about five o'clock in the morning they'd run over there and  
39 eat breakfast. Yeah. As long as they had somebody to watch their job or they got it  
40 tapped down or whatever. Yeah. Yep. Oh. It was great. The cafeteria was great. Yeah.  
41 You couldn't beat it. And, and it was cheap too. It was reasonable. Yep.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** When some of these activities went away.

44  
45 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Because the unions came in and less money was spent on some of  
2 these extras.

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did any of this continue among the employees because it was a way  
7 of life to do these things even if it wasn't sponsored by the company anymore?

8  
9 **JOE STRUPEK:** No, I think most of it when the company quit and like the cafeteria  
10 that was gone. That went. The, they let the bowling alley and all that go over there. It  
11 went to pot over there. And, and, the hourly guys didn't pick nothing up to do like that  
12 what they were doing for them. Nothing. Yeah.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** So outside of work, what happened to relationships with company  
15 families, between company families?

16  
17 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I don't know quite what you, you mean.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** How did the change in what the company was offering as far as  
20 organized recreational activities affect life outside of the plant?

21  
22 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, okay. Well that, you were saying like there would, families would  
23 know one another and go there for these things going and that. That all quit. Everybody  
24 was off on their own doing their thing or whatever. Yeah.

25  
26 (1:04:33)

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** That's what I was trying ask.

29  
30 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. Yeah.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** If it, if somehow things continued.

33  
34 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. No. It just was gone.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** In a different way.

37  
38 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. It just went away.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. During your years, were your hours ever, ever cut back?

41  
42 **JOE STRUPEK:** No, I don't remember every being cut. Well, there were times when  
43 they'd, uh, say they didn't want, they wanted to cut back on the overtime. They'd do that.  
44 But as far as, uh, telling me to, no, I'd, I'd work the hours. I'd work the, my regular shift.  
45 I'd just. I never got cut back. Almost six days. It was six days. I never got cut back. And I  
46 think after the union come in they changed that schedule. We started working a 40-hour

1 schedule. I think, uh, one of the shifts you, you worked six days, but otherwise you had  
2 two days off every, every week just about. But as far as cut back, I never got cut back.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if any workers at hourly wage, wage earners or  
5 anybody when there were fluctuations in...

6  
7 **JOE STRUPEK:** They never got their hours cut. Like I said, there were ever a few  
8 where they laid off a few people. But there was never where like they said, "Oh, we're  
9 going to cut this back to 30 hours or 20 hours or whatever." They never did that. They cut  
10 back on the overtime or cut back on this or that, but they never cut back on the hours.  
11 And they, it was hard for 'em to cut back because it's a 24-hour job. That furnace runs 24  
12 hours. So it has to keep running. You can't shut a furnace down. If you shut a furnace  
13 down, it's finished. You have to rebuild it.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** But could they try and make you do that with fewer people on the job  
16 to cut costs?

17  
18 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, they did one time. Uh. Uh. Before the union got in. I think that's  
19 what, that's what, uh, most of the guys voted for to get the union in. They had what they  
20 called a planning and scheduling group in there. And they were young kids, college kids  
21 with a stopwatch. And they, uh, they'd stand. They never did any kind of work like that.  
22 And that work is hot and dirty in there and you could only work so long and you got to  
23 take a break. Well, they'd stand out where the air was with that stopwatch and timed jobs  
24 and that and then the next day they'd knock somebody off. Like they tried to make  
25 upstairs, they tried to make one operator operate two furnaces. I was basement foreman at  
26 the time and I had two cleanup men and a crusher man. At that time, if you got chunks in  
27 the furnace the only way to get 'em out that, they had a table that rotated. If you got a big  
28 chunk in there, it would stop that table. And you needed that rotating to keep that charge  
29 moving. So you had to get a sledgehammer and bars and go into that heat and smack that  
30 sledgehammer and them bars would bust those chunks out of there. And one time I had a  
31 crusher man and two cleanup men and, oh, I think it was July. Ungodly hot down there.  
32 We busted some chunks out of a small furnace. I told them to go take a break in the clean  
33 room, and we all went in there and had a coffee and took a break. The next morning I  
34 come in and I had one less cleanup man cause he stood there with that stopwatch and  
35 said, "Well they could take a break this and that." And so I think that was, oh, they, they  
36 were going crazy with that. You know, and like I said operators upstairs, they were all  
37 tired of it. Up until that time, I don't think they would've voted the union in, but they  
38 voted it in then cause they tried to protect themselves. They couldn't, you couldn't, you  
39 couldn't operate like that. And upper management, nobody wanted to listen to you. Like  
40 I'd go to my general, general foreman and say, "Hey, we can't operate like this." Well,  
41 that's the way it is. So, so then I think that's why they did. And then after that when they,  
42 when they got the union it, it got back the same people you had. It went back to where it  
43 was. I think after that they had a planning and scheduling group too. But it was nothing  
44 like that. It was people in the plant to help with that.

45  
46 (1:08:16)

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** And so in February of 1974, the workers voted in the unions.

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there different factions in the plant of those who wanted to join  
7 the union and those who didn't?

8  
9 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. Like I said, there probably was a few that didn't want to join and  
10 didn't want a union. But a lot of 'em because of what they did with that planning and  
11 scheduling going on, knocking their jobs off and everything, I think those were all the  
12 ones that voted for a union. And like I said, I didn't blame 'em at the time. If I was  
13 hourly, I'd a voted for a union too. Because it was bad. It's just was terrible. I said it  
14 wasn't somebody that knew the jobs and that. It was young people that never did that and  
15 they stood out in the air when that stopwatch was going. And them jobs down there, there  
16 were jobs there, you just couldn't handle it. You worked so long you had to take a break  
17 or you passed out. So they just, they didn't understand.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** How did having unions, a union there affect your job as a  
20 supervisor?

21  
22 **JOE STRUPEK:** Well, I think I had, well I had to deal with the union. I had to deal  
23 with more people with complaints and stuff. Before, they'd complain and I'd handle it if I  
24 could. But now they was, it was, go to grievances. I have to go to grievance meetings and  
25 everything else. It helped, some of it never bothered me. What got me about a union most  
26 of the time was they protected the guy that didn't want to work. A guy that he didn't  
27 come to work. You wanted to fire him. They'd have big meetings and try to save his job  
28 and all of that. But the guys that worked most, I never had any problems with them. I  
29 dealt pretty good with the union. I think Jim Douglass was president most of the time  
30 when I was in there and me and him got along good. It was give and take. Yeah.

31  
32 (1:10:10)

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** The building known as the clubhouse was an old farmhouse that St.  
35 Joe purchased with the land in 1930 that used to be used as a boardinghouse for  
36 unmarried management and clerical staff.

37  
38 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall anything about this when you started there in the early  
41 '60s?

42  
43 **JOE STRUPEK:** No. I remember them talking about the clubhouse. And I'm not sure if  
44 it was across the road where the parking lot was later. But, uh, now I never had anything  
45 to do with that. No, no.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Have you heard any stories about positions that women filled during  
2 World War II?

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. Uh. There were, I, I know for, uh, there was women that  
5 worked in there during the war. But there was one woman that worked down at, uh,  
6 maintenance and she made what we called pipe bombs. And it was, uh, about an inch  
7 pipe and they'd weld a cap on one end and they'd fill 'em with so much water in it. Weld a  
8 cap on the other end and weld this, uh, coupling so it would go on the end of a bar. And if  
9 we had the chunks that we couldn't bust in the furnace, we'd take a lance rod and burn a  
10 hole in it and then stick one of them bombs in there and close the door and run. And wait  
11 until it went off. But she was good at that. I mean when she made the bombs, they went  
12 off. And then she retired, and they started making 'em down there and we'd have trouble.  
13 All kinds of trouble. You'd put three or four bombs there and they wouldn't go off and  
14 that was dangerous because if it didn't go off you didn't know whether it was going to go  
15 off later or what it was going to do. You had to go up there and try to burn it back out and  
16 put another one in. I remember her, but I think there were other ones that worked there  
17 too, but I don't remember what they did.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember her name?

20  
21 **JOE STRUPEK:** No, I don't. No, I don't. Now, they, uh, they tried women before they  
22 shut down in there. I think they had a couple working when they shut down. They tried  
23 women in there. Some of 'em were good and some of 'em they couldn't handle the job.  
24 Uh. And what was bad was they'd put one in there and a lot of the guys would do her  
25 work. You got a trial period, accepted her cause they'd go, "Oh, yeah. She's doing a great  
26 job." You accepted her and then they'd get mad. They'd come up and tell me, "Well, she's  
27 not doing her job." But that was part of the problem. But a lot of, a few of them there they  
28 were good. They could do the job.

29  
30 (1:12:24)

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** What jobs were they doing?

33  
34 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. One of 'em, a couple of 'em were, uh, skimmers on the condenser  
35 floor. At, at that time, um, before I retired they had went to casting machines. They  
36 weren't dumping slabs by hand no more. They went to these casting machines. You stood  
37 up there and they had, uh, uh, a holding pot and the metal had a pump in it and it pumped,  
38 come down launder. It filled a mold and moved to the next one. You just skimmed the  
39 dirt and that off the top and it would go all the way down. When it got down to the end it  
40 would be cool, it would dump 'em and that had a big stacker on it. Stacked 'em and sat  
41 'em down for the shipper. So there was quite a couple women that did that. There was one  
42 there. Oh, she was a big woman. She did, uh, uh, I think it was, uh, utility, shift utility.  
43 And they would take samples and that with five-gallon buckets of the sumps they called  
44 'em. She'd go down there with two buckets, pick 'em up and sat 'em down. So she did  
45 that. She was good at it. One worked the utility gang and that was, the utility gang was  
46 hot. Hot pulling electrodes. Cutting the rock oxide out of the condensers or out of the

1 vapor ring and that. And she could do it. Yeah. But a lot of 'em couldn't. A lot of 'em, a  
2 lot of 'em either quit or you had to let 'em go. And they, one of the stipulations in there,  
3 you couldn't be in the furnace plant if you were pregnant because of the lead and  
4 cadmium I think.

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Looking through company publications from the 1960s, it seems that  
7 there were very few African-Americans, uh, working on the St. Joe workforce. Did you  
8 see this change at any point?

9  
10 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. It changed. When I worked before they shut down this last  
11 time, they had other colored people coming in. Yeah. But back then, you're right. That's,  
12 you saw very few. I think the only one I can remember was one on the shipping gang for  
13 a long time. But that's the only one. Then, they started bringing more in after that. Yep.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if the company had actually made efforts to recruit  
16 minorities?

17  
18 **JOE STRUPEK:** I don't think they did back then.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make to recruit veterans?

21  
22 **JOE STRUPEK:** I, I, I don't know if they actually went out to recruit veterans, but if  
23 veterans come in there, they, they, they hired 'em. Cause there, there were a lot of guys  
24 that were in, uh, in Reserves. And when that guy was going for two-week summer trip  
25 they, they scheduled him out and he went. Yeah. He didn't get paid, but he went. And so  
26 they, they did it. But they hired, they hired veterans I know, but I don't think they went  
27 out recruiting 'em to say, "Come on down here. We're hiring veterans." I don't think they  
28 did that.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** I guess I was thinking more were they given any kind of priority for  
31 hiring?

32  
33 (1:15:09)

34  
35 **JOE STRUPEK:** I don't know. I don't know if they did or not. I don't think. I don't  
36 know. I don't know if they did or not. But back then I had nothing to do with hiring and  
37 that.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you recall the company hiring Vietnamese refugees in the late  
40 '70s? One person mentioned that and I'm...

41  
42 **JOE STRUPEK:** You know, you know, I, I remember one I think. I think I remember  
43 one that they hired. I think, I'm not, that's the only. I remember one. I'm pretty sure and  
44 that's all I remember is one. They may have hired more throughout the plant cause all I  
45 had mainly was the furnace plant.



1 **INTERVIEWER:** How was St. Joe Lead integrated into or contributing to the larger  
2 Beaver Valley community?

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, they employed a lot of people. Yeah, and everybody around, uh,  
5 said that's the place to work. I mean everybody around early back then said, "Oh, that's  
6 the place to work. You want to work there." And a lot of people tried to get in down there  
7 when they were hiring. And like I said, they, they employed quite a few people back then.  
8 Yep.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you aware of the company being involved in any civic programs  
11 or endeavors?

12  
13 **JOE STRUPEK:** I'm trying to think. I know they used to send somebody with a booth  
14 over there at, uh, Beaver when they had that centennial or whatever, when they were  
15 having the fall or something like that. I know they opened a booth over there. I don't  
16 know if there's any. Oh, yeah. I knew they were doing the river cleanup and things like  
17 that. They helped around here and that. Yeah.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about that.

20  
21 **JOE STRUPEK:** And United Fund. United Fund was a big thing when I, even when I  
22 first started. They pushed for that. They wanted to see everybody. Make sure everybody  
23 gave something. Yep. And what they would do, you set it up and you took so much out of  
24 your pay. Yeah. They were, they were big on United Fund.

25  
26 (1:16:54)

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if that went towards local charities?

29  
30 **JOE STRUPEK:** No, I don't. I'm not sure. Well I think you could select. They gave you  
31 a choice. You could select different charities it went to. Some guys did. Some guys just  
32 gave it to the United Fund.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any pressure from the company that you had to do this?

35  
36 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. When I first started they pushed you. They wanted you,  
37 everybody to give something. They didn't care if you gave a dollar. They wanted  
38 everybody. So they could say they had a big percentage given. Yeah. Yeah. But most of  
39 the guys went along with it. Most of the guys gave. Yep.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Why did you work at the plant as long as you did?

42  
43 **JOE STRUPEK:** Well, like I said, when I first started, I liked it. I loved going to work  
44 then. It was good until, until towards the end. Then it started to get bad. But I liked going  
45 to work. I liked the plant. Yep. I liked the things they did. I liked the people and that.

46

1 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the best part, a favorite memory or anecdote about  
2 working at the zinc plant?

3  
4 **JOE STRUPEK:** I don't know if I have a favorite one. I do know one thing. Uh. When I  
5 got the job, uh, I think I weighed 135 pounds. I was very small and, uh, the guy that when  
6 they called me for an interview the guy, his name was Joe Nard, and he had an office and  
7 you came in the front door and he had a back door. And, uh, he, uh, interviewed me and,  
8 uh, asked me if I could do all the jobs over there, and when he was done he said, "You  
9 can go out the back door." And I hit that door and something was wrong with it. You  
10 could hardly get it open. I pushed it, and I looked back at him and I said, "I can do  
11 anything at this plant except get out this door." [Laughter]

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

14  
15 **JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, towards the end I think was the whole thing. If that company  
16 would've thought more of the people and whatever. They seemed to just care about  
17 themselves and getting that metal across the bridge. But Horsehead was, when Horsehead  
18 took over that's when it really got bad. Up until that time, some of the things were bad,  
19 but when Horsehead took over it was really bad. Yep.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you recall about your last day on the job?

22  
23 (1:18:58)

24  
25 **JOE STRUPEK:** Uh. I just walked around and told everybody goodbye cause I didn't  
26 have nothing to do anymore. Yep.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** What were you feeling?

29  
30 **JOE STRUPEK:** I was a little hurt about the way they let me go. See I was probably  
31 going to go that summer. Okay. Cause that April I turned 62 I think. And, uh, they called  
32 me in there in December like about the 27<sup>th</sup> down to the main office at, uh, 7:30 and my  
33 assistant superintendent then he told me. He said, "Hey, you got a meeting. They want  
34 you down there at 7:30." So I told him. I said, "I'm going." He said, "Nah." At that time,  
35 they were talking about laying some salary people off. I said, "Well, I'm going." He said,  
36 "Nah, they ain't gonna let you go." I went down there and the guy said, "Yeah, whenever  
37 so and so comes in he's going to take you in the back office. He wants to talk to you."  
38 Well, he had a paper, and as I went in there he said, "January 15<sup>th</sup> you're done." And I  
39 knew that, I knew that. I worked for the guy for years and that. And I said, "You couldn't  
40 tell me this ahead of time? You're going to take me out at January. You couldn't tell me  
41 ahead of time?" He said, "They don't want nobody to know." He said, "You're gone  
42 because, uh, they need to let so many salary people go, and they knew you were going to  
43 go in the summer probably anyhow." So he said, "You're going now." He said, "We're  
44 going to pay your severance." I got, I think a couple weeks. It used to be when I first  
45 started there, salary people, for how many years they got that's how many weeks' pay  
46 they got for a severance. They cut mine. Maybe I got 15 weeks or whatever. And they

1 paid my insurance until I think April, and then I had to pick up other insurance until I  
2 turned 62 and that, that was the biggest thing that sort of got me, you know. You could've  
3 let me know ahead of time. You needed me to go or whatever. It wouldn't been so bad.  
4 But to call me down there and say, "You're done January 15<sup>th</sup>." Especially after I worked  
5 with him for a long time and knew. In fact, salary is like that. If they were going to do  
6 something, they might let me know ahead of time. Now, I wasn't allowed to tell nobody  
7 cause they wanted to bring it up all together. And a lot of the things they told me I never  
8 said a thing about it. And he tells me, "Well, they didn't want it out." Whatever.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

11  
12 **JOE STRUPEK:** I think it's good. It should give 'em some jobs. But a lot of people are  
13 worried. They're worried that all the jobs are going to be while they're building it, and  
14 when they start the plant they're not going to need very many people. So I think that's the  
15 big thing. But if they, it's employing people. I, I just get amazed every time I go by there.  
16 I got amazed when they first started. Cutting that hill off and everything. I said, "My  
17 God." And then they moved the road and everything. Yeah. But a lot of people that I talk  
18 to they're afraid that okay all these workers they got employed now cause they're building  
19 it. Once that's all gone, they're not going to have very many people working down there. I  
20 think it was, it's a good thing to bring something in there cause the plant was just going to  
21 sit there. I knew that Horsehead was having troubles. They built the new plant and they  
22 were shutting that one down. And I think they had trouble down there. That's why they  
23 went. They were afraid of going bankrupt. Yep. And that was another thing they did.  
24 They built that plant down there and all that experience up here. They never took very  
25 many people down there at all. They hired people off the street down there. Uh. I don't  
26 know if it's true or not. One of the guys told me he knew a guy that went down there to  
27 help 'em as a foreman or whatever and said they had, uh, molten metal has to run  
28 downhill. If it's going uphill, it ain't gonna go. And they said they put a pot in with a  
29 ladle, with a launder going uphill and trying to run metal up it to get to the pot. And he  
30 said the hourly, the people they were paying 'em \$10 an hour and they come in and said  
31 once they got a check half of 'em didn't come back. I mean you had a lot of good people  
32 here that worked in it. A lot of experience. That was one thing I had too. Years ago,  
33 before Horsehead took over I think even. They waited too long to hire somebody to  
34 replace somebody coming up. So you had these older operators, 25 or 30 years in there,  
35 when you could've been training a guy with that guy cause he had all that experience.  
36 And they'd wait till he was ready to retire and bring a new guy in and say, "Okay.  
37 Moving this guy up and whatever." But when I first started, oh, I tell you it was, it wasn't  
38 like that. It was like I said, uh, when I bid over at oxide, uh, on the furnace, uh, on the  
39 skimming, on the condenser floor. I'd, uh, I'd been years. I'd have waited until somebody  
40 retired or quit before I could have ever moved into one of those jobs cause that's the way  
41 they did it. The skimmer worked with that operator. He learned that whole furnace before  
42 an operating job ever come up for bid. If one retired, then it'd come up for bid. They took  
43 the oldest skimmer bid on it and he got it. But he already knew how to run the furnace.  
44 Cause a lot of times the old operator had the skimmer, run the furnace. They'd go out  
45 there and skim and dump slabs so he'd learn. But then that, like I said, they quit doing  
46 that. You know, quit hiring until late and then you lost a lot with the older guys retiring.

1 Yeah. There was an old, uh, condenser foreman when I started and he didn't like a lot of  
2 guys because they swore a lot around him. I swore a lot too, but around him I didn't. And  
3 he liked me. So he would show me things that he never showed anybody else. Like if you  
4 had water running over and funnels, he'd show me how to take care of it. He'd take me  
5 around the furnace and there'd be something wrong with it and he'd say what do you  
6 think is wrong with that. And I'd tell him what I thought and he'd tell me what was really  
7 wrong with it. Then he'd say we go down and ask that operator, he'd been there 20 years.  
8 He don't know. Go down and ask him. He didn't know. But that old timer he really, he  
9 was good. I learned a lot from him. Well I learned the whole condenser floor from him. A  
10 lot of people didn't like him, but I liked him. He was good. But that's what I said. They  
11 made the mistake to let all that experience go and then when they went down and built  
12 that plant there was a lot of experienced operators still there.

13

14 (1:24:29)

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16 **INTERVIEWER:** Anything else you'd like to add that I haven't asked you about?

17

18 **JOE STRUPEK:** No, I don't think. I think that's about it. But I, I, like I said I enjoyed  
19 working there until it got bad with Horsehead. But before that I enjoyed working there. I  
20 liked the people. They, they were good. Yeah. When I first started there, oh, there was,  
21 like I said, it was like family. Everybody took care of everybody else. If they had  
22 something to do at home and if you needed help, they'd come and help you. Whatever. It  
23 was good. Like I said, if you went in and if you didn't feel good, they'd tell you, "Sit  
24 down. Sit down. Sit down." They'd go do your job for you. Yep. That all changed.  
25 Everything's changed now. Yep. But I had a good life. I supported my family and put my  
26 son through college and my daughter went for a while and didn't want to go. So, but I put  
27 'em through college and raised 'em. So it was good. It helped me a lot. Like I said, oh, I  
28 got. I got some stubs here too. It was my first stubs, I think I got. Like two something an  
29 hour that I got. Oh, they, well the 10-year club used to give these out too. They'd give out  
30 a pin when you turned 10 years, 20 years, 25. [REDACTED] They were going to  
31 block the gate and you had to use a card to get in and that didn't fly.

32

33 (1:25:38)

34

35 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any other kind of security to get on and off the premises  
36 before that?

37

38 **JOE STRUPEK:** Yeah. They, they had, uh, all the road and right there they had a gate  
39 going in and they had a guard shed right there. And that's where they would stop people  
40 that didn't belong in there or whatever. But, uh, they'd come down there. Even if they  
41 didn't recognize you, they raised the gate and you'd wave at 'em and you'd go on through.  
42 They never tried to stop. Until they, I think later on they tried to do that. They tried to  
43 stop a lot of people.

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45 **INTERVIEWER:** You know, I'm noticing on this. There's a category for shoes. They  
46 took out of your paycheck for shoes.

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**JOE STRUPEK:** Yes. You could get shoes. They, they brought, uh, a truck in. Okay. And the truck sold shoes and work clothes and you could go over to the truck and give 'em your clock number and they took it out of your pay. Oh, and there was a credit union also. In, uh, whenever I first started. And, uh, you could get loans through there. Get a car through there or whatever, and their rates were good.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever take advantage of that?

**JOE STRUPEK:** Oh, yeah. I think a bought a car through there one time. But they used to give out awards like this for production. Well we did a lot of these after I, we started back up. Stuff like that. They used to do some of this. Give it out to sales people and whatever. And then they had an award I think that was zinc dust, zinc dust operator, a belt buckle. They had a lot of things like this here. It's like a slab and whatever they'd give out. And I think, uh, a lot of the college kids, uh, I know some of 'em would come in there and work for the summer cause summertime for vacations they would hire some college kids to work down there and some of 'em. Like I remember a couple asked if they could take a zinc slab, a 50-pound zinc slab, cause they were doing a report on it and they'd give it to 'em. They used to give stickers out like that. I think the rest of these are about the same. That's the rest. Uh. All I got from the credit union was that there. It was a deck of cards with their name and ad on it. Then, I think for a while. Oh, yeah I had this even I think until we shut down. If I wanted to drive in, I hung this on my mirror so then they could see it in the gatehouse and they'd wave you in.

**INTERVIEWER:** You have quite a collection.

**JOE STRUPEK:** Uh-hmm.

(END)

**John Wakeley**  
**Interview @ November 10, 2016**

## **JOHN WAKELEY**

### **Summary**

The interview with John Wakeley took place on November 10, 2016, in the kitchen of his home in East Liverpool, Ohio. Before starting the interview, John showed artifacts in his garage pertaining to St. Joe. These included helmets, tools, and flags. John worked at the Monaca plant from 1978 through the December 1979 shutdown; he worked there again from April 1987 to June 2013.

Raised as a “St. Joe kid,” John shares reminiscences of his father, I. Duane Wakeley, and his experiences participating in company-sponsored activities as a youth. The interview explores John’s work experience at the smelter in maintenance and the furnace department. He explains slag, casting machine and furnace operations, and the duties of the daylight utility gang and roving maintenance crew.

Trained as a medic, John was very involved in first aid and safety. He discusses this topic at length—both his personal involvement on the job and the company’s safety training programs, precautions and protocols, as well as occupational hazards, fatalities and a memorial to honor those lives lost. John also talks about the St. Joe apprenticeship programs, both before and after the 1979 shutdown. Having served as the plant’s union president, John describes general and specific issues pertaining to union involvement. Of particular interest is the union’s role in helping to prepare employees to transition after the final shutdown by Horsehead in 2014. John also tells the story of the POW flag that flew atop the plant until its final day.





1 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. First employment period was 1978 through the shutdown in  
2 December of 1979, where I was a slag operator in the basement of the furnace plant.  
3 Then I was rehired in April of 1987, where I stayed employed until June of 2013, when I  
4 started my new job at Pittsburgh International Airport.

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6 (0:02:15)  
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8 **INTERVIEWER:** Who in your family worked at the plant?  
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10 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Um. My father was hired in 1957 as a metallurgical engineer.  
11 Graduated at Carnegie Institute of Technology. He was a tech superintendent in the  
12 furnace plant before going over to the offices. When the mill shut down in 1979, he was  
13 the data systems controller cause he'd gone back to college at Penn State with a degree in  
14 computer science. Uh. After the mill shut down, he was employed as vice president of  
15 finance for a company called ISCOTT, which was the International Steel Company of  
16 Trinidad and Tobago in the West Indies. He worked there for seven years. Upon return to  
17 the United States, he was, uh, reached out to by Dick Knapp, who was a former employee  
18 prior to the shutdown. And, uh, he went back to work for the company at their  
19 Bartlesville, Oklahoma plant, where he retired from with accumulative total of 43, 43  
20 years' service.  
21

22 **INTERVIEWER:** Your dad's name?  
23

24 **JOHN WAKELEY:** I. Duane Wakeley.  
25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** You mentioned that your dad was working at the company and then  
27 he did graduate work?  
28

29 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Correct.  
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31 **INTERVIEWER:** Did the company pay for his graduate education?  
32

33 **JOHN WAKELEY:** That I'm not sure about. I was at, uh, grade school when he did  
34 that. I do know that after the mill shut down and he, as he was the data systems  
35 controller, he also went back to school and got an accounting degree because when he  
36 actually retired after 43 years' service he was a corporate accountant in, uh, you and I go  
37 to what they refer to as a CMA, I mean, a CPA to get your taxes done. He was one of at  
38 the time 1,700 people in the United States certified as a CMA, which is a certified  
39 management accountant. So his specialty was corporate taxes versus individual.  
40

41 **INTERVIEWER:** Was he working in a tax department for Horsehead or?  
42

43 **JOHN WAKELEY:** He was head of the accounting department.  
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45 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What kind of hours did your father work and how did that  
46 schedule affect you as a child and your family?

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**JOHN WAKELEY:** Traditionally, he'd work 10 hours a day Monday through Friday. Uh. Sometimes he would go in on Sundays to do work when he was data systems controller. But, uh, sometimes I would go with him to his office because of the key punch machines or he would arrange for me to, uh, go out into the plant and do things, uh, get materials for science projects or whatever. Uh. I played little league baseball. My father and I both were in the Boy Scouts. He was a leader. Um. Him and I both were nominated and inducted into the Order of the Arrow, which is an honorary campers society within the Boy Scouts. Uh. He was a merit badge instructor. I got my Eagle Scout when I was 13, which at that point I was one of the youngest Scouts in Western Pennsylvania to receive that rank in such a short time. Uh. And he also helped my mom and two sisters because she was involved with the Eastern Star and my two sisters were Rainbow Girls. And with them doing that, they were also Brownies and Girl Scouts. So Dad and I would go help build the campfires or whatever for them when they had their little campouts or whatever. So, uh, we've always been involved.

**INTERVIEWER:** It sounds like, it sounds like he was present in your life. What stories did your father tell you about the plant or his coworkers that stand out in your mind?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** He really didn't tell stories. Uh. There was other men that he worked with that had boys the same age group as me. So occasionally we would, uh, go golfing together on weekends because my father participated in the, uh, golf league that the plant had and, uh, he also bowled cause we had our own bowling alleys at the plant and, uh, later on when I got older him and I and my grandmother all bowled together Saturday evenings in a church league locally. So, uh, you know, Lon and his son would meet dad and I at the golf course on Saturday morning and, you know, it would be the two boys against the two or the father-son teams would tee up and, uh, we just did those kind of things together. He, he really didn't bring work home and if he did bring work home he also put it on the kitchen table after we went to bed. Uh. Our homework issues never suffered cause he was too busy doing his work.

**INTERVIEWER:** And who was that other father-son?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Lon Hardy.

**INTERVIEWER:** What, what was the first name.

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Lon Hardy, and I believe his son's name was Greg.

**INTERVIEWER:** As a child, did you have a sense that you too would work at the plant someday?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. No. Actually being an honor student in high school and taking accelerated, uh, science and math classes, uh, in Aliquippa in the late '60s they started

1 integration bussing and there was rioting and interracial issues and, uh, my parents  
2 actually took myself and sisters out of the public school system and enrolled us in  
3 Catholic private schools even though we were Protestant. And, uh, we didn't have free  
4 study periods and we didn't have vo-tech. My senior year of high school, aside from your  
5 regular core classes, I took physics, chemistry II, biology II, and introduction to calculus  
6 and things like that. So I always had a full, a full academic load. Uh. We actually hit the  
7 private Catholic school system when I was in the sixth grade and where I went to school  
8 at Mount Gallitzin Academy in Baden in sixth grade I was already in, inducted into  
9 French classes. So by the time I quit taking language courses in high school I had five  
10 years of French. But, uh, I actually went to college for Marine Biology and then switched  
11 majors to Business Management and, uh, you know, everything happens for, uh, a reason.  
12 You know. I'll throw the word predestination out as far as God's plan for you and, uh, I  
13 thought I had fallen in love and I was going to transfer to Robert Morris College and  
14 ended up quitting college and working in the mill. And then when the mill shut down, I,  
15 uh, went to EMT school and became a medic and started working for an ambulance  
16 company. [Clears throat] Dad got the job in Trinidad and at 22 years of age I had a  
17 decision to make. Venture out on my own or be a beach bum and go with mom and dad.  
18 And, uh, that's when at 22 years of age I signed a blank check and enlisted in the Army.

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20 (0:09:32)

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22 **INTERVIEWER:** Interesting story. Why did you leave school after two years?

23

24 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. Cause I was going to get married and I thought I was in love  
25 and, you know, you can't go to school and start a family and do everything all in one ball  
26 of wax. So I managed to get a job in the mill so that definitely left school out of the  
27 picture cause I was swinging a 21-turn rotation schedule.

28

29 **INTERVIEWER:** Can you talk a little bit more about your experiences growing up  
30 around the plant as a St. Joe kid?

31

32 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. Every year through the age of 12, they would have a  
33 Christmas party and, uh, your parents would sign you up for the age group. But, uh,  
34 everybody would meet. We had our own gymnasium at the plant. It had an actual  
35 hardwood floor and they had a men's volleyball league and the guys would play  
36 basketball after work. The departments and everything. But they would, uh, have a  
37 Christmas party for the kids as I said, and the gym would be all decorated with the candy  
38 canes and Santa Claus and they would roll the big screen down and show, show the old-  
39 fashioned Looney Toon Cartoons with Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck and all that and then,  
40 uh, they would have a magician come out and do tricks for the kids and then Santa Claus  
41 would come out on the stage and then you would go downstairs and they would have two  
42 lines. One side was for boys and one side was for girls. And they would have stations  
43 based on age groups, two to four, six to eight, 10 to 12, whatever. And, uh, you would go  
44 through a line, sit on Santa's lap, get a candy cane and a box of candy, and then go to, uh,  
45 specific age group you were in and pick up a Christmas gift that the company had paid  
46 for. And, uh, I have to tell you, by no means, were the gifts your Walmart type of

1 clearance rack item. You're talking, excuse me, telescopes, chemistry sets, tape recorders,  
2 cameras, and the older the age group, the more intricate or entailed the, the gift was. And  
3 that Christmas party actually went on through the plant shutdown in 1979. Uh. They also  
4 had their own cafeteria prior to '79. And, uh, the women that worked there, they would  
5 butcher. They would have their own meat butchered and, uh, when you went into the  
6 cafeteria with a tray just like you did in high school and asked for a hot roast beef dinner,  
7 it was fresh, hot roast beef with homemade mashed potatoes and gravy and fresh  
8 homemade apple pie or peach pie or whatever. And, uh, they sold meal tickets that they  
9 deducted the cost of the meal ticket booklet out of your paycheck for you and that's how  
10 you paid for your meals with the little meal ticket stubs, little booklets. Uh. Like I said,  
11 the company prior to '79 was definitely 100% family based and oriented. We had our  
12 own gas pumps down there that you could buy gas. We had our own credit union right on  
13 the site. We even had our ambulance and our plant nurse 24/7. After they opened back up  
14 in '81, no gas pumps, no credit union, no cafeteria, no ambulance.

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16 (0:12:59)

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18 **INTERVIEWER:** But how were they caring for people who got injured at that point?

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20 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. You dialed 911 and waited for the ambulance to show up and  
21 counted on the foreman and/or people on the rescue squad that the company only  
22 provided basic first aid training for. There was, uh, as I mentioned out in the garage about  
23 the number of veterans we had. There was also a high influx in the plant of volunteer  
24 fireman and EMTs, and we were the ones that actually made up the in-plant rescue squad.

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26 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of training did you have for the EMT?

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28 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. At the time, I got my first certification. That was a 110-hour  
29 classroom course with then time in the emergency room under doctor's supervision to  
30 verify my qualifications for treatment of care, and then, uh, I had to ride so many hours a  
31 week with a volunteer ambulance company to keep the certification up. Uh. Certification  
32 came from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, which was good for three years and  
33 at the end of three years, I had to either retake a refresher course and/or challenge the  
34 state certification course. Now the state certification course consisted of a written test and  
35 once you passed the written test, then you had to take a hands-on test. The hands-on test  
36 had what they called stations, where, uh, soft tissue was a station and you would go to  
37 this station with a partner and they would present to you a patient and they would  
38 describe the type of trauma, which soft tissue is a bad cut or whatever and you would  
39 actually have to simulate doing the full treatment. Uh. Same thing, another station would  
40 be for, for broken bones. Another one would be for one of the seven types of shock that  
41 there is. And then you had to pass all those and once you did that, then you were  
42 recertified as an emergency medical technician in the state of Pennsylvania. Uh. When I  
43 came back from Fort Ritchie, Maryland, my second duty station, which we'll get to. But  
44 when I came back from Germany, I went and took the Maryland EMT course at the  
45 Hagerstown Junior College, and the volunteer fire department I ran with up there actually

1 serviced Maryland and Pennsylvania. So I had dual status. I was certified as an EMT in  
2 both the state of Maryland and the state of Pennsylvania.

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4 (0:15:32)

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6 **INTERVIEWER:** Did, um, St. Joe Lead or its successor company provide any medical  
7 training or emergency training for its staff? I mean it sounds like you did this outside of  
8 the company. What did they do when they no longer had an ambulance and a nurse there?  
9 Did, what did they provide in the way of medical emergency services or training for it?

10  
11 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Once a year, once a year, the Red Cross would come in and run  
12 what they call, uh, basic first aid or first responder course with CPR and now obviously  
13 they've added the AED to the course, but basically it was a one-day, eight-hour course.

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15 **INTERVIEWER:** And who took the course?

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17 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Anybody that signed up. Uh. Especially the, uh, the CPR course.  
18 You know, they, they would have sign-up sheets in the departments and anybody in the  
19 plant that wanted to take the course was allowed to sign up and take it. And, uh, one of  
20 the reasons why we ended up having the AEDs placed throughout the plant was, uh, one  
21 of the five people I witnessed pass while I was an employee there was a gentleman who  
22 had a fatal heart attack in the change house after work while he was getting ready to go  
23 home. And you know, right away the union safety committee threw at the company in a  
24 positive, in a positive manor, you know, if we had an AED would it have saved his life?  
25 And AEDs just really come into play on the market as being a, a lifesaving instrument.  
26 So there again, because the rep, the reputation the union and the company had together,  
27 the company bought AEDs in the safety department and placed them in accessible areas  
28 throughout the mill, including the change house.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about the safety department? What,  
31 what was that and how many people were in that safety department and their  
32 responsibilities?

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34 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. The biggest that at any point that I remember was four people.  
35 Uh. When I left the plant in 2013, it had been cut to two. Uh. They were responsible for  
36 tracking all the confined space work permits and confined space entries that we did, uh,  
37 throughout the mill. Setting and enforcing OSHA policies for safety and requirements  
38 like annual fork truck training, whether or not the guys were wearing the seatbelts on the  
39 fork trucks like they were supposed to. Uh. Everybody that worked there had to be able to  
40 wear a respirator the whole time they were in their work area. So they would conduct the  
41 annual respirator fit testing to make sure that your PPE, which is personal protective  
42 equipment, was, uh, serviceable and fit properly. Uh. They would conduct the refresher  
43 trainings for the confined space rescue team that I was on and at one point the hazardous  
44 material response team. Uh.

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46 **INTERVIEWER:** Who was the head of the safety department?

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**JOHN WAKELEY:** When I left, his name was Jeff Zenizak. He lived in Chippewa and, uh, there again him and I had a good rapport with me being on the union safety committee for seven years before I became union president and, uh, fortunately Jeff relied strongly on the influence and advice of the employees that were volunteer fireman on the outside. Because with no fire brigade or ambulance, any real emergency in the plant the local volunteer fire departments and ambulance company came in to handle it. So with having volunteer firemen in there as employees, we actually convinced the company it would be beneficial to have all the volunteers carry pagers. So that if something happened in the plant, like if I was working at the sinter plant and there was, uh, a serious incident in the furnace plant, I had a pager that would go off that would tell me to go respond to an emergency in the furnace plant. So we would try to be like the first responders until the outside departments could come in and handle the situation.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there any scheduling to ensure that you always had some people such as yourself, who were qualified to deal with those emergencies as a first responder, on a shift in the plant at any given time?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** There wasn't any special scheduling to make sure there was people in there. Uh. It just fortunately I guess worked out that we had enough shift workers volunteer to participate. Uh. Probably my last 20 years in that, in the mill, I was on steady daylight. You know, and there was a higher concentration of employees on daylight, so that would naturally be considered a more critical time. Uh. Even though, like I said, we did work 21 turns. Uh. It just worked out that way that we, we always had somebody there besides a foreman that was qualified and, and there again the foreman knew from talking with people that even this guy wasn't officially on the in-plant rescue squad that he was a volunteer fireman, you know, over there and, you know, he's going to grab him if he needs help.

**INTERVIEWER:** Were the foremen given safety training?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** What did their safety training involve?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** The same as the hourly employees. Standard first aid, CPR, AED. Uh. They were all required to participate in the confined space rescue drills also.

**INTERVIEWER:** How often did these drills take place?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** It was annual training. Uh. We were trying to ramp it up to twice a year the last couple of years there because of the number of confined space entries we were doing. Uh. We sort of phased out of the hazmat response because of the

1 requirements for the training through the, through the state and the National Fire  
2 Academy.

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4 (0:21:25)

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6 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you explain a little more about what this confined space  
7 hazard was?

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9 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Okay. A, a confined space is a vessel that is not configured for  
10 constant human inhabitation. So in other words, if you have a culvert that you see the  
11 water run through underneath a bridge. If you stood that culvert up and crawled down in  
12 it, you're in a confined space. And when you work in a confined space, you have to  
13 monitor, it has to be inspected for three gasses, CO being one. You have to provide  
14 ventilation, and you have to have a rescue system to pull yourself out of something, in  
15 case something happens while you're in there. You have to wear a CO monitor the whole  
16 time to monitor the CO levels in that work area and fortunately we never had a confined  
17 space rescue scenario aside from training that would have to be performed. Uh. And we  
18 did thousands of confined space entries yearly. The safety department went around and  
19 marked each area that met the OSHA definition for a confined space and that alerted the  
20 foremen before work could be conducted that a confined space entry permit had to be  
21 done. And when the entry permit is filled out, the people that are actually going into the  
22 space, their name goes on it, the safety man's name goes on it cause you have to have a  
23 safety man on the outside with a radio and if something happened he called on the radio  
24 to the guard shack, which then notified the response team and the outside fire department.  
25 The, the system worked really well and, you know, we had to be careful and the reason  
26 the training kept going on and on was, as silly as it may sound, by definition if I'm down  
27 inside that vessel working and you stick your head inside the vessel to look at me, by  
28 definition you've just entered the confined space. You know, anytime you broke the plane  
29 of that confined space you were now in it, which means now there is no safety person.  
30 And it's just, you know, little things like that that the training provided so the people  
31 knew the dos and don'ts, which actually makes for a good prevention program.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** Did St. Joe develop this protocol?

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35 **JOHN WAKELEY:** No. It's, uh, they call it the blood bible, and it's about three-inches  
36 thick. It's OSHA regulation CFR, consolidated federal regulation, 1910 and in there,  
37 there's specific guidelines for confined space work, confined space sampling, confined  
38 space permits, how everything has to be filled out. Uh. Even the wearing of our  
39 respirators, because we worked in a lead and cadmium environment and our blood was  
40 tested every six months. The wearing of the respirator and how to test to make sure the,  
41 uh, employee was capable of wearing it is outlined in CFR 1910. Uh. Everybody that  
42 wore a respirator had to have an annual PFT, pulmonary function test, administered by a  
43 doctor. And if you didn't pass the PFT then you were referred to a pulmonologist and the  
44 pulmonologist made the determination based on your physical condition and, and, uh,  
45 vitals, blood pressure, heartrate, and everything, whether or not you could wear a  
46 respirator cause that was the defining requirement to be an employee there.

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**INTERVIEWER:** For the PFT testing and the blood testing, did the company bring a physician onto the site to do that?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Yes. Uh. There's a company that works out of Ellwood City called Apple. It's a diagnostics team, and they would come down and they would do the annual hearing tests, the pulmonary function tests, and then there was a local company doctor that they sent one of their nurses down for the, uh, blood monitoring every six months.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you know how early, in terms of years, they started doing that kind of monitoring?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** The only thing I can guarantee you is it did not happen before the shutdown of '79. And, and even at that, the first probably 15-20 years I was back as an employee and I urge you to giggle when you hear this story. The top floor of the furnace plant there used to be a yellow line painted down it. If you stood on this side of the yellow line, you had to have a respirator on. If you stood on this side of the yellow line, you didn't. There's five floors in that department. Every floor had a line like that. If you're standing here, you don't have to wear your respirator. If you're standing here, you do. And silly me, I was one of those guys that stood here a lot. Never being smart enough to say, you know, what's changing the air when it cross that yellow line and actually what happened, they ended making the whole department a respirator area where that, that yellow, magic yellow line disappeared. But there was hundreds of employees for thousands of man hours that actually, even though they passed the respirator test, breathed in the lead and cadmium dust because they weren't required over here to wear a respirator.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you know if after all these years, well for you as an example or your, your coworkers, cases of respiratory illness that arose because of this exposure or other illness from the exposures, the lead and the cadmium?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** We had several people actually removed from work areas because of high lead counts in their blood. Uh. They're going to look at me and say because I'm a smoker, but I do have COPD. I was diagnosed with COPD before I left the mill. But there again because of my physical appearance and my vitals at that time of my employment, the pulmonologist still cleared me to wear a respirator because even today at 58 years old, my blood pressure is only 122/70 with no medication. So, but yes, there's, uh, most of the guys that die that worked there or have died since the place closed had either been a, from a heart attack or from cancer. So and, you know, if you think about it the two things that we were exposed to the most are both carcinogens. And when the company was first opened it was a smelting company. Uh. When we shut down it was more like a hazmat refinery. I mean it, uh, anything they could throw in the top of them furnaces that they thought they could get zinc out of they burned. It was a waste incinerator. That's the word I was looking for.



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2 (0:28:34)

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4 **INTERVIEWER:** And did you consider working anywhere other than at the zinc plant?

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6 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. After my unemployment ran out in '79 from the first shutdown  
7 and I was, uh, working as an EMT for Valley Ambulance in Allegheny County, my father  
8 secured employment out of the country and the money I was making as an EMT was not  
9 enough to sustain a, a livelihood for myself. So I had a decision to make at that point  
10 whether to stay with mom and dad and just move down to Trinidad or try to find another  
11 viable form of employment. I wasn't having much luck interviewing with what I was  
12 interested at the time being a medic. Cause at that point in the late '70s that job didn't  
13 really pay much. So I went and took the tests, the battery of tests for enlistment and at age  
14 22, out of shape, I headed off to Fort Dix New Jersey for basic training with the United  
15 States Army. I finished my basic training at Fort Dix and then was reassigned to Fort  
16 Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis, Indiana, for the personnel administration specialist,  
17 which I picked that field because of the two years of college I had in business  
18 management. Needless to say it was an eight-week course that was self-paced that I  
19 finished in two weeks. So I sat at Fort Benjamin Harrison two weeks on casual status  
20 waiting for my deployment orders and in 1981 I shipped out to Schweinfurt, Germany,  
21 with the Third Infantry Division. I spent three years there. I ended up being on a, every  
22 year divisions and battalions go through what they call an IG, which is in an Inspection  
23 General. I ended up, just like dad, good with computers and paperwork, being recognized  
24 as getting a 100 percent in my area inspected and actually ended up being placed on a  
25 pre-IG inspection team, which what that meant was before the inspector general would  
26 show up to inspect the unit they would send me and a team in ahead of them to make sure  
27 that the unit was ready for the inspection. Uh. I did three years in Germany, reenlisted for  
28 station of choice, got promoted to E5 and came back to a little town called Hagerstown,  
29 Maryland, which I reenlisted for there because it was only a four-hour drive down the  
30 turnpike from Pittsburgh, so why not come close to home. Uh. Hagerstown, Maryland,  
31 had a little place called Fort Ritchie, Maryland, which was the support facility for Camp  
32 David and Site R. I did three years there and, uh, decided after six years active duty to get  
33 off active duty. Signed up and did a six-year hitch in the Reserves and got discharged  
34 from them. And here we are now with a guy that lives, breathes, and sleeps veteran  
35 advocacy.

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Taking you back again to this question. The first time you worked at  
38 St. Joe's in '78?

39  
40 **JOHN WAKELEY:** '78 and '79.

41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. At that point, were you only interested in working at St. Joe's?  
43 Were there other opportunities you were looking into?

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45 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. The only thing I can tell you about that is, is to think of the  
46 song "Family Tradition."

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**INTERVIEWER:** That's what I was wondering.

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Okay. And when you started in '78 for that one year before the plant shut down, where were you working in the plant and in what capacity?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** I started off in the furnace plant on, uh, daylight cleanup and had bid to the basement of the furnace plant on a job that they called slag operator, which is the job I was on when they shut down in '79 and Lee Corfield and myself and some guys wrote the ever famous poem that was published in the *Beaver County Times* called "Twas the Night Before Shutdown," which sadly I have not been able to find a copy of for you.

**INTERVIEWER:** I have a copy of it.

**JOHN WAKELEY:** You have a copy? Fantastic.

**INTERVIEWER:** I think Terry Belczyk.

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Cool.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sent it to me. Yeah. Um. Oh. Slag, slag operator.

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Yes, ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What does that mean?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** We, uh, they had these steel framed buggies with wheels on 'em with a big bar sticking out the front of it, and we rode on them and we stuck the steel bar inside the furnace and raked the red hot charge out of the furnace in the basement onto a table trying to maintain the charge height in the barrel of the furnace on the top floor between three and five foot, which is what they said was the ultimate range for maximum production. Uh. There again in '79 sometimes the furnace would be smoking and smoke would be rolling off of the red hot charge to the point where you couldn't even see the guy riding the buggy, but respirators were optional. [Laughs] Uh. It paid \$7.81 an hour plus shift differential plus at the time we were getting cost of living.

**INTERVIEWER:** You mentioned that you put the charge on the table to keep the appropriate levels. Then what happened with the charge on the table?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** The, the tables rotated and they would go around to the backside where a plow, as the table rotated the plow would knock the charge off the table onto what we called the O2 pan, which then would go through a series of pan conveyors. It

1 would roll, go down the O2, excuse me, up an incline and drop onto the O5. From the  
2 O5, it would drop into, uh, a device called a crusher, which the big chunks it would break  
3 them up. It would come out of the crusher and drop on the O7 pan. The O7 pan would  
4 take it up the incline and drop it in an elevator and then it would end up going over to the  
5 sinter plant to be run back through on what they call a reclaim process. Cause they didn't,  
6 you don't run the feed just through one time. It's sort of like when you cut an orange open  
7 and you squeeze it, you don't just quit after the first squeeze. You keep squeezing until  
8 you can get the very last bit out of it. So...

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10 (0:35:29)

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12 **INTERVIEWER:** When you get that last bit out of it, where does it go?

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14 **JOHN WAKELEY:** It went on the ground, which is why a lot of the dirt at the facility  
15 had to be buried or covered by Shell because it is actually considered hazardous waste,  
16 which is why a lot of the trees. When you first came down Route 18 on either side of  
17 Route 18, it was lined with pine trees. And at one time, the pine trees were all thriving  
18 and pretty and green. And that was one way that St. Joe showed the public and the EPA  
19 that their emissions and whatever else went on inside those gates weren't hazardous to  
20 the atmosphere or environment. If you saw pictures of it when the plant shut down, a lot  
21 of those trees were dead. Uh. And there again, you know, we used to have our own coal  
22 fire power plant down there, which you know got shut down because we couldn't, the  
23 company wouldn't pay the money to upgrade it to meet EPA standards for emissions.  
24 So...

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** When did they shut down the power plant?

27  
28 **JOHN WAKELEY:** The power plant actually went down I think, I am going to guess,  
29 three maybe four years before the actual, the power plant was closed before the  
30 announcement that Shell was buying the property. Although that announcement was  
31 dragged on several times, uh, you know, they are, they aren't, they are, they aren't, but...

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** When you returned to the plant in 1988 after your military service,  
34 what position were you hired for?

35  
36 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. I went into what they called as a yard laborer. Everybody that  
37 starts as a new employee there starts as what they call a yard laborer.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** So even though you had worked at the plant in '78, you started in '88  
40 as a yard laborer?

41  
42 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Correct. With, with no seniority. When they shut down in '79,  
43 there was a handful of guys that didn't take severance pay. Those guys stayed and  
44 maintained the power plant and/or were the first ones called back when they opened up in  
45 August of '80. They made an agreement with one of the employment, federal  
46 employment agencies from what I understand that before they would hire anybody new

1 they would exhaust the former employee list or the list of former employees that were  
2 deemed acceptable and suitable for continued employment. So once you hired in, if you  
3 took your severance pay, you started over with zero seniority. You started out in the yard  
4 gang and then you may work a week or two doing general cleanup around the plant and  
5 then you get sent or loaned to a department to help cover vacations or days off. From  
6 there, you have to bid into the department and bid on a job. So I started out in the yard. I  
7 did some time in the refinery as a runoff operator and bottom utility. But I ended up  
8 bidding back into the furnace plant as a slag operator because number one, I was familiar  
9 with that job cause I'd done it and, number two, the department superintendent knew that  
10 and made sure I knew when there was a bid coming up. I worked as a slag operator for a  
11 while and then I bid up onto what they called the condenser floor as a shift utility man.  
12 The only problem was we changed from a five-furnace operation to a six-furnace  
13 operation. They didn't have enough slag operators trained to handle a six-furnace  
14 operation. So I stayed in the basement as a slag operator even though my time was  
15 counting as a utility man. Well before I got out of the basement to actually work the  
16 utility job, the next job in the line of progression was a casting machine operator. I bid  
17 the casting machine. So when I left the basement, I actually went straight onto the casting  
18 machine. Now what happens with the casting machine is the metal that the furnace makes  
19 gets poured. The ladles get poured into a holding pot. There's a little air pump that  
20 transfers the metal out of that holding pot down a launder to a conveyor that has the  
21 molds that make these, except they are obviously bigger, 60 pounds apiece. Once the  
22 metal comes into the mold, I mean, you set the controls on the pump to turn off and on its  
23 own. So it fills the mold and automatically shuts off. As the conveyor is rolling, when it  
24 fills the mold, you get this bubbly foam stuff on top of the metal. It's the easiest way to  
25 describe it. And you take what they called skimming boards and you skim that off and  
26 toss it into a pan. So that the bottom of the slab is now smooth. So as it goes down the  
27 conveyor, it comes out of the mold and it gets stacked by an automatic stacker. So you  
28 just keep running. The object of running the casting machine is to keep the pot level low  
29 enough that there is enough room for the furnaces that are making metal to keep dumping  
30 into it. So I worked for a while as a casting machine operator and then I bid on the  
31 furnace operator, which was the highest paying job on shift. And that's the guy that  
32 actually operated the furnace. Each furnace had eight transformers that you averaged  
33 10,000 KW per hour going through this furnace. Uh. It was an electrothermic smelting  
34 process. Electric over heat. The furnaces to make it simple went through your basic, three  
35 basic states from high school chemistry. The feed goes in the top as a solid. Through the  
36 electrical charge, it gets changed to a gas, where the gas gets pulled out of the furnace on  
37 what they called the vapor ring and goes in what they called a condenser. So now you  
38 have a solid turned into a gas and when it hits the condenser, just like you think  
39 condense, it becomes a liquid, which was the molten zinc. In a nutshell, that's an  
40 electrothermic smelting process.

41

42 (0:41:52)

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44 **INTERVIEWER:** What's the alternative?

45

1 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Electrolytic, which Bartlesville, Oklahoma, had an electrolytic and  
2 the new plant that they built in North Carolina, which is why we shut down, was  
3 supposed to be a refined version of the electrolytic process. And what happens with an  
4 electrolytic process is basically they create a slurry or a metal bath. And they drop  
5 screens down in the bath, just like a diatomaceous earth filter on a swimming pool. Okay.  
6 And the plates for the screens have contacts on them. So they drop these plates down  
7 inside the bath and there's an electric charge going through this plate. So as the slurry  
8 goes through the plates, the zinc adheres to the plate. And every so many hours or days  
9 they would pull the plate out of this slurry and there would be a thin film of zinc on it.  
10 They would then take a stripper and strip the zinc off the plates, throw it in a pot and melt  
11 it back down and then run it through a casting machine. [Laughs]

12

13 **INTERVIEWER:** And where do Larvik furnaces fit into the story?

14

15 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. The Larvik furnaces were used more from what I understand  
16 because, believe it or not, I didn't work that department. Uh. They melted the metal, and  
17 they were actually part of the oxide department just like the refinery and what happened  
18 there was instead of the metal coming out and being cast, the metal was superheated,  
19 which now the metal would turn back into a vapor where it would go through what they  
20 called like a blow box. And that's what would make the powder oxide, uh, or zinc oxide,  
21 as it is more commonly referred to. The zinc oxide, the white powder, uh, it was used in  
22 pharmaceuticals, vitamins, I mean if you take a box of, uh, Cheerios or cornflakes, on the  
23 ingredients, you will see zinc oxide. The, uh, white stuff you put on your nose so you  
24 don't get sunburnt, that's zinc oxide. But other applications that people don't realize is  
25 Kodak film processing, zinc oxide. The vulcanization process for all your rubber  
26 products, especially Michelin tires and Goodyear tires, zinc oxide is required. So we had  
27 the zinc oxide market for all those type of products, but the reason we made regular zinc  
28 was the flipside was you can't find a piece of galvanized metal anywhere in the world that  
29 doesn't have zinc as a component of it. And ironically, if you would take a penny right  
30 now today from the U. S. Mint and cut it in half, the center of that penny is zinc. It's  
31 actually copper coated.

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33 (0:44:59)

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35 **INTERVIEWER:** I've yet to find someone to talk to about the acid plant. Was that  
36 operating when you were there?

37

38 **JOHN WAKELEY:** The acid plant, the acid plant was operating in '79, but prior to '79  
39 the departments were color-coated. In other words, if you worked in the furnace plant,  
40 you had a blue hat. If you worked in the refinery, you had an orange hat. If you worked in  
41 this department, your hat was green. You didn't leave your department. As a matter of  
42 fact, when I worked in the furnace plant before shutdown, I knew how to get from the  
43 change house to the basement of the furnace plant to the cafeteria and back to the  
44 basement. Each floor, each group even had their own timeclocks. So I can't tell you  
45 anything about the acid plant only except my last five years in maintenance the old acid  
46 plant was across from the building that I worked out of.

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2 **INTERVIEWER:** Talk about the millwright apprentice program, how it was run, the  
3 kind of training you received, how long the program took to complete and where it took  
4 you in your career at the plant.

5  
6 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. We actually had a, uh, an electrician apprenticeship program,  
7 uh, mechanical repairman or millwright apprenticeship program. We also had a learner  
8 program for the bricklayers. Uh. Prior to the '79 shutdown, the apprenticeship program at  
9 St. Joe was considered one of the highest training programs in Beaver County. Uh. After  
10 the '79 shutdown, they brought the apprenticeship program back in and basically what  
11 happened was the company would decide how many people they needed in maintenance  
12 to operate the plant. Uh. If they didn't have enough people that were qualified either with  
13 a journeyman's card or people who had graduated an eight-year mustang program then  
14 they would post a bid. Whoever was interested in getting into the program would bid on  
15 the job and if they needed four, the four highest guys in seniority were invited to take a  
16 qualification test. Once you passed three different parts of a testing, you know, one was  
17 logic, one was math, and one was mechanical aptitude, or there may have even been four  
18 parts. Anyhow you had to reach a certain cutoff score. If you reached that cutoff score,  
19 then you were invited into the apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship program was a  
20 four-year program, which involved on-the-job training and classroom work with  
21 homework and tests. Uh. The program was certified by the Pennsylvania Department of  
22 Labor, and the instruction books and testing materials came from Penn Foster, which is  
23 for lack of a better word, a correspondence course company for, for different crafts. Uh.  
24 You worked overtime. You took a 30-day welding class and had to pass a, a welding  
25 qualification test. Uh. Every three months, you rotated into a different department. In  
26 other words, I would spend three months working with the pipefitters. Then I would  
27 spend three months in the sinter plant maintenance department. Then, I would spend  
28 three months in the furnace plant maintenance department and so on. So for four years  
29 every three months, we would rotate to a different department while once a day, one, one  
30 day a week performing classroom work and all the rest of the training being on the job.  
31 Uh. Upon completion, the company presented you with a full set of tools, which I showed  
32 you my tool locker out in the garage. We did have guys get kicked out of the program for,  
33 for failing tests and grades and there again, every month, while you were in a department  
34 working as an apprentice, the foreman in the department filled out an evaluation on you  
35 and scored you on points too. So there were ways if your, uh, work was subpar that you  
36 would be asked to leave the program. And if you, you left the program, you had to turn in  
37 the full set of tools they gave you. If you managed to graduate, the company's reward to  
38 you was you get to keep the tools. Uh. The other reward is by graduating that course we  
39 received what they call a journeyman's card or journeyperson card from the Pennsylvania  
40 Department of Labor certifying us as mechanical repairman. Uh. Where has that card  
41 taken me since they announced the shutdown of the plant? I tested for United States  
42 Steel as a millwright. I passed the test as what they call a third-class millwright.  
43 Unfortunately, their contract says you have to test out fourth class to be eligible to hire.  
44 Uh. I passed, ironically, the millwright machinist test for Shell and was interviewed for a  
45 position at the Newell Congo plant. Sadly, however, the young gentleman hired over me,  
46 his daddy was an electrician at the plant. They tested 10 of us and they only invited us,

1 three of us to interview, so I still felt good about being able to pass the test. I, uh, tested  
2 for Elliott Turbine in Jeannette, PA, as a mechanical repairman. And even though I work  
3 field maintenance now at Pittsburgh International Airport, I really don't get to use any of  
4 the skills that I went to school for. I mean, it took me 15 years of trial and error to pass  
5 that apprenticeship test and that was my total goal once I got back in there to become a  
6 millwright. Uh. November 17th, CCBC is having a trades crafts expo with Shell about  
7 the cracker plant, and I will be attending that to see, you know, maybe I can still have a  
8 future with Shell.

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10 (0:50:59)

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12 **INTERVIEWER:** That would be a nice coming home.

13  
14 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Yeah. So, but you know, it's helped me in personal life too as far  
15 as, you know, being able to fix things, work on things. You know. Not everybody can  
16 melt or weld as people will joke and, you know, it's, to me it just makes me more of an  
17 all-around person.

18  
19 **INTERVIEWER:** So just to clarify for me please, the time that you worked in the  
20 furnace plant versus the time that you were doing the millwright program and then  
21 working as a millwright at St. Joe. Where, where did that fit in on a timeline?

22  
23 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. I had roughly 26 years total service. The last seven were four  
24 years in the apprenticeship and three years as a millwright. All the time prior to that from  
25 the furnace operator up to me entering the apprenticeship program was in the furnace  
26 plant as a production worker. I ended up leaving the furnace operator job and going to a  
27 job they call daylight utility, which is for lack of a better word, unskilled maintenance.  
28 We worked on the furnaces. The work that we did on the utility gang is what kept the  
29 furnace running day to day to day to make the metal. We were the ones that opened the  
30 doors on the furnace and cut the slag out with jackhammers so that the furnace could  
31 breathe with that gas. We were the ones that took a water blaster running at 10,000 psi,  
32 cleaning the lines so that the scrubber system could handle the byproducts of the smelting  
33 process. We were the ones that would open the door on the condenser that had grown  
34 down with slag and residue and set up a Remington eight-gauge shotgun and shoot the  
35 slag off of the roof of the condenser. Uh. So that's why, you know, we were considered  
36 ourselves more unskilled maintenance because the work we did was technical, but you  
37 don't get any kind of training or card to transfer that into another business.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** So was that after being a millwright?

40  
41 **JOHN WAKELEY:** No. This was all before.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Oh, before. Okay. Okay.

44  
45 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Yeah. My line of progression went from yard laborer, slag  
46 operator, casting machine operator, furnace operator, furnace plant daylight utility man.

1 Then I tested and went into the apprenticeship and when I graduated the apprenticeship I  
2 was actually assigned to the roving maintenance department, which roving maintenance  
3 is exactly what it sounds like. We worked in every department. Uh. We primarily did the  
4 furnace rebuilds in the furnace plant, but when there was a shut down and a major tear  
5 down replace in the sinter plant, we would be on that job. If there was a pan conveyor  
6 system being replaced, we were the guys on two 12-hour shifts doing it. We did all the  
7 structural work throughout the plant also.

8  
9 (0:54:09)

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11 **INTERVIEWER:** Just a few more questions about safety that I want to go back to.  
12 Were employees involved in developing or conducting safety programs?

13  
14 **JOHN WAKELEY:** To a degree. We had what they called a suggestion program within  
15 the plant, and employees that would see maybe a safer way to do something or a more  
16 productive way to do something would write that up and turn it in under the suggestion  
17 program and at one point the company actually gave monetary awards out for the  
18 suggestion program. Uh. Some of them did come under safety, uh, number of safety men  
19 on a job or whether or not a job was being done without a safety man, and you know,  
20 somebody may have what they call a near miss. A near miss is an accident that almost  
21 happens, but it is serious enough that you step back and say, "Wow, wait a minute. You  
22 know what, this guy could have really got hurt." So then you sit down and you write what  
23 they call a near miss accident and near misses would come to the safety committee and be  
24 reviewed and then we would sit, you know, the safety department is at that meeting.  
25 Well, you know, maybe we should try this or maybe if we did that or, uh, the guys on the  
26 utility gang running the jackhammers, they started getting carpal tunnel. Well there again,  
27 the world of ergonomics was in its infant stages. We actually had a company come in and  
28 do what they call an ergonomic study. They filmed us doing the job. They said, "Well  
29 why aren't you guys wearing impact gloves to lessen the blow of that jackhammer on  
30 your hands and your wrists?" So then the company bought the impact gloves and then we  
31 made it required PPE that if you're running the gun, you have to wear the impact gloves  
32 and then that reduced the cases of carpal tunnel. So, but, you know, things like that just  
33 kinda rolled, rolled into each other.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** What incentives were in place for departments operating without  
36 safety incidents or employees without safety incidents?

37  
38 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. Employees were at one point involved in a plant-wide safety  
39 program for individuals and based on the number of hours worked you received, I'll call  
40 them trinkets. Uh. You had to work a minimum of 250 hours to be eligible for your first  
41 trinket, which was a wallet. Then they stepped it up to a money clip and a key ring, and  
42 then there was a tape measure and it all culminated before they cancelled the program  
43 with anybody that worked 4,000 hours received a watch with the company logo on it. Uh.  
44 The, the safety incentive program went by the wayside. Uh, you know, part of it may  
45 have been with the concession contract and bankruptcy the company went through while  
46 I was there. Uh. Some guys considered it blood money. You know, guys would get hurt



1 and not turn it in. Uh. And there again with the plant nurse leaving the plant, we had  
2 some people, you know, you tweak your knee or twist your ankle and you're off the next  
3 two days. So you say, "Ah, I'm just going to go home and see how I feel when I come  
4 back." Well I had one friend do that and when he came back he could hardly walk. His  
5 leg hadn't gotten better, and here he had a torn Achilles tendon. But because he didn't  
6 turn it in before he went home that day on Friday, when he came back in Monday, the  
7 company said, "You didn't get hurt here." So instead of everything being covered by  
8 Workman's Comp, now he was out on his own. So that's why we pushed for everybody,  
9 no matter how big or how small, to turn everything in. Well then what we started doing  
10 was every month you would have a safety meeting with your foreman. They would show  
11 a safety training video, cover an MSDS out of the department MSDS book, and cover an  
12 article out of the plant's safety manual. And you had to sign a paper for attending the  
13 class or meeting. What they started doing was to entice the foremen to actually have  
14 those meetings and for the guys to push the foremen and to remind them to have those  
15 meetings. If you followed your monthly safety meetings like you were supposed to the  
16 company started having pizza parties for the shifts, where one day a month every quarter,  
17 if you had done your safety training, the company would buy pizza for the guys on the  
18 shift for lunch. There again, some guys called it blood money, but sometimes things got  
19 turned in at those safety meetings that were getting overlooked. You know, a hole in the  
20 floor, a loose bolt, you know, whatever. Uh. The other thing we started doing was we  
21 instituted a program called SLAM, where every day when you were given your job, you  
22 would be given a card. It was called a SLAM card, and SLAM stands for Stop, Look,  
23 Assess, and Manage. So when you read your job card, you stopped and looked at what  
24 job you had. Then, you would look at the job. This is what we got to do. This is what  
25 we're going to need. You would assess the job, which is where you would identify the  
26 safety hazards and what could happen if you don't control the safety hazards like pinch  
27 points, uh, sharp edges, uh, welding arcs, whatever. And you would also have to  
28 document what the outcome then would be, broken bone, avulsion, laceration, whatever.  
29 And then you would M, SLAM, manage the hazard. And you would manage the hazard  
30 by wearing a proper PPE, conducting a confined space entry permit, notifying the guards  
31 you are making a confined space entry permit. And it actually got guys thinking step by  
32 step what they were going to have to do to perform their job, which now you realize,  
33 "Hey, you know what, we got to make sure we take CO monitors," or, "Hey, you know  
34 what, we need to call, we need to call the transformer room and make sure that furnace is  
35 locked out and the power is not on before we go to do this." I'll admit when they first  
36 came out with them, even being on the safety committee, "Ah, it'll never work. This is  
37 going to be a pain in our butt." But it actually, the foremen didn't like it because now  
38 they got us thinking and we're saying, "Hey, you know what, we can't do this job until  
39 you do that." Oh, well. The only boring thing was some of the jobs we did in roving  
40 maintenance I'd be on the same job for five days in a row. Every day, I still had to fill out  
41 a SLAM card. That's not to say things don't change day to day, but most of the time they  
42 didn't. But nonetheless, our foreman was rigorous about it. We did a SLAM card on  
43 every job we had every day. Now, if he handed me a yellow card in the morning and I  
44 had three different jobs on it. That's three different SLAM cards. And they had to be  
45 filled out before I could go perform the job. It's really, I actually took it and suggested it

1 at the airport and, uh, the gentleman that took it to the airport safety committee got a \$50  
2 gift certificate for lunch at the air mall, and I got a big thank you from him.

3  
4 (1:01:53)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Didn't, he didn't pass it on to you?

7  
8 **JOHN WAKELEY:** No.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Didn't take you out for lunch?

11  
12 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Nah. But you know what, being on probation when I gave that to  
13 him, I said, "You know what." I said, "Don't tell 'em where you got this, but see what  
14 they think of it." So... [Coughs]

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you familiar with the safety banquets of the old days?

17  
18 **JOHN WAKELEY:** No.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** When you no longer had an ambulance on site and you had to call  
21 911, how long did it take to get help out there?

22  
23 **JOHN WAKELEY:** You know what, I can't tell you because being a part of the in-plant  
24 rescue squad if something happened that I was responding to I was so focused on patient  
25 treatment or controlling the incident that I, I don't know who called the ambulance or  
26 what time they called or what the response time was. I just...

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you sense it was fast enough to pick up where you left off or you  
29 got as far as you could go?

30  
31 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Well, I can tell you is, uh, being a former medic, time stands still  
32 and five seconds seems like five minutes. You know. You always catch yourself even  
33 when you're working with a partner on the ambulance and you tell 'em to run back to the  
34 ambulance and, you know, grab an IV or grab, grab the O2 bottle, it's always like,  
35 "Where the hell are they at? What's taking 'em so long?" I mean it's, to me it just, it  
36 comes with the scenario. You know, and I'm sure people, you know, dial 911 from their  
37 house, you know, they think the same thing. You know, but when you actually sit down  
38 and look at response times, you know, "Hey from the time we got the call till the time we  
39 called on scene was five minutes not 15."

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of time off compensation, bill paying or other benefits did  
42 the company provide for the employees who got hurt on the job and reported it before  
43 they went home for the day?

44  
45 (1:04:08)

46

1 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Aside from standard Workman's Comp, there were no other side  
2 benefits except the company did have a program that they called light duty that a lot of  
3 other business don't have. Uh. Basically what light duty was, was I got hurt but my  
4 doctor feels I'm to the point where I can still contribute, but not 100 percent within my  
5 job description. And so in the doctor's opinion as long as the company "allows you to  
6 come back in on light duty, you come back to work." The benefit there was through  
7 investigation, even if you're on light duty, the company has to offer you overtime as long  
8 as it does not exceed the restrictions of your light duty permit. So in theory, you can  
9 come back into the mill on light duty and still work overtime versus just getting your  
10 Workman's Comp check. The flip side to that, as I understand things to benefit the  
11 company, now you're taking a guy that's on full Workman's Comp and he's back to work.  
12 So that reduces your Workman's Comp liability on your OSHA-10 schedule. The only  
13 thing that the company didn't notify people about was when you're on light duty, you're  
14 allowed to file a partial Workman's Comp claim for overtime they don't offer you. And  
15 employers don't advertise that. Most of the guys that came into the plant on light duty  
16 came in and worked 40 hours and went home didn't know they were eligible for overtime  
17 or that they could file that claim and the company never broadcast it. I for one found out  
18 about it by accident two and a half years after I had a light duty incident, which was past  
19 the statute of limitations and I couldn't file back.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** What jobs were considered light duty?

22  
23 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Janitor. Cleaning the breakrooms. Uh. [Clears throat] And there  
24 again it depended on what your light duty work restrictions were. Uh. The utility gang  
25 did a job, performed a job called slagging in the furnace. It was when they wrecked the  
26 barrel of the furnace down and hauled it out, which was all bricks, so that the bricklayers  
27 could build a new one. Well we had guys that weren't allowed to lift more than 25  
28 pounds. Okay. Fine. You can't lift a brick. [Clears throat] But you can sit in a Bobcat and  
29 drive it, while we fill it with bricks and then take it outside and dump it. You know, you  
30 know, we had guys that tried to beat that system. You know, there was a guy that I  
31 worked with that drove a full-sized Chevy pickup truck, four-wheel drive. He said he  
32 couldn't climb in a Bobcat to drive it, but he crawled up in that truck every day when he  
33 went to the parking lot. And you know, me being notorious for being deplorable, I called  
34 him out on it. I said, "You know what, hey." I said, "If you can't get in that Bobcat how  
35 do you get in your truck to go home?" "Well I guess if I'm real careful." I said, "Yeah, I  
36 thought so." Because he would work four hours overtime and just sit on a bucket and  
37 watch everybody else work. That didn't sit well with some of us. You know. I like slack  
38 time just like the next guy, but when it's time to work you got to work. I know I'm  
39 sounding mean now.

40  
41 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Given that you were a, a first responder, um, taking care of  
42 medical emergencies in the plant, what were some of the typical and more extreme  
43 medical emergencies that you had to deal with?

44  
45 (1:07:55)

1 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. [Clears throat] I dealt with a possible heart attack at the front  
2 gate, where I just did your primary diagnosis while the, uh, assistant safety director was  
3 calling the ambulance and coming over to take care of him. And, uh, the only other actual  
4 real emergency that I responded to in my time down there unfortunately was the, uh, two  
5 fatalities in the refinery.

6  
7 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened there?

8  
9 **JOHN WAKELEY:** We had a column explode and, uh, two guys that were on the  
10 second floor of the refinery were pretty much next to the column that exploded and, uh,  
11 they were, uh, immediately consumed by the high temperature gases and it more or less,  
12 you know, autopsy says smoke inhalation, but what happened was the superheated gases  
13 more or less burned out their respiratory systems.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** When did this happen and what caused that kind of explosion?

16  
17 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. I believe it was in 2010. It was investigated by the Chemical  
18 Safety Board and OSHA for almost two years. Uh. [Clears throat] There was a, a series  
19 of things that happened with the column that were all contributing factors. Uh. Basically  
20 when the column exploded it took half the department out and, uh, like I said these guys  
21 were just immediately overcome. I was working furnace plant maintenance at the time of  
22 the explosion. [Clears throat] We heard the explosion, looked out the maintenance door  
23 and saw the whole side of the refinery which was right across the railroad tracks from our  
24 maintenance building engulfed in flames. Uh. Being on the plant rescue squad, I headed  
25 towards the refinery, ran in the compressor house and grabbed an SCBA, self-contained  
26 breathing apparatus like the firemen wear, went around to the roadway between the  
27 refinery and the oxide department, at which point everyone that had evacuated informed  
28 me that there was two guys missing. So, uh, comfortable with my training and what I did,  
29 some people weren't comfortable with what I did, but I donned the SCBA and picked an  
30 entry point to the building that I felt was safe cause I had worked in that department  
31 being in maintenance, and, uh, I started to search and found their bodies. [Clears throat]  
32 Came out and informed the foreman that he should go ahead and call the coroner that we  
33 had at least one confirmed fatality. Cause at that point I had only found one individual,  
34 which was James. Uh. By that time, the rest of the in-plant rescue squad and the plant  
35 safety director had arrived on scene and I informed them of what was going on. And then  
36 the fire departments all rolled in and it just went from there.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Two questions. Was there any kind of memorial at the plant for the  
39 deceased, and did the company take care of the families?

40  
41 **JOHN WAKELEY:** [Clears throat] The bench that I believe is now in Monaca. There  
42 was a black granite bench that was placed underneath our flagpole in memory of all  
43 fallen coworkers, which wasn't specifically for James and Corey cause there, there'd been  
44 some other people killed there. Uh. When they closed the plant I believe they moved it to  
45 Monaca. Uh. A year after the accident I hosted a poker run at the Midway Bar and Grill  
46 which used to be the hanging point for all Horsehead employees with the, uh, money

1 being supposed to have been set up as a, uh, scholarship fund through the union hall. So  
2 we had a poker run and a Chinese auction and live band and food and everything and t-  
3 shirts and all that. A matter of fact, I have a shirt from the poker run with Corey and  
4 James's name on it. July 22, 2010, was the day of the explosion. This design right here  
5 was made into stickers that everybody put on their hardhats.

6  
7 (1:12:27)

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Was, was the union's presence and influence any different with the  
10 reopening and rehiring of workers in 1980?

11  
12 **JOHN WAKELEY:** I'm not sure because I was out of town, more or less. Uh. I didn't  
13 get called back on the initial recall, which is why I ended up, like I said enlisting in '81.  
14 [Clears throat] I don't know how the union played with that or what they did. I know that  
15 the union in my opinion was I'm going to say strong at that location, but not overbearing.  
16 Uh. Through part-time employments and my current employment I have to honestly  
17 admit that despite how much employees including myself at times may have complained  
18 about what the union did or didn't do at Horsehead they are without a doubt the best and  
19 strongest union that I've worked for. The, I've spent time with the teamsters working part  
20 time for Rent-A-Car companies and I'm currently with the Laborers Local out of  
21 Pittsburgh, and quite frankly my experience with those other unions are at best a joke. So  
22 guys need to understand we got them what they got and it was the best that we could do  
23 and I've been fortunate to run into guys since I've left there who have told employees that  
24 the officers I worked with did a lot for them and got them money and training that they  
25 may have not received if it hadn't been for our efforts. So...

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** I, I understand you became union president.

28  
29 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Yeah. [Clears throat]

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Does that mean president of the union within St. Joe?

32  
33 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Correct.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

36  
37 **JOHN WAKELEY:** What happened was, uh, United Steel Workers 8183 became  
38 amalgamated. So what that meant was the primary executive board represented 15 other  
39 companies. In other words, we were 8183 at Horsehead, 8183-1 was Chippewa Police  
40 Department, 8183-2 was Medic Rescue, 8183-3 was Rome Monuments, and so on. I was  
41 elected unit chair or unit president specifically just for the Horsehead crew which was  
42 over 450 employees. I and the unit secretary worked hand and hand with the executive  
43 board from 8183 on all the union issues we had concerning our collective bargaining  
44 agreement.

45  
46 (1:15:18)

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** What was the biggest challenge you faced as the union president?  
3

4 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Preparing the guys for an effective and positive shutdown and loss  
5 of employment. [Clears throat] Myself and the executive board put together two job fairs  
6 that we held at Center Stage. Uh. And what we did was we made them like job expos  
7 where, uh, United States Steel, Elliott Turbine, CCBC. We even went as far as inviting  
8 the Domestic Relations Department from the Beaver County Courthouse, the  
9 unemployment office, the VA office. We had, twice we did a day, a full day setup with a  
10 raffle for the people that attended, where they could come, pass interviews, talk to these  
11 people, talk to these groups, talk to these schools about what they could do and what  
12 would happen with them when they lost their jobs the final day that the mill was closed.  
13 Uh. You know, a prime example was Domestic Relations. Okay. You got a guy paying  
14 child support. Now, he loses his job. What happens? Instead of him being out in the  
15 wind, getting that phone call or that court order saying, "Hey, you're in contempt and  
16 we're taking you to jail." Those guys were able to sit down with the Domestic Relations  
17 people before they lost their jobs. What do I need to do or what's going to happen with  
18 me? Uh. Guys applied for career programs at New Castle School of Trades at Penn State.  
19 Uh. Veterans make sure they got registered through the VA office if they hadn't, and  
20 whether or not they're eligible for any benefits. Uh. And like I said, United States Steel  
21 and several companies even took names and resumes and/or emails to invite guys to test  
22 for possible employment. So in, in getting that all lined up there was a lot of logistics, a  
23 lot of juggling, getting all those organizations to be able to meet the same day in one  
24 location, which when we talked about what we needed to do, it was like, "Well, you  
25 know, they need to see this. We need to do that." And that's why we came up with the,  
26 the job fair idea. Which a lot of guys took advantage of it, a lot of guys received training.  
27 I mean, there was guys 63 years old when the plant shut down that went back to school  
28 because with the union getting the TAA money approved through the federal  
29 government. In Pennsylvania, there were no extensions on unemployment. After 26  
30 weeks, you were done. But if you were still in school, you still received benefits. So like I  
31 said, even guys that were 63 years old instead of retiring they went to school. Okay.  
32 Yeah. They took a supply class or a logistics class, but they're in school. They're still  
33 receiving benefits. So and, and to me that was probably, myself and John Jeffers, the  
34 most important highlight of what we did and that was my, pretty much my last thing. The  
35 only other big thing I was involved with was, uh, we got an employee who was  
36 terminated for harassment under the American Civil Disabilities Act. We got him his job  
37 back, which was kind of ironic all around. We had an employee who wore double hearing  
38 aids. [Clears throat] And he wasn't allowed to leave the shop and go out into the field or  
39 departments to work. So to make the story short, we had an employee ask the company to  
40 put up signs that said, "Caution: Hearing Impaired Employee." Cause there was a lot of  
41 fork truck and vehicle traffic around where this guy was allowed to work. Well things  
42 snowballed and things were said and one thing led to another and this employee filed  
43 charges against his coworker for harassment under the Disabilities Act, and the company  
44 fired the guy.

45  
46 (1:19:15)

1  
2 **INTERVIEWER:** Fired the guy who filed the charges or fired the guy who he accused  
3 of?

4  
5 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Fired the guy, who was accused of the harassment. It took six  
6 months and an arbitration hearing to get the guy's job back, but he got his job back with  
7 back pay. So, but I mean that involved the NLRB and everybody else and...

8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Going back a little bit. When you were talking about helping the, the  
10 employees in the union prepare for the shutdown and the job fair for their transition, how  
11 much lead time did you have in knowing that there was going to be a shutdown to help  
12 each other?

13  
14 **JOHN WAKELEY:** I left the plant nine months before the actual shutdown date. Uh. In  
15 all honesty, we decided to move forward with the job fair and other things the minute we  
16 filed the TAA petitions with the government. Uh. As best as I can recall, they never were  
17 given a rock solid this is the last day, this is the day we're closing, this is the day that you  
18 won't have a job while I was there. There was speculation. You know, rumors was it was  
19 going to be December of 2013 just like they shut down in December of 1979. Come  
20 December of 2013, they didn't shut down. They were still running. So and it seemed like  
21 they kept just extending it or, "Hey, you know, we're going to get that one last tap out of  
22 that furnace." Uh. I felt a gut feeling way before that that the plant was doomed. Uh. You  
23 know, our last union contract they asked us to open the contract and sign early, a year,  
24 uh, actually a year before the contract was going to expire because Corbett and the  
25 commissioners and Horsehead wanted a contract in place to show the commitment by the  
26 union for the new plant to be built in Pennsylvania. Ironically, once things started  
27 actually came out in the light, the expiration date of the contract ended up being the  
28 tentative shut down date for the plant. Because Corbett and the county commissioners,  
29 which two out of the three got voted out and Corbett got voted out, failed to manage to  
30 give Horsehead a sweet enough deal for them to build the new plant here, which is why  
31 they went to North Carolina and I, I don't blame the company. North Carolina gave them  
32 huge breaks on utilities and everything else. But there was never an actual date. I just had  
33 a gut feeling that it wasn't going to happen. You know, and I told lots of guys that  
34 believed in me, "Don't believe this stuff that these guys are throwing at you. Think about.  
35 Look at what you see happening." And sadly, you know, some of the things I thought  
36 actually came to fruition.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** So you worked under ownership by ZCA and you worked under  
39 ownership by Horsehead Corporation.

40  
41 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Correct.

42  
43 (1:23:11)

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** How would you compare those two experiences?  
46

1 **JOHN WAKELEY:** I didn't notice any difference at all except the change in the  
2 letterhead. Uh. Typically, they both ran on a shoestring. Uh. I'll say that maybe under  
3 ZCA the employees were treated a little better, but once we went into bankruptcy and  
4 Sun Capital bought us, things sort of went downhill. And then once Jim Hensler and  
5 Horsehead Corporation got hold of it, you know, to me it was apparent and there again,  
6 with discussions with my dad before he passed that, you know, there were two sets of  
7 books whether you want to admit that or not. And, you know, dad would chuckle with me  
8 all the time being an accountant, you know, that's impossible to do. But, uh, you know,  
9 under Horsehead we went through a bankruptcy. We did a concession contract and, uh,  
10 you know, it's a wonder that more guys didn't get hurt down there because they wouldn't  
11 order replacement parts. They wouldn't order new stuff that needed replaced. I mean, uh,  
12 they weren't hiring guys. They would rather and, and I sort of understand the economics  
13 of it. It's easier to pay you overtime than it is to put the new employee on the books when  
14 you had the benefits package and everything. Cause they say the standard rule of thumb  
15 is your wages plus 50 percent is what it is actually costing the company to have you  
16 there. But when you have guys averaging 60, 70 hours a week every week, mentally and  
17 physically it's going to take a toll. I mean at one point the union actually made the  
18 argument that nobody was allowed to work a triple. You were 16 and out, and there was  
19 guys down there trying to work triples. Why? And what's going to happen when you  
20 total your car on the way home cause you fell asleep? Where's that going to leave your  
21 spouse and kids? You volunteered to work it. You're not allowed to sue your employer.  
22 It's against the law in Pennsylvania. Where's the negligence? You know and there again,  
23 like I said, be mad at the union but we tried to look out for the health and welfare of you  
24 and your family. Uh. My typical schedule when, even before I left in 2013, yeah, it was  
25 voluntary and once I got used to the schedule no big deal. I worked five 10s and an eight  
26 every week. You just get used to it. And the thing is if you don't volunteer for the  
27 overtime then they force somebody to stay and work. And when you force somebody to  
28 stay you don't get anything out of 'em cause they don't want to be there or they would've  
29 volunteered. So, yeah, I was one of 'em, you know what they call, some guys called it the  
30 hog crew. Cause I would hog up all the overtime. But, uh, yeah, I mean, you know, they,  
31 they did away with the safety incentive program. They did away with the suggestion  
32 program. Uh. The bonus program, take it or leave it that was, that wasn't really controlled  
33 by the company. No matter how you look at it, that, that hinged on the LME market of  
34 zinc. So, when we came out of the bankruptcy they did give us, uh, a lucrative contract. I  
35 mean everybody got a \$2 an hour raise on their wage the first year. But all that was, was  
36 the money we gave up with the concession contract. We, we were still behind in wages  
37 and then they, uh, they did do a bonus payout, which basically just covered what our  
38 contribution would've been for the term of the contract for healthcare. So and there again,  
39 they throw it out there, "Oh, we're giving you \$10,000 refund for your healthcare." But  
40 yeah, you're giving it to me in one big check, which now means I'm getting taxed at this.  
41 And...

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** What efforts did the company make to support veterans? Or to hire  
44 them, to...

45  
46 (1:27:12)



1  
2 **JOHN WAKELEY:** I don't know what HR's policies were on veterans. Like I said, uh,  
3 when we spoke in the garage, I do know from the petition I ran for the POW flag that at  
4 one point 35 percent of our workforce were veterans and, uh, at that time most of 'em  
5 were Vietnam era. Uh. We did have in the contract where veterans were, veterans were  
6 people on reserve status were compensated for missing work for their weekend drills and  
7 their two-week summer camp. Uh. A lot of employers don't have I don't think a lucrative  
8 a setup as we had. Uh. This contract that we had with Horsehead as far as taking care of  
9 employees even had a clause in there that if a volunteer fireman came to work late cause  
10 he was at a call the company paid him for half the time he missed because he was doing a  
11 public service. And I've never heard of another company paying a volunteer fireman for  
12 coming in late. So they were proactive as far as liking the employees' involvement in  
13 their communities and/or defending the nation.

14  
15 **INTERVIEWER:** How did that, uh, POW/MIA flag end up at the plant and then in  
16 your garage?  
17

18 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Uh. Vietnam Veterans Chapter every year, well first in 2002, they  
19 brought up the replica of the Vietnam Memorial down to Beaver. And, uh, being a biker I  
20 got involved in organizing a POW/MIA Memorial Bike Run. Similar to the Rolling  
21 Thunder Ride in Washington, DC, except we managed to have 1,800 motorcycles gather  
22 at one point and ride 70 miles through Beaver County ending up at the Vietnam  
23 Memorial Replica in Beaver. At which point, the local Vietnam Veterans Chapter do a  
24 ceremony. They read the 73 names of the Beaver County people on the wall and ring a  
25 bell after each name and, uh, then we'd go back to the VFW for door prizes and a block  
26 party. Well the fourth, excuse me, the third Friday of every September is actually  
27 National POW/MIA Recognition Day. So we got to brainstorm and asked the company to  
28 fly the POW flag that day, at which point, the corporate lawyer told me that they couldn't  
29 do that, that it was a special interest group type flag and they would have to fly a bunch  
30 of other people's flags if they let us put the POW flag up. At which point, I informed him  
31 that, uh, the POW flag is the only flag in the history of this country besides the stars and  
32 bars to fly on the Capitol or the White House. So little Johnny being the guy he is, I  
33 decided to run a petition around the mill and I basically asked every employee to sign a  
34 petition asking the company to fly the flag. And some people would look at me or the  
35 guys helping me with this and refuse to sign it cause they thought, you know, they'd get  
36 in trouble for signing the petition. You know, at which point, we'd just look at him and  
37 say, "Well you know what, the guys that are represented by that flag are the ones that are  
38 giving you the right to say no." And several people thought about that and changed their  
39 mind and signed. The bottom line when it was all said and done 35 percent of the  
40 workforce or employees through the union we took the petitions to the company and the  
41 flag was put up on the flagpole and it stayed there from 2007 till the last day the mill was  
42 open. At which point, thinking of me, Jason Eckhart, who was a foreman down there,  
43 gave me a phone call and said, "Hey, John, we're taking the flags down tomorrow. If  
44 you'd like them, we would like to present you with the POW flag and American flag, the  
45 last two flags to fly over the plant." At which point, I took the flags and as you'll see in  
46 the pictures it's hanging in my garage, a piece of Beaver County history.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Just a few last questions to wrap up. What was the best part about working at the zinc plant?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** Both the utility gang and the maintenance crew I was on was like college fraternities. There was a, a brotherhood, a tight knit, uh, when I was with those crews individually nobody messed with us. We always had each other's back. We always managed to get the job done no matter how dirty or how hot. And somehow still have fun doing it. And, uh, some of us enjoyed time together outside the mill. Some of us couldn't stand each other once we walked outside the gate. [Coughs] Excuse me. I mean I made a comment to a buddy of mine one time, you know. I says, you know, him and I used to tip, tilt back a few beers and karaoke together after work and when we walked in the gate I'd look him square in the face and tell him he was one of the laziest guys I ever met. You know and vice versa, there's guys I couldn't stand in the mill cause we would butt heads, but we'd sit for four hours after work at Midway eating wings and tilting back a beer. I mean just cause I work with you doesn't mean I have to hang with you and just because I hang out with you doesn't mean I have to like you at work. And I think the military helped me take that attitude also, but...

**INTERVIEWER:** How could your experience with the company have been better?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** I would've been able to stay there long enough to retire. It's not easy finding work at 55 years of age especially with industry the way it is in this area as far as mills. You know, finding a maintenance job is really rough and very competitive and one of the reasons I went back was I figured there was no way second time in I wouldn't be able to retire. I was going to be a St. Joe man no matter what the sign said at the gate. I was going to be a St. Joe man for life.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

**JOHN WAKELEY:** I think there was too much smoke and mirrors when the deal was first being cut. I think the guys at Horsehead were led on too long as to what their fate was really going to be. I am glad to see Shell investing a gang of money in the area. The only thing that I caution people about is the way they are reporting things locally, the number of jobs the cracker plant is going to create and the bottom line is once the plant is built they are only going to employ the same number of people that lost their jobs at Horsehead. So the county and the state really traded 600 jobs for seven years of construction and get 600 jobs back. Uh. Long term it's probably going to be good for the company, especially the health of the people that end up working there versus the environment I worked in. Uh. It, it's, it's just bittersweet and I don't think people understand the whole picture about what's really going to happen once the plant is built. Uh. It's my understanding too from doing research and talking with people, you know, these 10,000 jobs they're talking about that are going to build the plant. A lot of them are coming from down south cause our locals up here don't have enough people to handle the

1 job or not slighting any of the locals up here, the training, you know, the experience of  
2 working with Shell if I'm, I hope I'm making sense with this. Uh. See and the other  
3 problems is too like I belong to the laborers local, but there's an agreement amongst all  
4 the locals up here that I can't transfer from one local to another. So the only way I can go  
5 work at the new Shell plant as a laborer is if the airport gives me a leave of absence, and I  
6 hardly think the airport is going to give me a leave of absence for the timeframe that's  
7 required to build the plant. But yet they want 125 laborers and I heard 3,000 welders by  
8 the first of the year.

9  
10 (1:35:47)

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** If you were guaranteed seven years of work for the construction of  
13 the plant, would that make sense to then switch your local and...

14  
15 **JOHN WAKELEY:** I'm not allowed to switch.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** So you can't leave a local and go back to a local you started with.

18  
19 **JOHN WAKELEY:** No. I, I can leave the local and go work and come back. But I  
20 don't believe the airport would give me a seven-year leave of absence. And let's just say I  
21 work for local 123 and local 456 is providing all the laborers. I'm not allowed to take my  
22 membership from 123 and move it to 456. Because the 13 laborers locals in this area  
23 have an agreement that you can't jump between each other. Now, if you can guarantee me  
24 seven years employment to build that plant, would I quit 123 and work for Shell? Yeah,  
25 cause that takes me to 67 and I'm retired.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** That's what I'm asking. That's what I'm asking you. If you had seven  
28 years that you could be building that plant, the new plant.

29  
30 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Yeah. I would quit 123 in the airport and work for Shell to build  
31 the plant, and that would take me to 67. All the young guys can come in and take the jobs  
32 and I'm hopefully, and I'm retired. [Coughs] But, and there again that's why I said I'm  
33 going to attend that career trade expo that Shell's hosting November 17th at CCBC. And  
34 I'm not trying, you know, I'm trying and obviously I'm not content with what I'm doing  
35 versus the training I have under my belt and, uh, you know, people look at you and,  
36 "Well, why you want to leave the airport? You got this." I'm just not content. Silly me.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Well this was very, very helpful.

39  
40 **JOHN WAKELEY:** [Laughs] I just wish dad would've been alive cause the things he  
41 coulda, you know. The amount of time he spent there, but being a St. Joe kid helped to I  
42 think, you know.

43  
44 (1:37:55)

45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much.

1

2 **JOHN WAKELEY:** Thank you.

3

4 **INTERVIEWER:** I really appreciate it.

5

6 (END)

**Dr. Thomas Weyand**  
**Interview @ November 11, 2016**

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND**  
**Summary**

Dr. Thomas Weyand's association with St. Joe actually started in the summer of 1964 as a college intern in engineering industrial research. He worked for St. Joe fulltime as a research engineer from 1970 to 1987, at which point he left to start a new company, Pittsburgh Mineral & Environmental Technology (PMET), Inc., located in New Brighton, PA. The interview took place in the conference room at PMET on November 11, 2016.

In the interview, Tom talks about the internship program and reminisces about living in the clubhouse with other students; he also mentions St. Joe funding his graduate education. Tom explains the functions of the leach, roaster, and acid plants, the need for engineering to support these activities, and the expansion of research activities and resources into a corporate tech center. He discusses the technology acquired to operate the research center and how this aspect of the plant continued despite the 1979 shutdown. Tom explains changes that affected the research program that were attributable to the 1987 sale of the company to Fluor Corporation.

Tom describes the organizational structure and staffing of the research department's two main groups: extractive studies and product development research. He spent most of his career at St. Joe in the latter, although at some point he ran the former. Tom highlights research contributions including the development of maintenance-free battery alloys, a flash smelting process, a lead chloride process, and a bacterial leaching process for extracting gold residues (part of St. Joe's venture into gold mining in Chile). He provides an interesting account of the company's international ventures, into South America in particular.

Tom provides some historical perspective on key research figures at St. Joe's: Carlton Long, Herand Najarian, and Robert Redelfs. He also talks about lab safety, safety training programs, and concerns about women working around hazardous materials like lead in the labs.

1 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND**  
2 **INTERVIEW - 11/11/2016**

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4 **SPEAKERS:** CAROL PERLOFF (“INTERVIEWER”)  
5 DR. THOMAS WEYAND  
6

7 **INTERVIEWER:** This is November 11, 2016, interview with Thomas Weyand, Ph.D.  
8 And, uh, Tom, could you please state and spell your full name, give us your date of birth,  
9 and address?  
10

11 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Thomas Weyand, W-E-Y-A-N-D, uh, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]  
12 [REDACTED], New Brighton, Pennsylvania.  
13

14 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you currently working or retired?  
15

16 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I am currently working. Some would challenge that.  
17 [Laughter].  
18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** And what kind of work are you doing now and where?  
20

21 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** We're running a small engineering business in New  
22 Brighton, Pennsylvania. It is an offshoot of the tech center actually. When, uh, St. Joe  
23 closed the tech center, we made an offer for part of the, uh, the capabilities in the tech  
24 center and that was the basis for Pittsburgh Mineral, our company. We've been in  
25 business for 30 years now. Uh. We provide services for the mining and smelting industry,  
26 primarily the nonferrous people. Uh. We also have, uh, offer laboratory services to a  
27 variety of people, including structured mineralogy and things like that and thirdly we, uh,  
28 do technology development and have several patents that we license out as a complement  
29 to our work here.  
30

31 **INTERVIEWER:** Are you from the Beaver County area or did you come here because  
32 of employment opportunities at St. Joe's?  
33

34 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I grew up in Erie, Pennsylvania, about 100 miles north of  
35 here. I went to school in Missouri and, uh, St. Joe hired me as a summer engineer and  
36 that's how I ended up starting at St. Joe. Ultimately, they, uh, provided a fellowship. They  
37 put me through graduate school, and I started working for them in 1970.  
38

39 **INTERVIEWER:** So what formal education did you have before you started working at  
40 St. Joe's?  
41

42 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I had a Bachelor's and a Ph.D. in metallurgical engineering.  
43 [Clears throat] Excuse me.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** And what was your first experience working with St. Joe in the  
46 summer of '64?

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**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I was, uh, assigned to do a temperature profile of the furnaces. I designed a water cooled thermocouple and we did, uh, temperature measurements while the furnace was hot.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was this as, uh, an intern?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** It was a three-month summer engineering assignment. They, uh, they every year hired, oh, I suppose about a half dozen kids in various technical schools and, uh, we stayed in the clubhouse on the smelter property and we were assigned to work with an engineer for that, that summer.

**INTERVIEWER:** So was this while you were an undergraduate or working?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I was a junior going into my senior year and, uh, I worked two additional summers for the company.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tell me about the clubhouse.

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh. The clubhouse was like a fraternity house. It was, uh, it was quite an experience. We, uh, you throw a half dozen to eight guys in a, you know, house and I suppose there's some degree of mischief that happens. Certainly good parties. [Laughter] So, it, it was quite nice. It was a, it was very, uh, economical and, uh, by the same token they, uh, actually paid you rather well. We I think made about \$100 less than a degreed engineer was making at the time. So it was a very nice job.

**INTERVIEWER:** How many of you stayed on for employment ultimately?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Probably about half the people that I met in the first year, and it was, it was clearly a recruiting, uh, uh, exercise for them. They actively went out and identified targets, uh, that they wanted to hire.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more about the summer intern program? How it was organized? Who was training you? What the day looked like?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh. Well I, I was assigned to work in a, in a group, uh, with a, uh, an, uh, a journeyman engineer. And, uh, I guess the first year I had two assignments. The first one was in the furnace plant doing the thermodynamic study of the furnaces and the second half of it was in the, uh, the leach plant where I did a, uh, I worked with some fellow from the analytical lab doing a nickel cadmium separation of nickel cadmium battery scrap. So it, they were real projects. They were, uh, meaningful work and, uh, yeah, I learned a lot about an industrial research atmosphere.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was there a classroom component in the program?



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**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No. No. No. This was really a, uh, a hands-on work assignment.

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you explain what the leach plant did?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, well the leach plant, uh, was a, uh, a, uh, chemical leaching process of residues that were generated during the pyrometallurgical smelting of zinc, and the, uh, these residues contained cadmium, which at the time was rather valuable. Uh. Uh. And, and some other byproducts, uh, as well. And these people would, would, uh, extract these metals, reduce them, and sell them as a byproduct. You may recall that cadmium is, was commonly used as an electroplating coating on various electronic pieces of equipment as a corrosion prevention, uh, device or method.

**INTERVIEWER:** Was St. Joe's one of the nation's larger, uh, suppliers for cadmium?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Gee. I would expect so. They were certainly a, uh, big player in the zinc business. So it would go hand and hand I think.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you have any exposure to the acid plant?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** That was, uh, well, the leach plant was associated with the acid plant, but I, I myself did not work in the acid plant at all.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you able to describe what the functions were in the acid plant?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh. In the acid plant, you converted the, uh, sulfur bearing gases to sulfuric acid by a contact process and it was an important thing because, uh, and my understanding was they had a long-term contract with a large chemical company I believe that made fertilizer. And, uh, they would take the sulfuric acid from the plant and react it with phosphate rock and make phosphate fertilizers. Uh. But that, that was the extent of my involvement in that, that area.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where did the roaster plant fit into these processes?

**DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh. These, these minerals came in as a sulfide mineral. It was zinc sulfide and, uh, in order to reduce the zinc sulfide you first have to convert it to zinc oxide. So you would heat up this material in there and the sulfur would come off as a sulfur dioxide. You're left with a, a zinc oxide, a crude zinc oxide coke calcine and the calcine then would be mixed with siliceous materials, as well as carbon and sintered into a competent mass similar to what is done for blast furnace feeds. Uh. So you have a, uh, a rock that you've made. This is fed into the shaft furnaces and with carbon and, uh, heat is reduced to zinc metal. But the zinc metal is a vapor. It comes off the furnaces as zinc

1 vapor and St. Joe had invented a specialized condenser to condense the zinc vapor to zinc  
2 metal. It is quite an accomplishment actually.

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4 (0:08:03)

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6 **INTERVIEWER:** To your knowledge, did any other companies pick up on that, um,  
7 innovation that St. Joe made with the condenser to be able to do the same process?

8  
9 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I was on the understanding that there were some, uh,  
10 similar condensers operating I think in Japan and maybe in Europe. Uh. It wasn't  
11 commonly applied and at that time a lot of the zinc production had gone to electrolytic  
12 zinc as opposed to thermal zinc and, uh, so there was no need for a high temperature  
13 condenser like they, they had developed. The, uh, I might mention that, uh, the, uh, the  
14 pyrometallurgical production of zinc, the high temperature production, is a technically  
15 complex operation. Zinc is a very difficult metal to extract as a pure metal. Uh. It, it tends  
16 to want to back react into zinc oxide. So, uh, how you handle the zinc vapor and how you  
17 get it condensed quickly into metal is extremely important and because of these  
18 complications, uh, there were quite a few, uh, engineers located on the Monaca site to  
19 support these activities. I, uh, offhand don't recall a number, but I would think there were  
20 probably 20 chemical and metallurgical engineers somehow supporting these activities,  
21 which provided the basis to, to develop eventually an R&D center to support the whole  
22 company because you had this large technical, uh, talent basis.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** We're going to get to that shortly.

25  
26 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Okay. Sorry.

27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** No, that's fine.

29  
30 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** You can cut that out.

31  
32 **INTERVIEWER:** That's fine. No. No, it's fine. [Laughter] I just wanted to, um, go back  
33 a little bit further about your, your graduate studies. Um. This was after you had started to  
34 work at St. Joe?

35  
36 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** It was after I did summer engineer program with St. Joe,  
37 but before I actually worked full time for St. Joe and, uh, my, uh, my thesis work actually  
38 was, uh, studying the oxidation rates of, uh, liquid lead and lead alloys, which is one of  
39 the products that St. Joe also produced at, at the Herculaneum smelter in Missouri. So we,  
40 we tried to tie my thesis work into something that might have some practical value for the  
41 company.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have an agreement to work with St. Joe after you had your  
44 degree?

45

1 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No. No. Only I was interviewed and, uh, offered a job and I  
2 accepted it. It was a great company to work for from my point of view. Yeah.

3  
4 (0:10:52)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** I, I heard somewhere that they paid for your graduate education or is  
7 that?

8  
9 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yes. Yes. They, uh, they put a fellowship in at my school  
10 for me to go through graduate school.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** And that was without a guarantee that you would come and work for  
13 them?

14  
15 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** That's correct.

16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** Well it paid off.

18  
19 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Well, I think so for both of us maybe.

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Did they do that with other, uh, prospective employees?

22  
23 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I'm not aware. I'm not aware of it, but they might have done  
24 that.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** In what year did you start working for St. Joe Lead as a full time  
27 employee?

28  
29 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** 1970.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** And in what year did you stop working for the company?

32  
33 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** 1987 when they closed the tech center.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** Uh. Let's talk about the research department now. Um. Could you  
36 please outline the organizational structure of the research department describing the  
37 different divisions or groups within there, their functions, the purpose?

38  
39 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Sure. The, uh, by the time I got to St. Joe in '70, uh, the  
40 research department was pretty much, uh, reporting to the New York, uh, uh, main office.  
41 It was not reporting to the smelter, although it was located on the smelter property. And  
42 the, uh, the onsite, uh, manager of research was the director of research. His name was  
43 Carl Long at the time. In fact, he was one of the inventors of the zinc condenser. Under  
44 Carl, there was, uh, two managers and they managed two groups that, uh, one was  
45 directed to do extractive studies and the other group was directed to do product  
46 development, uh, research. Within those groups, there were teams, generally were led by

1 a team leader plus maybe one or two additional engineers and also assisted by, uh, two to  
2 four engineering assistants. These engineering assistants were people from the shop that,  
3 uh, tested for an opportunity to take these jobs. The company sent them to, uh, Penn State  
4 to get an associate degree and, uh, these were quite capable fellows. Uh. They were, they  
5 literally were engineering assistants. They conducted test work and in most cases, at least  
6 through the preliminary data analysis. The product development group was started at a  
7 time when, uh, St. Joe, uh, recognized that its products especially for lead were being  
8 threatened by new rules eliminating tetraethyl lead from gasoline. That was a major  
9 market for that, the lead smelter in Missouri. Uh. And so, uh, there were activities in both  
10 zinc, uh, product development as well as lead product development conducted at Monaca.  
11 And, uh, in both cases, there were some fairly significant game changing developments  
12 that occurred. The most significant one with regard to lead was the development of a  
13 maintenance free battery alloys. You may recall Delco came out with a battery that you  
14 never added water to. And that was, that was using the lead strip process that was  
15 developed at St. Joe and a lead calcium tin alloy that did not release, uh, break down the  
16 electrolyte in the battery to gasses.

17  
18 (0:14:34)

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20 **INTERVIEWER:** When was that development, roughly?

21  
22 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I would guess about 1975, something on that order.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you involved in that project?

25  
26 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I wasn't directly involved in that. I came along a little bit  
27 later and I worked with some lead calcium alloys for casting. The conventional way of  
28 making battery grids for lead acid batteries was to cast the, uh, a framework and then coat  
29 that framework with lead oxide active material. Uh. The process that was developed for  
30 Delco was a strip process, which was really quite a large step in metallurgy because lead,  
31 uh, at room temperature your essentially hot working the metal. So it does not develop  
32 cold work strength. Uh. The fellows that did this development got around that with the  
33 alloy work and the method that they were producing the strip, which provided a strip with  
34 good mechanical properties, which allowed it to go through the metal working processes  
35 at Delco to be converted into strip. It, uh, I, I consider it one of the, one of the really  
36 significant developments that I, I witnessed in my time. Uh. There's. Oh. Go ahead.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there a patent put out on that?

39  
40 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I imagine there was, but, uh, St. Joe had an interesting  
41 attitude about that and they, uh, they were interested in selling metal not technology and  
42 so almost everything that I worked on that could have been patented was given away. It  
43 was made available to anybody who wanted it. So, uh, they tended to, uh, um, take the  
44 approach that, uh, in the product side I should say, in the, in the extraction side it is a bit  
45 of a different story because you're competing with other people. But, uh, where they were  
46 trying to generate sales they, uh, they would I think generally prefer to have you publish

1 your results, make them available, give presentations to possible clients and make that,  
2 that, uh, available to the market at large. Uh. So the, uh, other areas that were pretty  
3 significant that I recall and I may be overlooking some of them, but in the extractive area  
4 the guys came up with a flash smelting process. In essence, it was an adaptation of a  
5 rocket, uh, to, to take the zinc bearing residues and extract the zinc at a very, uh, cost and  
6 energy efficient fashion. Uh. They, uh, let's see we had a, uh, a bacterial leaching  
7 development that allowed us to, uh, extract refractory gold. At that time, St. Joe was a  
8 major player in the gold business down in Chile. And, uh, a lot of gold residues are what  
9 they call refractory, which are difficult to extract and, uh, oftentimes coated. The gold is  
10 coated with a sulfide mineral. And we had bacteria that would remove that sulfide  
11 mineral and therefore make the gold available for leaching. One of the fellows that  
12 worked on that development also showed that he could extract nickel and cobalt from a  
13 byproduct mineral that was, uh, found in one of the lead mines in Missouri. Cobalt at that  
14 time was a hot topic. It was during that crisis in Africa and the Airforce was very worried  
15 about supplying cobalt for jet engine parts and, uh, we, uh, we, we had a good run at that  
16 one.

17

18 (0:18:16)

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20 **INTERVIEWER:** Who, who was the market for the gold?

21

22 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** The gold went into the market worldwide. The, uh, it was  
23 interesting that the mine in El Indio. It was called El Indio, and it was in the mountains of  
24 Chile. I believe it was like 12,000 feet in the air. It was way up there and, uh, it was tied  
25 into a complex ore with, uh, high arsenic content, which the arsenic had to be removed.  
26 But a lot of the gold mineralization in the mine was so rich that they called it direct  
27 shipping ore. And they shipped it directly to, uh, copper smelters for recovery of the gold  
28 as part of the copper, uh, mineralization that it occurred with. So as such, I don't think St.  
29 Joe ever produced gold bars. They produced, uh, concentrates and, uh, sold those  
30 concentrates to various smelters worldwide. They eventually converted not only to  
31 copper but recovered the gold.

32

33 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there any added security when you were dealing with gold  
34 coming in?

35

36 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Um. I, I, I did not get down to the mine. We had a fellow  
37 that was, uh, sited on the mine for quite a while, uh, working in process support. But, uh,  
38 you heard stories about some of these miners bringing goats into the mine for lunch and  
39 stuffing them with ore and taking the goat out. [Laughter] So I, I suppose there were  
40 security issues, but it, it wasn't like a diamond mine. This, this was concentrate. So it, it  
41 was not like having shiny metal that somebody would want to put a grab on I think.

42

43 **INTERVIEWER:** And at the plant were there any security measures because you were  
44 producing a very valuable?

45

46 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** The plant was down in Chile.

1  
2 (0:20:06)

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** But I mean when you were working extracting the gold in Monaca?

5  
6 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No.

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** Or were you just doing the research in Monaca?

9  
10 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** All we did was research supporting.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Okay.

13  
14 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Uh. I, I can tell you that in, in. I worked with gold ores and  
15 people working with me have worked with gold ores for many years and I have only seen  
16 gold twice that I could see visually.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** I was confused. [Laughter]

19  
20 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Most of the gold that we see is very finely divided gold and  
21 it is locked up in other minerals and in fact, uh, at St. Joe, as well as continuing here at  
22 PMET, we, uh, we provide support to guys who are trying to increase the extraction of  
23 the, uh, valuable metal.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you please talk a little bit more about how Monaca became a  
26 research center for St. Joe Lead beyond what the activities that were taking place in  
27 Monaca?

28  
29 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Well the first thing was the expansion for the product  
30 development, uh, to secure their market share in, uh, in a changing marketplace. So the,  
31 the lead battery alloy development was huge because St. Joe had never sold, well  
32 certainly did not sell much lead to the grid market. They sold lead to the active material  
33 market to make lead oxide. But not to my knowledge to the, uh, to the grid market. At  
34 that time, batteries were made with lead antimony. And, uh, when batteries are recycled  
35 part of the economics of the process was recovery of the antimony by the recyclers. Well  
36 when you change the grid alloy all of a sudden the antimony has no value at all. And, uh,  
37 in fact is a cost rather than a, uh, positive. Um. So that's, that was the focus of the product  
38 development. The extractive area of the company started to look more broadly. Uh.  
39 From the time I got there, they became involved in gold exploration. They had a very  
40 large exploration department that was doing geological, uh, work worldwide. And they  
41 identified the gold deposit in El Indio, Chile. St. Joe also bought an interest in a coal  
42 mining company. Uh. They owned a, uh, bought an iron mine out in Missouri. Uh. So  
43 they were expanding much beyond the original scope of the company of primary lead,  
44 which they had smelted for a hundred years at least, and, and the zinc smelter that they  
45 had sited in Monaca probably I think around 1930 or so in that area. And it was primarily  
46 sited here to make zinc oxide for the rubber industry in Akron. Rubber, uh, tires contain a

1 fair amount of zinc to prevent heating by hysteresis that's when they're rolling the tire.  
2 Uh. It was only after several years that, uh, Dr. Long, uh, invented the condenser and the  
3 company started producing metal. Uh. I had mentioned earlier that, uh, because zinc  
4 smelting is such a technically complex operation there were on site probably more  
5 engineers than at any other operation at St. Joe. And so it became obvious that maybe you  
6 build on this basis of talent to support these other activities beyond the zinc smelter, some  
7 in the lead, but also we did work with the iron mine and, uh, did a fair amount of work in  
8 support of the gold operation.

9  
10 (0:23:45)

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** How large was the research staff during your time there?

13  
14 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I think the maximum size was probably about 60-65  
15 people. Uh. It was in that order. Huh. It's interesting. It's not a number I carry around in  
16 the back of my head, but it, it was quite large. For the company, the size of it, I think it  
17 was pretty significant and it had budgets. Uh. When they were doing development for a  
18 hydrometallurgical lead smelting or lead extraction process the, uh, demonstration plant  
19 was built in Monaca. And, uh, I think we had budgets on the order of \$8 million at that  
20 time. It was pretty significant back in those days given the amount of money. Uh. And I  
21 should mention that, uh, the company was worried about, uh, worker exposure from, uh,  
22 high temperature lead smelting at Herculaneum. And, uh, they were looking hard at, uh,  
23 at replacing our technology with what was developed here at Monaca by the extractive  
24 group. It was called the lead chloride process. It turns out that the, uh, the fellows running  
25 the Herculaneum smelter, uh, concentrated very hard on cleaning up their act and it  
26 became more economic to continue with the, uh, tighter environmental controls in  
27 Missouri than to supplant it with an entirely new process technology. So that was, uh, set  
28 aside, but it certainly was a successful, uh, effort. A lot of it, a lot of good work done  
29 there.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of hours did you keep working in the research department  
32 within a plant that was going 24/7/365 days a year?

33  
34 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I think we, we, fairly standard, uh, daylight hours. Uh. On  
35 occasions, I'm sure the extractive guys, uh, worked odd hours when they were in the  
36 plant, uh, to fit within the production schedule. But the product guys were pretty much an  
37 eight to five sort of lot I think. Uh. It would vary around that schedule.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Where were you located within the plant and could you talk a little  
40 bit about the facilities you had?

41  
42 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yes. Uh. When I arrived, uh, I think they had just moved  
43 into, uh, what used to be called the Poor House I believe. It was the County Home, and it  
44 was, uh, it would be downstream from the smelter, but in between the smelter and the  
45 power plant if, uh, you're familiar at all with the layout there. Uh. It was right on the bank  
46 and, uh, it was, uh, it was quite a large, old building. But because it was set up in rooms

1 for housing people it, it was fairly ideal for offices. So, uh, one wing of the building was  
2 the extractive guys. The other wing was the product guys. And the basement and some of  
3 the ancillary buildings were where the labs were located. They only used the front half of  
4 the building, the newer part of it, while I was there.

5  
6 (0:26:58)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what was the back part used for or was it not used at all?

9  
10 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I think it was used for record storage and stuff like that. I  
11 mean, I hardly ever even went back there, but we had, uh, down in the basement we had  
12 labs for creep testing of, uh, zinc alloys primarily. Uh.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** So when did the research department move into the County Home  
15 building?

16  
17 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** It was before I got there. So it was in the late '60s sometime  
18 I believe.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** And where was it located before then?

21  
22 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I have no idea. I think they were, uh, probably in, in the  
23 plant itself and located at various sites.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** While you were working in the former County Home building, did  
26 you hear any stories about ghosts or other legends of the County Home?

27  
28 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No. None of that. Although there was a jail cell in the  
29 basement and, uh, it was kind of a joke. I suppose everybody had their picture taken  
30 inside the jail cell at one time or another, but I, I guess when they were using it as a  
31 facility it was a temporary, uh, holding cell for the, uh, local police. But now there were  
32 no ghosts that I was aware of in there.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. You had mentioned Carlton Long as having been the director  
35 of research when you got there?

36  
37 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yes.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk some more about him, um, his accomplishments as a,  
40 as a scientist, his skill as a, as a leader of research, as a person to relate to?

41  
42 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I think he had, he had quite a vision. You know, when  
43 you're young you don't appreciate some of these things. It is when you look at folks in  
44 retrospect that maybe you appreciate what they've done. Uh. I think he was the driver of  
45 expanding the scope of the research department. I think he got us involved and, uh, I  
46 think he was one of the founders of a group called the International Lead Zinc Research



1 Organization. And that was directed to only product development. It was not directed to  
2 extractive research. That was something that was kept close to the vest by each of the, uh,  
3 producers. But they, they cooperated together in terms of developing products cause they  
4 were all threatened by the same, uh, market forces. Uh. So that, that was a very active  
5 group. They, they sponsored research, uh, and did a lot of work both in battery, uh,  
6 research, as well as various zinc alloy developments. Uh. We got involved, uh, with  
7 them. They had, you know, invented a, uh, they had a group over in England that  
8 invented an alloy called ILZRO 12. It was, uh, essentially zinc with 12% aluminum and it  
9 was, uh, touted as a casting alloy to replace, uh, I'd say brass castings, uh, in decorative  
10 art and stuff like that. And, uh, we, uh, we took that information and developed an alloy  
11 that we called ZAC 73. That was in 1973 curiously, but it was for the composition as the  
12 number. And, uh, it, it had, uh, really remarkable properties, uh, and very competitive  
13 with cast iron as a replacement for foundry alloys. And, uh, unfortunately St. Joe did not  
14 produce, uh, special high-grade zinc and a lot of these alloys required special high-grade  
15 zinc for their corrosion resistance and so, uh, I don't think, uh, St. Joe ever produced  
16 much in the way of the wrought or cast zinc specialty alloys that were invented there.  
17 They, they were, they went to other people.

18

19 (0:30:48)

20

21 **INTERVIEWER:** I thought there was a, a time in which high-grade zinc was one of the  
22 options that they were producing.

23

24 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, high-grade zinc.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** The high grade, the intermediate, the Prime Western.

27

28 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Well, Prime Western has I believe about 1% lead. High  
29 grade has a lower lead content. Special high grade is four nines zinc. It is 99.99%. Very  
30 pure zinc, and it's, uh, the lead content in the zinc is what leads to, uh, corrosion problems  
31 in high-performance alloys. Uh. It's, it's excellent in terms of galvanizing uses. Uh. It's  
32 not so good as an alloy.

33

34 **INTERVIEWER:** So the, the 99.99%...

35

36 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yes.

37

38 **INTERVIEWER:** Zinc. What was the market for that?

39

40 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Well, it was what all of the electrolytic smelters were  
41 producing and in fact, uh, they had kind of the opposite problem. Uh. For them to  
42 participate in the, uh, galvanizing business, they had to debase their product and add lead  
43 to it so it would perform properly as a galvanizing alloy. So typically these people  
44 targeted the die casting market and, uh, other high end markets as their primary market.

45

46 **INTERVIEWER:** For the, for the very high...

1  
2 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** For the special high-grade zinc.  
3  
4 (0:32:07)  
5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.  
7  
8 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Now St. Joe did make some of this. Uh. It was made in the  
9 refinery, but, uh, I think the majority of it was made as zinc oxide rather than, uh, zinc  
10 metal. It was not a, it was not a, uh, I, I can't imagine it was an efficient way of making  
11 special high-grade zinc compared to the electrolytic process.  
12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** A little more about Carlton Long.  
14  
15 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, I'm sorry. I got off the topic.  
16  
17 **INTERVIEWER:** That's okay. This, this happens.  
18  
19 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Uh. Uh. Carl Long was a graduate, I think, of the  
20 University of Colorado. I think he was a chemist or a chemical engineer as I recall. Uh.  
21 But he, he came and, uh, he and a fellow by the name of Najarian were the co-inventors  
22 of the condenser and I guess that established his, his, uh, him as the, uh, a lead technical  
23 inventor and, uh, got him in the director of research position. And from that, he really, he  
24 had the vision of expanding it, uh, in developing the, uh, both the extractive as well as  
25 the, uh, product development areas. And so, he was, he was running the show probably  
26 for about five to 10 of the years that I was there and then retired.  
27  
28 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. He was, he was appointed, um, the head of research, director  
29 of plant and process research in 1937.  
30  
31 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No kidding.  
32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** By the plant manager George F. Weaton, whose name is also on  
34 the...  
35  
36 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Power plant.  
37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** Patent for the...  
39  
40 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, really.  
41  
42 **INTERVIEWER:** The condenser...  
43  
44 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I didn't realize.  
45  
46 **INTERVIEWER:** That allowed them to be able to make the...

1  
2 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** That's interesting. I didn't know that.

3  
4 (0:33:54)

5  
6 **INTERVIEWER:** The liquid zinc.

7  
8 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I'll be darned.

9  
10 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

11  
12 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** That's, uh, so anyway.

13  
14 **INTERVIEWER:** Was he an approachable person? Was he a good mentor?

15  
16 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No. He, uh, he had his office in the main office area, and  
17 we were down in the, uh, the, uh, Poor Farm. And, uh, so I didn't deal with him very  
18 often, about once or twice a year I suppose, you'd get an interview with him. I dealt more  
19 directly with the, uh, the group managers that we worked under at the, uh, facility. Uh.  
20 An interesting story was he, he asked me once in one of these interviews. He said,  
21 "What's your, uh, what's your vision?" And I said, "My vision is to have your job."  
22 [Laughter] Apparently that wasn't the right answer. [Laughter] But it worked out that  
23 way. So we'll see. [Laughter]

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** So what position in the research department were you initially hired  
26 for when you joined the company full time?

27  
28 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I was hired as a research engineer and, uh, I'd have to check  
29 my resume. I don't recall these things, but I, I guess I went from a research engineer to a,  
30 uh, a team leader. I had a small group working with me on various casting, uh, liquid  
31 metal processing, uh, projects, both lead and zinc. And, uh, I guess, uh, later on I ended  
32 up being a manager, assistant manager of research and eventually for about a year was  
33 the director of research for the department and then, uh, St. Joe sold off and we  
34 evaporated.

35  
36 **INTERVIEWER:** Let's talk about that a little bit. Selling off. The company gets sold.  
37 This was in '87 to...

38  
39 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yeah. St. Joe was owned by Fluor. Uh. And, uh, I don't  
40 recall the exact timing, uh, but, uh, Fluor came in as the white knight when Seagram's  
41 was looking at buying St. Joe and utilizing the cash they had on hand more efficiently  
42 and, uh, so the people running St. Joe, uh, decided that a better marriage for the company  
43 would be with Fluor, a large engineering company, who was fairly flush at the time. They  
44 had just finished the Alaska Pipeline project. They, their problem was, uh, on the large  
45 engineering projects, at least the story that was told, was on large engineering projects  
46 they would generate a lot of cash. And, uh, they had problems utilizing that cash. And St.

1 Joe was a, a capital intensive operation, putting large mines in place and smelting and  
2 that is a capital intensive business. So they said, "Oh, here's a great marriage. We'll take  
3 one outfit that generates a lot of cash and another one that requires a lot of cash and  
4 marry the two together." So, uh, unfortunately after a few years, uh, the market went bad  
5 both for the engineering and for the metals business and, and the marriage was not so  
6 happy from there forward and for a variety of reasons. Uh. You can hear all kinds of  
7 stories and rumors, but Fluor management decided to sell St. Joe off in parts rather than  
8 allow the management to have the leverage to buy out of the whole company. And, um,  
9 it, when that announcement was made, um, Bill Sutton and I sat down and, uh, we said,  
10 "There's no more future for corporate technical center if there isn't a corporation." And,  
11 uh, we had, we had looked at starting a business for a few years. After Fluor took us over,  
12 uh, it was a different, uh, way of doing business and it was certainly much more political  
13 than St. Joe had been. And we decided maybe it would be, uh, good for us to get into  
14 some other business of our own. And, uh, when, when the announcement of breaking up,  
15 uh, St. Joe came down, I remember it was on Easter weekend. The two of us sat down  
16 and wrote a business plan. We said, "What do we know how to do?" Well the two of us  
17 had been running a tech center. We said, "We think we maybe out to take a look at what  
18 an opportunity might be here."

19  
20 (0:38:46)

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** What year was this?

23  
24 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** 1987. Uh. It might've been, yeah, the spring of '87 and we,  
25 uh, we formed our company in July of '87 and started operations in, I think, October of  
26 '87. Uh. We made, we made an offer to Fluor for some of the, uh, equipment that was in  
27 the tech center and we also made an offer to some of the employees we had worked with  
28 to staff our company. And that was the basis that we started PMET, Pittsburgh Mineral.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Had Fluor made a decision to axe the research department, the tech  
31 center?

32  
33 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Well there was no reason for it. I mean, we reported to the  
34 corporate folks and there wasn't any corporate folks anymore. And so, uh, the only  
35 choices were to, uh, have each of these individual operations that would be spun off, uh,  
36 the lead operations became Doe Run Lead, I believe. Uh. The zinc smelter became ZCA  
37 and then Horsehead eventually I guess. Uh. I think the gold operation was sold to an  
38 Australian as I recall. I don't recall exactly. And, and so each of these were spun off  
39 separately. So there was no basis for us. So the, the thing we, uh, the pitch that we made  
40 to Fluor to acquire the equipment that we needed to support our company was that we  
41 would provide a discount service to each of these entities as they would require for a  
42 couple of years after, uh, we got started and that seemed to be attractive to them and they  
43 made a deal with us.

44

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Who determined, before that happened and you were still this active  
2 tech group, uh, and research department, who determined what areas you should be  
3 researching?  
4

5 (0:40:44)  
6

7 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** That's a good question. Actually, I think, I think the group  
8 managers, uh, identified a scope of interest. But the individual team leaders were actually  
9 the people who generated the proposals for their projects and, uh, carried them out. You,  
10 you literally sold a project. You, uh, in fact Carl Long put in a system that you had to  
11 budget it out and show the return on the investment and the whole 9 yards. So he was  
12 teaching us how to write a business plan. I just didn't know it at that time. But it, uh, it  
13 most of these projects to my knowledge were generated more from the ground up than  
14 from the top down.  
15

16 **INTERVIEWER:** Were they ever generated from a customer coming to the company  
17 and saying can you develop this for us?  
18

19 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yeah. Yes. I think that's where the lead strip business came  
20 from was, uh, one of the guys who was leading the lead work was in touch with  
21 somebody, I should know his name and I've forgotten it, but it was, uh, uh, a well-placed  
22 person at Delco and they were looking for a maintenance free alloy. And they wanted to  
23 go, avoid the casting and handling individual grids and go to a mechanized, uh, metal  
24 forming operating instead and he worked with a fellow called Mike Rose, who was  
25 leading the lead work at, uh, at our operation and, uh, Mike and, uh, a couple of other  
26 fellows, Dave Prengaman and, uh, John Barclay, I think were the guys who really led the  
27 development towards these alloys and the, uh, the processing that was required that it be  
28 successful in making a strip. So in that case I suppose the, the ideas came down from the  
29 top. Boy, a lot of this stuff came from the bottom up and, uh, the individual team leaders  
30 would pitch the project and hopefully you'd, you'd have a, uh, sympathetic ear to sell.  
31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** Where did the funding come from for your department and for your  
33 research?  
34

35 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Corporate until late in the process, uh. By the time I was  
36 involved in selling the total research package with Phillip Abramowitz, uh, say in  
37 Clayton it was, it was pretty much established, uh, by New York and, and divvied up by  
38 Long and, uh, others.  
39

40 **INTERVIEWER:** Was there ever any outside funding that came in like government  
41 funding, you know?  
42

43 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Interesting that you ask that.  
44

45 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Private industry funding.  
46

1 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** We, uh, my partner, uh, was in charge of the business side  
2 of the tech center when we were there. And he routinely was, uh, pressing it. We ought to  
3 do outside funded work to support it. Because it became more and more difficult to sell a  
4 project and budgets were shrinking commonly. And, uh, the management at St. Joe just  
5 did not want to do that for whatever reasons and finally, uh, finally we had some change  
6 in management and, uh, I remember we were playing racquetball and, uh, Bill and I  
7 pitched this idea to, uh, a fellow who was our boss, Phillip Abramowitz and, and he  
8 accepted it. He said, "You can go down." He said, "We're going to have a big reduction in  
9 force here, but I will let you go down and see if you can pitch a project and, uh, save  
10 these jobs." And so we went to the Bureau of Mines and sold the flame reactor project to  
11 the Bureau of Mines and that was, that was a big accomplishment. It was the first project  
12 I'm aware of that was funded by outside funding other than the small projects for ILZRO.  
13 And it, uh, it provided the basis for the guys that were doing the flame reactor  
14 development, uh, to move forward.

15  
16 (0:44:45)

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** How successful was that project?

19  
20 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** The flame reactor was, uh, it was directed primarily to, uh,  
21 taking EAF dust, which is, uh, a dust that is generated when, uh, an electric arc furnace,  
22 uh, melts scrap steel. And, uh, this, this, uh, because of the high temperatures involved  
23 there was a, uh, a fair amount of lead and zinc and cadmium and other cats and dogs from  
24 the galvanizing that go off in the, uh, dust and so this dust has, uh, has a toxic component,  
25 uh, of lead. And, uh, at the time the EPA had established that you, uh, you could not  
26 dispose of this material, uh, in a conventional landfill. You had to have this specialized  
27 landfill and treat it. And so these guys, uh, looked towards taking this stuff that was a  
28 waste material, recovering the zinc out of it, and, uh, rendering the, uh, residue, the liquid  
29 residue, slag. It is a, uh, nonhazardous material. Uh. This was towards the end of our, uh,  
30 our run. But I believe that they put in a plant out in Texas at a steel mill to process dust  
31 out there. Uh. As the company changed and ZCA took over, uh, ZCA had, had Waelz  
32 kilns that they were already providing this process. Uh. A Waelz kiln is a directly fired,  
33 uh, rotary furnace and it accomplishes the same sort of, uh, function of vaporizing, uh,  
34 lead and zinc. And, uh, I believe that they weren't motivated to change technology when  
35 they had plants already in place, uh, to run these, these operations. So I think it kind of  
36 died on the vine because of, uh, that was after I was gone, but that's the way I read it.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** And before you came to the company, I have a question about the  
39 World War II and, and post-war years, are you aware of...

40  
41 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I'm not quite that old.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** I know, I know. I'm talking about just through like historical, you  
44 know, passing information along. In any ways, was the, the research department impacted  
45 by those events, World War II, the post-World War era, with government funding for  
46 rearmaments and any connections there at all. I know, I know that the whole

1 manufacturing changed during the war years to accommodate the Department of Defense.  
2 I'm just wondering if that impacted also the research aspects of, of the plant?

3  
4 (0:47:39)

5  
6 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I don't know. I don't know. All I know that I heard from  
7 that period was, uh, uh, they had attempted to produce magnesium by the same process as  
8 the zinc smelting. And I think they had some serious issues with that and it, it never came  
9 to pass. But, uh, that's the only part of war related, uh, activities. But I, I've never heard  
10 about 'em.

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** What did they want the magnesium for specifically?

13  
14 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Airplane parts. Lightweight metal. So, uh, yeah. You know.  
15 Magnesium was in demand and at the time the methods to produce magnesium were  
16 pretty darn primitive. And, uh, so they thought well gee whiz. Here's a metal that  
17 vaporizes. Why can't we just change over our furnaces to produce a magnesium? Well if  
18 zinc is highly reactive, magnesium is probably five times as reactive I suppose and so, uh,  
19 fires are a real problem with magnesium if you get fine powdery material and it catches  
20 fire.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** How far did they get in experimenting with magnesium?

23  
24 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I got the feeling that they had a fire and they decided we  
25 aren't going to do this anymore. That's my impression. I, I didn't speak to anybody  
26 directly involved in that, but I remember hearing that story. And the logic makes sense  
27 when you think about it. I mean it is a very analogous metal. But, uh, mainly the risks of,  
28 uh, very bad fires are quite high with it and you can't put those fires out with water unless  
29 you want to hear a huge explosion. So, I, I think probably they decided, uh, common  
30 sense should prevail in that particular instance. Uh. I don't, I don't recall hearing  
31 anything like from the Korean War or any of that or anything special that happened. Uh.

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** No. I, I think the bigger effort was World War II and then afterwards  
34 gearing up for the Cold War.

35  
36 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yeah.

37  
38 **INTERVIEWER:** And stockpiling zinc for future needs and production.

39  
40 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I can remember when the market went south. Uh. Driving,  
41 we had to drive through the plant to get to, uh, our offices.

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Which time the market went south?

44  
45 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, gosh. This had to be in the '70s I guess. And it was  
46 very disheartening. I mean there was zinc stacked up all over the parking lots and

1 everything. You just wondered how long could this go on before bad things happen. And,  
2 uh, by golly that company really hung in there. And, uh, they cut back in production I'm  
3 sure, but they, they did not stop and there wasn't a massive layoff. In fact, one of the  
4 things I remembered moving here that was, I, uh, St. Joe may have put me through  
5 school, but they didn't make me rich while I was in school. So, gee, when I got out of  
6 school, I, uh, I suppose more money than I knew what to do with and I immediately  
7 wanted to buy a car. And I went to the bank and asked if I could get a loan to buy a car  
8 and the guy says, "Who do you work for?" And I said, "St. Joe." And it was no problem  
9 because they just didn't have layoffs and strikes at St. Joe. I got a loan and nobody knew  
10 me down there. It was, it was an interesting experience and, uh, and that was kind of  
11 typical. A lot of people complained that St. Joe was a paternalistic company. Well, that's  
12 kind of not so bad sometimes either.

13  
14 (0:51:23)

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** I've only heard it as paternalistic in a positive sense.

17  
18 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I, I thought they were a class operation. You know. I, I  
19 sometimes hear people run down the company. I said, "I have nothing bad to say about  
20 them. I thought they were honorable people all the while." Uh. I think they complied with  
21 the rules that were in place at the time. The environmental rules and restrictions. I, I just  
22 was never aware that there was any, uh, anything being done at night to get away with  
23 something. I, at least from my point of view, it was a great company. A great  
24 organization.

25  
26 **INTERVIEWER:** So you were working in the research department when the unions,  
27 the union came into the plant.

28  
29 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Uh-hmm. Yes.

30  
31 **INTERVIEWER:** Um. Did you feel any ramifications of that in the research  
32 department?

33  
34 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yeah. I sure did. And it was, uh, it was one, not one of Carl  
35 Long's best choices. He, uh, he elected to go along with the plant and allow some of our  
36 people to become unionized. Uh. We had a grade of people called testers, and they were  
37 the guys who worked for the engineering assistants. They did not have the two-year  
38 degree. And, uh, these guys became unionized and, uh, it's, it's just not a, it's a difficult  
39 way to work in a research atmosphere where jobs just aren't standard. I mean they, they  
40 change from day to day and, uh, uh, eventually and I think Bill Sutton eventually, uh,  
41 made an arrangement that we, we could get away from having a union element in the, in  
42 the tech center. And, uh, we never had any troubles in that fashion. It just was a clumsy  
43 arrangement and maybe Carl was getting a little old. I don't know. I think that was a  
44 mistake. Uh. Especially since we weren't part of that organization.



1 **INTERVIEWER:** I've heard a lot from other, um, interviewees about all the activities  
2 that they participated in.

3  
4 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Ah.

5  
6 (0:53:37)

7  
8 **INTERVIEWER:** And I'm just wondering was that same sense of belonging and  
9 participation felt in the research department?

10  
11 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh. I think so. Uh. I mean they had a picnic ground behind  
12 the, where our tech center was and, uh, I suppose every month in the summer there was a  
13 picnic from some group. Uh. I still have glasses I think from the maintenance picnic. And  
14 so you'd have beer and barbecue and only rarely though were spouses, uh, invited. Uh.  
15 That didn't happen very often. I suppose it was security stuff with the gate or whatever.  
16 But, uh, yeah. That was very nice. Uh. And I guess prior to my, my involvement I guess  
17 they had a very active athletic, uh, um, uh, function. A volleyball team. The rumor I  
18 heard was they tried out for the Olympics and stuff like that. So. Our tech center had a  
19 tennis league and, uh, it was quite large. Uh. I suppose we, we had 20 or 30 people that  
20 were in the league and each week we'd rotate around and play tennis.

21  
22 **INTERVIEWER:** Were, were people in the tech center integrated into the teams and  
23 activities of people who were working in the furnace plant and elsewhere at the smelter?

24  
25 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I don't, I don't know whether I can speak to that because,  
26 uh, in the product development area we had relatively little contact with the plant. I, my  
27 contact was in the refinery. We had a continuous casting for zinc alloys and, uh, if I  
28 wanted to make up an alloy, a large batch for a sample for a customer, we'd have to go to  
29 the refinery and make it there. We didn't have any facilities for that scale. Uh. But maybe  
30 the extractive guys did. I, I don't know. But at that time I wasn't involved with the  
31 extractive guys. And by the time I was involved with it, uh, it was, it was a different, it  
32 was a different arrangement pretty much. Yeah. Most of these guys were working on  
33 other projects not just the smelter. Uh. So.

34  
35 **INTERVIEWER:** In the, in the 1970s, um, the company had to deal with some  
36 environmental issues that were more, uh, prevalent, the oil crisis...

37  
38 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Um.

39  
40 **INTERVIEWER:** How did these kinds of external factors influence what you needed to  
41 do in the research department?

42  
43 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Well happily we, we were able to buy gas at the gate.  
44 [Laughter] So if you were prudent in how your driving habits were you, you probably  
45 could be able to get enough gas for your needs. The, uh, I, I failed to mention but one of  
46 the things that St. Joe, uh, the tech center guys got involved with was back in that

1 timeframe. I suppose a little later actually. The, uh, the fellows in, uh, the extractive area  
2 got involved in the EPA toxicity round-robin testing. This was the first, uh, EPA test to  
3 determine hazardous characteristics and so they were, they were well involved in that and  
4 it was for a good reason because I had mentioned St. Joe had been making lead for over a  
5 hundred years in Missouri. So there were a lot of residue piles from the mining waste, as  
6 well as the smelting waste. And they were very concerned about what, what impact the  
7 new rules were going to have on them there. And, uh, they, they were involved in that  
8 and later on with the TCLP test, the toxic characteristic leach procedure test. And so,  
9 they, they, uh, they were there. Uh. And, you know, I don't think it was a case of trying  
10 to beat the system. I think it was a case of trying to understand and do what's right. I  
11 really, I, I, my dealings all along had been that they, uh, they were honorable people  
12 about trying to comply with the law. The problem was the law was changing and you  
13 were being held to a different standard, uh, from the past. So that's, uh, that's a problem. I  
14 often mention to folks when they talk about things like this that wouldn't it be interesting  
15 if they changed the income tax rules and you had to go back 20 years for all their past  
16 taxes and bring them up to the new rules. And that's really what was happening. Life isn't  
17 fair.

18  
19 (0:58:46)

20  
21 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you ever have, uh, cutbacks in the research department staff?

22  
23 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Uh-huh. Yeah. We, uh, we had a fairly major one, uh, I  
24 suppose a couple of years before we closed and, uh, at that time a lot of people were  
25 offered a fairly generous termination arrangement. Uh. And, uh, uh, gosh. I remember we  
26 had a picnic and, uh, t-shirts printed for that and it was kind of like a going away thing.  
27 These were all your friends. I mean these weren't employees. These were colleagues that  
28 you worked with. I felt pretty bad about them leaving.

29  
30 **INTERVIEWER:** Were there, um, any efforts by the company to help people who were  
31 laid off get work elsewhere?

32  
33 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I suspect so. I, uh, I know that, uh, they were given a, a  
34 good severance and, uh, continuing health, uh, insurance. Uh. Which these days it'd be  
35 pretty generous in its self. And I suppose. Yeah. They did have, uh, some people come in  
36 and have some seminars and things like that in terms of how to package yourself up. But  
37 I'm not sure that they had anything, uh, where they actively promoted you or did a  
38 placement activity. [Clears throat] We didn't have that when I left either. Uh. We, we, uh,  
39 we were allowed to work with somebody to help us put a resume together or something.  
40 Instead we used them to help us write a business plan. I figured that was more to the  
41 point. [Laughter]

42  
43 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. How would you assess the resources and facilities you had for  
44 accomplishing your research objectives? Uh. Did you have state of the art technology to  
45 work with?

1 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Absolutely.

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk about what some of the technology was?

4

5 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** We, uh, you know, uh, during the '70s was a hey day for  
6 corporate research, especially in Pittsburgh. I mean. You had U. S. Steel. You had  
7 Westinghouse, uh, Gulf, and, uh, you'd go around and all these labs were pretty  
8 impressive. But here's little old St. Joe. I mean, I think back then in those days maybe  
9 they had \$200 million in sales something like that. Pretty small. And, uh, we ended up,  
10 uh, when we expanded the scope of our offering to provide mineral services to the mines,  
11 we, we brought in a, uh, scanning electron microscope and, uh, state of the art x-ray  
12 diffraction unit and in fact that was part of the equipment that we acquired for PMET, but  
13 this was, uh, this was pretty advanced for the non-ferrous smelting people. And, uh, I, I  
14 think, uh, we had, we had fair support for stuff like that. I remember that was a big  
15 purchase. It was over \$100,000 at the time for the microscope.

16

17 (1:02:13)

18

19 **INTERVIEWER:** What became of the microscope when the department was closed?

20

21 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I'll take you back and show it to you. [Laughter]

22

23 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay. I was hoping it made it somewhere useful. [Laughter]

24

25 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Uh. Actually we, we've been blessed, uh, obviously this  
26 isn't state of the art stuff anymore. But we've been blessed that we had a, uh, employee  
27 that came with us and, uh, he, uh, is skilled in, uh, electronics and maintenance and he  
28 has maintained the equipment and we've upgraded it through the years and, uh, we get  
29 good performance from it. So if you spend your money you can keep these things running  
30 for quite a while.

31

32 **INTERVIEWER:** What happened to the activities of the research department when the  
33 plant was shut down in 1979?

34

35 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** You know, uh, we pretty much kept right on going. Uh. I  
36 don't recall that there was any significant rift. Uh. It was complicated because, uh, we  
37 lost all, uh, all services. Uh. And, uh, so, uh, we probably ended up. During that time, the,  
38 uh, the product development group that I was in and the, uh, extractive guys almost  
39 operated independently. They, they, it wasn't married together at all and I remember I  
40 was assigned a job to coordinate with the extractive guys on how things as mundane as,  
41 uh, sewage treatment gets taken care of and things like that. But, uh, we pretty much  
42 went, went on. I don't know about the extractive guys what, what they did, but you'll  
43 recall that we were, we were working on other stuff. And, uh, and then I think the lead  
44 strip plant was running then and, uh, we just soldiered on.

45

1 **INTERVIEWER:** So when the smelter shut down, you, the research department and the  
2 power plant, business as usual?

3  
4 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Certainly, I think pretty much the research was. And it was  
5 because it was a corporate function rather than a, uh, local function. To tell the truth, I, I  
6 really wasn't aware of what went on in the extractive group, whether they had some  
7 issues with their work, but ours was, uh, we were pretty heavily involved at that time and,  
8 uh, some of these zinc alloy developments as well as the, uh, the lead battery  
9 developments and life went on.

10  
11 (1:04:59)

12  
13 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you move into the extractive group at some point?

14  
15 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Uh. There was a reorganization and, uh, the whole group,  
16 uh, the whole department was brought under different management and, uh, I ended up,  
17 uh, uh, running the, uh, the extractive group and that would be at the end of the lead  
18 chloride experience and going forward.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Could you talk a little bit more please about what the extractive  
21 group was doing and what some of the more significant, uh, contributions were from that  
22 group?

23  
24 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yeah. I, uh, I think a major one that I had mentioned earlier  
25 was this lead chloride process. This, uh, this was a, uh, really an important undertaking.  
26 It, it used ferric chloride to remove or dissolve lead from galena, lead sulfide in a, in a  
27 low temperature, uh, hydrometallurgical process. Once the, uh, the lead was dissolved  
28 and it was crystallized and the lead chloride crystals of high purity. So these guys had  
29 developed a process, built a demonstration scale plant and produced quite a large amount  
30 of lead chloride. The lead chloride then was going to be, uh, it was a joint development,  
31 uh, Alcoa had a, uh, specialized electrolytic cell, fused salt itself. And, um, it was a  
32 bipolar, uh, cell, a liquid aqueous cell. And they, uh, they were supposed to provide the  
33 cell technology to reduce the lead chloride crystals into lead metal. It turns out Alcoa did  
34 not succeed on that end and, uh, in fact we, uh, we had a fellow go to France for quite a  
35 long assignment and work with an outfit over there that had a, uh, an electrolytic cell  
36 also. So this, this was a huge deal and, uh, it just ended up that, uh, they were competing  
37 with the, uh, smelter guys at Herculaneum as to who could, uh, meet the environmental  
38 rules and most economically and so it, it made sense that if those guys in Missouri could  
39 meet the rules that it made no sense to, uh, completely change your technology and so  
40 that's where it stopped. Uh. Very interesting technology. Really, uh, really kind of world  
41 beating. So that, that was one of 'em. Uh. We also had guys, uh, I had a guy that was  
42 down in Chile for an extended period of time. I should mention St. Joe had an interesting  
43 approach to, uh, overseas operations. They were very comfortable with, uh, are we  
44 stopping? [Laughter] So, St. Joe was very comfortable in, uh, working in South America.  
45 They had owned a, uh, a smelter in Argentina for years, way, uh, uh, back and, uh, so  
46 when they found the gold deposit in Chile, they, uh, they were comfortable in developing

1 that. But their approach was they did not send Americans down to run these operations.  
2 They were run by either, uh, ex-patriots from England and other countries and, uh, local,  
3 uh, folks and so I think that's why they never had any of their, their properties taken over,  
4 uh, during all the upheavals that you heard about even during the Allende mess, uh, down  
5 in Chile, they kept operating. And so, uh, I, I think they were very smart about how they  
6 operated in, uh, in other cultures. Uh. So we would send people down there, but these  
7 guys weren't staying there very long. Uh. It was still go down and fix a problem and get  
8 out.

9  
10 (1:09:06)

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Were you ever sent down to South America?

13  
14 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No, I wasn't. I, uh, unfortunately, I didn't get down there.  
15 We did. I mentioned earlier that we had a, uh, fellow that developed a bacterial leaching  
16 process and, uh, we put together a plant down there to process, uh, refractory gold, uh, in  
17 the tailings. In that sense, it was a big sewage plant and, uh, I think it was maybe the first  
18 successful use of bacterial leaching.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** [Coughs] Excuse me.

21  
22 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** And I also mentioned, uh, the flame reactor, uh, activities.  
23 Those, uh, that was an extractive development and it was, that grew out literally of, uh,  
24 rocket work. I think it was Tullahoma. It was associated with, uh, NASA and they did  
25 their preliminary test work with a facility that did rocket engines. It's interesting stuff.

26  
27 **INTERVIEWER:** I'm going to look backwards again. During the, uh, post-World War  
28 II years, and I know this is not your time there, the research department staff doubled in  
29 size and operated seven interrelated laboratories, rubber, paint, electronic, ceramic,  
30 microscopic and analytical and it looks like I'm missing one. Um. How did these  
31 departments factor into the more modern period of the research department?

32  
33 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Isn't that interesting. I kind of overlooked them, didn't I?  
34 Uh. They, uh, St. Joe had probably one of the first transmission electron microscopes I'll  
35 bet in this area, uh, in, in that microscopy lab. Uh. Oh, gee. It was about when they first  
36 invented it. And it was so they could image zinc oxide. The zinc oxide particles are  
37 extremely small and, uh, different shapes of the zinc oxide particles make it, uh, desirable  
38 for different applications. So that, that lab principally that and there was, uh, a ceramic  
39 and a paint lab. They were principally, uh, kind of smelter oriented. They were, they were  
40 zinc oxide guys. Uh. The rubber lab was the same sort of thing. It supported the sales of  
41 zinc oxide to the rubber industry. So we knew these guys, but, uh, they, they were not  
42 part of the group that I was talking about out at the Poor Farm. They were in the plant  
43 and...

44  
45 **INTERVIEWER:** So, so, they're, physically they're...

1 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Physically in the plant.

2

3 **INTERVIEWER:** Research was happening in the plant and not where you were?

4

5 (1:12:02)

6

7 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Right. That work was in the plant and, uh, uh, literally in  
8 the plant. I mean, uh, I guess the rubber lab was in the main offices, I recall. But the  
9 other, uh, other activities were out in the plant. Uh. They were doing some interesting  
10 stuff actually. They had a ceramic engineer that was making zinc oxide bricks and you  
11 could heat things with them and connect them up with a, a power supply and, uh, it, it and  
12 the paint lab, uh, you know, obviously was, uh, directed towards uses of zinc oxide as,  
13 uh, I think for a fungicide as I recall was a function that was put in the paint other than  
14 blocking pigment as an alternative to titanium dioxide. Uh. No. I and to tell the truth  
15 during the time that I was managing research I did not manage any of those people. They,  
16 they weren't there. That was, I think, I always thought of them as part of the smelter  
17 activities to tell the truth. They certainly were dedicated that way and for right, I mean,  
18 rightfully so.

19

20 **INTERVIEWER:** Some other research names from the past. I'm wondering if you have  
21 any comment on any of these? Uh, James J. Rankin, uh, Robert S. Havenhill, and Robert  
22 Redelfs?

23

24 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Redelfs.

25

26 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

27

28 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Yeah. He's the guy who hired me.

29

30 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. He was, he was the director of metallurgical control  
31 department.

32

33 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Right. Which was the A lab. It was the analytic lab  
34 function. But he also was the, uh, the head recruiter if you would for the company. Great  
35 guy. I just heard that he died and lived to be 94. He just died a year ago out in St. Louis.  
36 So. Yeah. Anything I got out of St. Joe was directly a result of Bob and, uh, quite a  
37 fellow. And he's the fellow who came up with the, uh, the idea of sending, uh, hourly  
38 guys to Penn State to get an associate degree and, and become engineering assistants.  
39 That was his, his doing. And, uh, the way he went out finding people was he developed  
40 relationships with, uh, profs in the different schools of Michigan Tech, Colorado School  
41 of Mines, or, uh, Carnegie Tech. He probably had others too that I'm not aware of. But he  
42 would, he would take these guys out for dinner the night before and say, "Who you got  
43 that's a good prospect as a student?" I'm sure that's the way the talk went and I remember  
44 this one day before I ever did any work at St. Joe as a summer engineer, my adviser came  
45 to me and he said, "Did you sign up for St. Joe for an interview?" And I, I said, "No, I  
46 didn't bother." He said, he said, "I think you better sign up [Laughter] for an interview."

1 And so, I, I probably impressed Bob really well because I wasn't well dressed for the  
2 interview at all. I was wearing an old orange sweater and showed up for the interview and  
3 apparently, apparently Tom O'Keefe said enough nice things to offset what probably I  
4 dragged myself down by. Yes. Bob Redelfs was an exceptional guy. He was another one  
5 of those forward thinking people. You know, you think about non-ferrous smelter  
6 operations and that and you don't think that these are people that have visions. You think  
7 of the big guys of 3M and stuff like that. But these guys, uh, these guys did a pretty good  
8 job I think. I didn't know these other people. I didn't come across them.

9  
10 (1:15:54)

11  
12 **INTERVIEWER:** Did women have a place in the research department?

13  
14 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I had a technician that was a woman. [Laughter] So. There  
15 weren't many. Uh. We had, uh, some of the summer engineers were, uh, were female.  
16 Uh.

17  
18 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you continue to have summer engineers into the '70s, into the  
19 '80s?

20  
21 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. I think it stopped about when, uh, when  
22 we had the reorganization. But, uh, up till then we had people come in, uh.

23  
24 **INTERVIEWER:** Up until the 1987 reorganization?

25  
26 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Something like that. Yeah. Well a little earlier than that.  
27 Maybe 1980 or something like that. Uh.

28  
29 **INTERVIEWER:** Were any of these women hired after coming through the summer  
30 intern program?

31  
32 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I don't think so. Uh. And part of the problem would be, uh,  
33 these folks could demand a pretty high income. [Laughter] Huh. So the chances of  
34 attracting somebody to Monaca, Pennsylvania, versus some other more visible job  
35 probably was a hard sell. The, uh, I'm trying to think we had, uh, we had a lady that  
36 worked for us, uh, in our metallurgical lab and I had a, uh, a girl that worked with us out  
37 in the, uh, out in the lab.

38  
39 **INTERVIEWER:** Do you remember names?

40  
41 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No. I'm afraid I don't. But, uh, uh, I probably could look it  
42 up for you, but I, uh, hmm. I can see her face. The issue I always had in, uh, was  
43 especially at that time my work was with lead and, uh, these were all young ladies and I  
44 was very concerned about these people having a lead issue and being pregnant and so  
45 that, that was my greatest concern. I didn't care whether they were men or women in

1 terms of the work. We didn't do heavy stuff or anything like that, but it certainly was a  
2 reproductive concern on my part.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** What, what, um, precautions were you taking even among the men in  
5 the laboratory if you were working with lead?

6  
7 (1:18:10)

8  
9 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** We were all tested for lead on a regular basis. And, uh, we,  
10 uh, we had some pretty serious rules about it. I mean, you weren't allowed to smoke. Uh.  
11 You had to wear a respirator when you working around the lead. Uh. You had coveralls if  
12 you were getting into some serious stuff. Uh. Change of clothes and, uh, there was a  
13 change room in the basement of the tech center and a shower room. So, especially like  
14 the guys in lead chloride. They, they had to change into work clothes. It was like working  
15 in the smelter. They'd change into work clothes and then change out of 'em and shower.  
16 Uh. We learned something about lead. I learned something about lead and it applies more  
17 broadly to any, uh, any metal contamination including radiation. It's, it's a matter of  
18 hygiene, personal hygiene. That you don't, you don't handle the stuff and then smoke a  
19 cigarette and all of a sudden inhale the stuff from the dirt on your hands. Things simple as  
20 that. It's, it's not complicated. It's just paying attention to details. We worked on a project  
21 with, uh, naturally occurring radioactive material. In fact that's one of the services we  
22 offer now at PMET. And, uh, it's the same rules for radioactive material as it is for lead or  
23 arsenic or any of the, uh, traditional heavy metals.

24  
25 **INTERVIEWER:** Did you have accidents or injuries in the lab?

26  
27 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No. I'm proud to say that I don't recall that we ever had a  
28 lost time accident. I remember actually arguing with the people out in Clayton. Uh. Once  
29 they had an award for a safety milestone and they said research couldn't get one. And I  
30 said, "Our guys are working with more dangerous stuff than the guys in the plant at  
31 times." I said, "I think they," so we ended up getting a thermos bottle. [Laughter]

32  
33 **INTERVIEWER:** I saw one of those thermos bottles yesterday.

34  
35 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, really?

36  
37 **INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

38  
39 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** The plastic, round plastic one. [Laughter] I don't where I  
40 put mine, but I remember I was on the phone and I said, "You don't appreciate it." And I  
41 said, "These guys are dealing with unknown stuff every day," and I said, "I think it's  
42 exceptional that they didn't have a, uh, serious injury."

43  
44 **INTERVIEWER:** What kind of formal safety training or orientation did you give your  
45 employees in the research department?  
46



1 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh. Tons of it. Uh. Carl Long had instituted a, uh, a safety  
2 program with job safety analyses and all of that stuff. We had regular safety meetings.  
3 Uh. Each, each group would have a monthly safety meeting and a speaker would rotate  
4 around, uh, on that. Uh. You know, I think, I think it was a fair emphasis on it actually.  
5 And it was, uh, in all honesty. I understand the hazards of working in a plant  
6 environment, but, uh, it's, it's also a concern when you're, when you're doing a project or  
7 an experiment and you really aren't all that sure the outcome and, uh, if an accident  
8 occurs. Uh. We did a lot of, uh, casting of lead. Horizontal casting of lead. Uh.  
9 Continuous casting. And, uh, you're literally going from liquid metal to solid metal in  
10 about a one-inch or two-inch space in the mold and so if there's an accident you all of  
11 sudden have water in, in contact with metal. So these are the things you have to really  
12 pay attention to. Somebody could get hurt badly otherwise. But that...

13  
14 (1:21:56)

15  
16 **INTERVIEWER:** But nobody did.

17  
18 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Nobody did. Thank God. Maybe we were just lucky.

19  
20 **INTERVIEWER:** Just a few more questions to wrap this up. What was the best part  
21 about working at the plant?

22  
23 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Oh, gee. You know, there, there were just a lot of positive  
24 things. I, I don't think I ever got up in the morning and said, "Oh, God. I got to go to  
25 work." I, I thought the people, all of the guys I worked with were gentlemen. I mean,  
26 they, up and down the organization and the management and everything. Uh. So, uh, you  
27 had that going for you and made some very good friends. And, uh, I'd say you had  
28 challenging work, good friends and, and a company that took reasonably good care of  
29 you. I, uh, I think. I think they, I mean, how many companies now have Christmas parties  
30 and give presents to kids and stuff like that? Uh. I don't know if people appreciated that,  
31 but it had to be a hell of an expense. I didn't get any of those presents. I didn't have any  
32 kids. [Laughter]

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** Other than that, how could your experience with the company have  
35 been better?

36  
37 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Uh. Gee. I don't know. I, uh, to tell the truth, I, uh, I  
38 mentioned earlier my, my intent along the way was to, uh, to run a research group. I  
39 accomplished that and, uh, and it provided me a lot of the skills that you don't get in  
40 college. It provided me the skills that I think, uh, allowed us to survive in this business on  
41 our own. Uh. The whole idea of managing projects and people and all that stuff. The  
42 company sent me I don't know how many different meetings and training sessions and  
43 stuff like that. When I think back, it was pretty nice. Travelled a lot. Got to Germany and  
44 Japan and God knows where. Oh, Saudi Arabia that was, uh, that was a real experience.  
45 But, you know, you had a chance to go out to meet potential customers, to work with

1 them. Uh. It was a real, uh, broadening experience. I don't know whether I was special or  
2 whether everybody had the same thing. They should've if they didn't.

3  
4 **INTERVIEWER:** I, I haven't spoken to anybody who, who mentioned a travel  
5 schedule like you just did.

6  
7 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** Really. Oh. No. I ended up, uh, well that was when we  
8 were working on the magnesium project and, uh, Fluor was interested in selling the  
9 magnesium smelter to Saudi Arabia. And, uh, I got the opportunity to go to Saudi Arabia,  
10 uh, before the wars. And that's the first company, uh, country I ever visited that when I  
11 got back home I said, "I am glad to live in this country." It, it was so oppressive at that  
12 time even. It was, uh, an example of how bad it was, uh, they had built an industrial  
13 development, uh, equivalent to like a housing development only for industry. And they  
14 had cooling water canals and chases of, uh, electric power, uh, lines and everything was  
15 set up to put a plant in there and you got all your, uh, boundary utilities already there. It  
16 was fantastic and Fluor had built a refinery over there. Anyway, we were driving up this  
17 highway and, uh, one of the things is when you took a trip like this you would give a, a  
18 seminar when you came back to the rest of the folks. So, I borrowed my, my girlfriend's  
19 camera at the time and we're going up the road and I'm taking pictures of this stuff and it  
20 was really pretty darned impressive and we got stopped by the police and I ended up  
21 spending about eight hours being interviewed. All of a sudden these guys who could  
22 speak English earlier, all of a sudden couldn't speak English and finally they brought a  
23 Brit cop in and he said, "You've been very bad." And I said, "How was I being bad?" He  
24 said, "You were taking pictures and, uh, you aren't allowed to take pictures." And I said,  
25 "I don't need to take pictures of the refinery." I said, "If I want to know how your refinery  
26 is built I guess I could call a friend at Fluor and ask for the drawing." [Laughter] I said, I  
27 said, "This is crazy." And finally they, uh, I think the head of the office there probably  
28 called and sprang me. I never was actually in jail, but it, it, it was just such an oppressive  
29 thing, and I said, "Geez, how do you, how do you do this?" And I don't think anybody in  
30 this country appreciates, at least, at that time what freedom we had. We've lost a little bit  
31 since 9/11. But, you know we travelled a lot and, uh, a lot of the projects were  
32 international projects. Uh. So. Japan was interesting. So.

33  
34 **INTERVIEWER:** What do you think about Shell coming to the area?

35  
36 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** I think it's the best thing since sliced bread. This has been a  
37 depressed area ever since the steel went down. Uh. It's, it's been tough. Uh. I got to  
38 believe that most of the young people are leaving this area to go to where there's work.  
39 Uh. So having this massive investment not only in Shell, but I think that's significant.  
40 Yesterday, in fact, we drove by the site and I said, "Holy Toledo. This is, I wouldn't have  
41 known where I was." But the, uh, on top of that, I'm absolutely convinced that there will  
42 be other companies coming in now. We're going to be a little Houston. And, uh, and I  
43 think now, now people, kids growing up here have a reason to stay home and get a, get a  
44 decent job. So it's, it's wonderful. I, I compliment everybody who had something to do  
45 with it. It's, it's desperately needed for the area. My opinion.

1 **INTERVIEWER:** Thank you. That's it for my questions. Um. And if you have anything  
2 you'd like to add.  
3  
4 **DR. THOMAS WEYAND:** No. I guess I don't have that much. I had too much to say  
5 already. I, I hope you can make some sense out of this. [Laughter]  
6  
7 (1:28:47)  
8  
9 **INTERVIEWER:** Thanks very much.  
10  
11 (END)