

Title: Interview with Hugh Locker

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SCHWARTZ: OK! Well we'll stick this right here and hopefully it will pick up everything real well. OK, so first of all, I would like you to say your name, if that's alright.

LOCKER: My name is Hugh Locker.

SCHWARTZ: OK. How long have you lived in Bellingham for?

LOCKER: Well, I came to Bellingham in 1954.

SCHWARTZ: OK. What... how would you characterize your family background?

LOCKER: Well, I've been... [interrupted]

SCHWARTZ: So... [interrupted]

LOCKER: I was a single child in a disruptive family in California.

SCHWARTZ: OK. Where in California did you live?

LOCKER: San Francisco.

SCHWARTZ: Never been there.

LOCKER: Nice city. Nice city to be from.

SCHWARTZ: I'd love to see, looks beautiful.

LOCKER: Well it is beautiful.

SCHWARTZ: So how did your family come, or how did you come to Bellingham?

LOCKER: Oh, well, that goes back to a time when I was in high school in Seattle. The coach from [what was] then Bellingham Normal College – there was a teachers' school up here at Western [Washington University].

SCHWARTZ: Yes...

LOCKER: They had come down to Seattle to interview some football players when I was still in high school and they made me aware of Western Washington's athletic program. I went off into the service and when I come back from the service I gave them a phone call, [to] tell him I wanted to go to college, and he said he could give me a part-time job. So I moved up here and went to college.

SCHWARTZ: What was your area of study?

LOCKER: At that time I was leaning towards a science background.

SCHWARTZ: Science, and what kind of science? Just a general science or...?

LOCKER: Chemistry.

SCHWARTZ: Chemistry? Excellent. OK, what did your parents do, occupation wise?

LOCKER: My mother was a house wife. My dad was a a stevedore, I guess you would say.

SCHWARTZ: A what? I'm sorry.

LOCKER: A stevedore.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: Worked the docks.

SCHWARTZ: So what religion was important in your family, or did you guys go to church at all or anything?

LOCKER: Well, I got bits and pieces of several religions over my lifetime.

SCHWARTZ: Yes...

LOCKER: I guess when I was very young and lived in a neighborhood in San Francisco I went on occasion to Catholic church, and then when I came to Seattle and [was in] high school I went to a Lutheran Church, and then when I went into the service I was reattached with the Catholic faith and... nothing. I don't have a faith, per say.

SCHWARTZ: Mm hmm.

LOCKER: I just touched them all.

SCHWARTZ: Well, that's wonderful to get a good sense of what's out there I think. So what branch of the service were you in?

LOCKER: Marine Corps.

SCHWARTZ: Marine Corps? Wow. And about what years were you...

LOCKER: I went into the Marine Corps about 1951. Went overseas to Korea, spent 18 months in Korea, came back home, was discharged because I was a reserve unit that I went overseas with, and then came up to college.

SCHWARTZ: And where overseas did you go?

LOCKER: Went to Japan first, and then to Korea.

SCHWARTZ: Wow. What is your birthday?

LOCKER: Nine fifteen thirty-one.

SCHWARTZ: Excellent. OK. So you went to college. Did you just graduate as an undergrad and then...?

LOCKER: Never graduated.

SCHWARTZ: Never graduated? How long were you there?

LOCKER: Let me give you a little background on that. I was [a] commercial fisherman also. I had fished north in Alaska before going into the service and when I came back home out of service I had a friend who owned a fishing boat. I fished with him a couple years and was fishing over in the [San Juan] islands when – I think in Friday Harbor – [I] met my wife. And that was in 1954, ate '54, and then we got married and had our first child in – am I sure about this now? –

SCHWARTZ: [Laughs]

LOCKER: - in '56 or '57... well, maybe I better say he was born in '57. She came back to Seattle and I met her again in Seattle. And that's we got re-involved with each other. And then she went back over to Friday Harbor and I went back to see her, and then we became engaged at one point and...

SCHWARTZ: Aww.

LOCKER: We've been together ever since.

SCHWARTZ: Wow. That's wonderful! You met her in Friday Harbor you said?

LOCKER: Yes.

SCHWARTZ: My boyfriend's from Orcas Island.

LOCKER: Oh is that right?

SCHWARTZ: So I've been there quite a few times. [Laughs] It's a wonderful place!

LOCKER: Yup.

SCHWARTZ: It's an excellent place to meet your wife. [Laughs]

LOCKER: It was a lot different back then. It wasn't as commercialized. It was a very nice, quiet place to go. It was a nice place for fisherman. All the fisherman were there during the whole summer. There [were] several canneries on the island at that time. Now they've all gone away.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah. Did you ever work in any of the canneries at all or did you just know about them?

LOCKER: No, just [a] fisherman.

SCHWARTZ: Just [a] fisherman. So was it college that made you stay in Bellingham after you were in...

LOCKER: After, well, from the service, yeah. I stayed in school and then when we got married I was still going to school and I wanted to get a degree. But then, what happened, the normal things – you have a child and all of a sudden I had to have a job and so I went down knocking on the door [of] Puget Sound Pulp and Timber.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: That's Georgia Pacific before...

SCHWARTZ: Yes. Puget Sound Pulp and Timber?

LOCKER: Yes.

SCHWARTZ: What was the waterfront like back then? How would you describe it?

LOCKER: Oh, it was pretty much very active. There was a lot of log movement, a lot of log trucks coming in, a lot of logs being dumped in down by the mill. But it was very active.

SCHWARTZ: OK. What other companies do you think were... do you remember what other companies were down there at the time that you were down there?

LOCKER: Well, probably the... there was a lumber company just down below us.

SCHWARTZ: Mm hmm.

LOCKER: Columbia something lumber company. That was just south of the electrical plant that's been there – now making steam generator... made steam which the mill finally took. After they built it we utilized the steam but they also generated electricity. We were there – let me think, who else was there? That's where the old yacht club used to be. The old yacht club was down at the end of Cornwall. At the very end was a garbage dump/ [That] was years and years and years and years ago. And then it moved, it moved, of course, over into the basin where it is now, downstairs. Used to be a big yacht club there. Little things like that, little businesses there, and then moving on, to another place.

SCHWARTZ: And what was the rest of Bellingham like, around then?

LOCKER: [Inaudible]

SCHWARTZ: Yeah, like size or... What do you remember?

LOCKER: We had, shoot, I think it was almost six movie theaters downtown.

SCHWARTZ: [Laughing] Really?

LOCKER: Little ones, here and there. They all went away, eventually. It was a quaint little town, it was a nice little town, but it was small. College was the main stay of population for kids. Course back then we only had [inaudible]. Most of them were GI's just coming out of school or out of the service.

SCHWARTZ: That makes sense. So if you remember, way back, what was your first day at GP like? Do you remember?

LOCKER: Well, I had gone down and my job downtown was working at an apartment house, Mount Baker apartments, from the college. I'd been [inaudible] a room within the Mount Baker Apartments, and... we were doing weekend work. I worked vacuuming the floors and washing windows and doing all kinds of things and taking care of the place on the weekends so that the regular scheduling [commander?] that was there didn't have to do it. That gave me a small apartment in the place. Well, then we became a family... and we had a child and they didn't allow little children at the Mount Baker Apartments. Well, we had to move – but they were very nice about it – and we moved to another small house up on Iron Street.

SCHWARTZ: Iron? Where were the Mount Baker Apartments, if you don't mind me asking?

LOCKER: It's down... Do you know where the triangle is, downtown Bellingham?

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

LOCKER: OK, it used to be... let me have your pen. [Draws a map on a notebook] Goes down to the waterfront... This is the one that goes out towards... You come down through Bellingham and you make that little round turn... One goes into old town.

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

LOCKER: The triangle building's right there on the corner. Mt. Baker Apartments [were] right across the street from it... took up half of the block there.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: And then... years ago there was the Old Fair Market, grocery store – neat store that was – the big grocery store in downtown, the big furniture store right here [pointing at his map]. Very nice place, I liked it, Fair Market, they were very nice to us, too.

SCHWARTZ: So how many children did you have?

LOCKER: Four boys.

SCHWARTZ: Four boys, wow! Sounds like both my parents. I'm like the only girl in like forty years of children [laughing]. We have all boys in my family. I have a brother so I understand that.

LOCKER: I was asking for a girl the first time.

SCHWARTZ: Really!

LOCKER: And I asked for a girl each time but it didn't happen until I asked for the girl for the fifth time and she [my wife] says there will be no fifth time.

SCHWARTZ: And what were their names, your children?

LOCKER: Patrick. Michael. Michael was the first one. Patrick, John, and Scott.

SCHWARTZ: Excellent. OK, so what happened after you moved into a house on Iron Street, you said.

LOCKER: Oh. I went down and finally applied for the Georgia Pacific... Puget Sound Pulp and Timber for a job and they asked me what my background was. I told them I was taking science and I had chemistry. Well, chemistry worked well for me because they thought there would be an opening within the lab down... they had lab doing the research, doing the analytical work on a daily basis on the products within the mill [to] keep the mill running. But I worked the yard for the first... gee, I can't recall. I think it was almost six months working out in the yard as a grunt, digging in the muck and the

stuff within the mill, cleaning up the mill and doing things of that nature – all the bad jobs. But eventually I got into the lab. [I] stayed in the lab for twelve years doing research and analytical work and testing out various [inaudible] solutions within the plant that they used to test the pulp, the constituents with which they make the pulp. They had rocks made by cooking acid... cook the pulp in, and you had to test that for strength. And they would also test the gasses and separate things coming off of that, [to] see that we were getting the best we could out of all the things we were using. That was at a time, too, where we were having... they allowed us to put material out into the bay which, as time went on, of course, that was looked on as detrimental. Well, there [were] two standpoints: Puget Sound looked at it, it was detrimental and it was a waste. As far as they were [concerned] we were actually losing product...

SCHWARTZ: Right.

LOCKER: ...instead of utilizing. And then they turned that around, they started turning that around before Georgia Pacific came in, but then we worked harder and more in depth on it to save the material. Eventually we cleaned up pretty dang good.

SCHWARTZ: Excellent. So you started in the yard you said...

LOCKER: There in the yard and then went to the lab.

SCHWARTZ: What kind of responsibilities did you have?

LOCKER: Just a laborer, just a common laborer.

SCHWARTZ: Just a laborer, OK. And then, so what would you say your basic responsibilities were then within the lab? You kind of described a little bit about what your job was like. Did you... is there anything else you'd like to say about your responsibilities?

LOCKER: Well, there were steps that you went through, just like on any job. You go through Tech One through Tech Three or Four in advancements for wages and et cetera. In between you worked with different equipment. You worked with gas chromatograph, you worked with running the solution that came in daily, and then when you got into testing out in the bay, we would bring the waters back in and test them inside the lab to see how much lignin was in the water in different segments going out and away from the mill. We would test for lignin through [inaudible].

SCHWARTZ: And what exactly is that? You say you're testing for... what is that again?

LOCKER: Lignin, L-I-G-N-I-N.

SCHWARTZ: What exactly is that?

LOCKER: That's the effluent that that had gone out.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: It's a flushing process that goes out.

SCHWARTZ: OK, yes. I have tried to read about the process in articles but it's... I don't have a big background in science so it's been a little bit hard to read it and understand the complete process. Can you walk me through a typical day, in the life of a...?

LOCKER: In the lab?

SCHWARTZ: In the lab or the yard, whichever, but it seems like you spent a lot more time obviously in that second job so...

LOCKER: Well, in the lab you did the work that came in. There were certain standard things that you did daily: testing the solution, making up new solutions for testing. And then there [were] things that you did on a time basis either monthly or weekly where you tested for the lignin in the sea water where you went out and actually collected samples in the sea water. Back then Georgia Pacific even – they bought a boat – made a boat that was available so that we could go out and drag nets and collect a cross section of the life that was out in the water and analyze that and look at it. And we had people that knew what they were doing when they were analyzing and looking at it. But we'd go out and collect it and we'd collect the bottle samples and we kept the bottle samples. And [we'd] do that on a period basis which was a state requirement. We had to pass certain tests to be able to do what we were doing in releasing the effluent out in the bay.

SCHWARTZ: OK, and when did they stop allowing that to be released?

LOCKER: Oh, they just kept... What they do is, once you start doing that [they] make you clean up. Then you work towards the perfect cleanup. So they kept setting standards a little bit higher and kept working harder and harder to get it – either less effluent going out, or you made systems within the plant that allowed you to save more material than release it and utilize it for something else. And then along about that time they found out that lignin was one of the good things for animal feed industry.

SCHWARTZ: Oh, OK.

LOCKER: For binding... when they make pellets for feed, for animals, they do it in a big machine and they press the feed through a die which squirts out little round pieces of feed. Well, sometimes they come out and they just pop and it'll open. But if you put lignin with them, and send it through the same die, they'd hold together and they'd stand up then during shipment, bagging, shipment, et cetera. And somebody on the east coast said, "Gee, that would be good for our feed industry out here." So it was the late '60s [when] they started using lignin in animal feed binding and they'd also been using it in concrete, for strength. Then we started using it in binding the road, dust on roads, making roads out of it. They had done that for many years back in Minnesota. They built roads

and eventually they [kept] laying it down, putting down more gravel. They built up six to eight foot thick – road bits – they couldn't get them out. It was tough. They had to bulldoze them out with huge, huge Cats, and so they started using them. We used them in Salt Lake City where they go down into those deep holes, where they're yarding [inaudible] material out and their roads have to be coated, and so we'd coat them and [inaudible] their roads.

Well, lignin became the universal product and we went on the road selling it. I moved out of the lab and into what was called the "Mod Squad." It was a group of several... two engineers and a bunch of technicians, people from... We'd go on the road, we'd go to a plant – feed plant – [and] we'd take the material with us. We had a small portable [inaudible] we built up [so] we could pump hot lignin into a pelletizer... which would make the pellets, and then we'd test the pellets and show the company how much better their pellets were before and after. And they said, "Well, that's a good deal, then we'd like to have that system here." So then we'd go back and we'd put in a ten thousand dollar tank – holding tank – to receive lignin by railcar from Bellingham to the east coast. And we'd put in a heating system to keep the material warm, and a piping system that was all case [inaudible] wired and everything to keep it warm all through the machine to use. Then we trained the guys to use it and they did that. [It] actually used to absorb most of the cost. We allowed them to pay that off by buying our lignin at increased price, at maybe a dollar a ton or something, over the next ten years. When the ten years was gone, the system was theirs.

SCHWARTZ: Oh wow, so it's kind of like a...

LOCKER: It's a win-win situation. They were getting a product they could use: lignin. Bellingham was getting [to be] a place where they could take their lignin and utilize it instead of putting it out to sea.

SCHWARTZ: So what kind of... how big were the companies you were selling it to? Were they big?

LOCKER: Oh, yes.

SCHWARTZ: Huge companies?

LOCKER: Albers Milling Company... have you heard of Albers?

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

LOCKER: Albers is big. We worked with them in Portland. We worked with them... several cities back east. We worked with them down in California.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: Then we started putting terminals in different cities throughout the United States. We put them in... we had one in Portland. We had one in San Francisco [and] Long Beach, California. We had one in Houston, Texas. We had one in Jacksonville, Florida. [We] had one in Philadelphia. We had one in Kansas City. These were all terminals with which we kept shipping by railcar... [and] all of a sudden we started shipping by large ocean going vessels. They'd come in and we'd load up the vessel with a million gallons of more material and they would make stops in different port of calls and fill up our terminals.

SCHWARTZ: So, once you'd sold this material to a company would you... have to go back personally or did you just send it out?

LOCKER: No, once we put the system in we went back to the systems. We tried to go back once a year to each one to see that they were functioning and working well for the company. If they don't work for a company then they don't use it, then they don't use our lignin. So you wanted to keep the material flowing for all these different spots we had.

SCHWARTZ: So you must have traveled a lot!

LOCKER: I did, for eight years.

SCHWARTZ: For eight years you said? Wow. Was that hard?

LOCKER: Well, it was. It was during the time when all of my boys were growing up.

SCHWARTZ: Very young.

LOCKER: My wife had... after eight years she said, "Me or the highway." So I came back in off the road and worked back in the mill.

SCHWARTZ: I can understand that. So what did you... where did you work in the mill then when you came back?

LOCKER: I came in as a shift foreman. That's where we have a mill shift foreman on for eight hours a day, seven days a week, but they rotate it so that you got more than one... three shift foremen. You got a bunch of them in there to fill positions and you rotate on shifts.

SCHWARTZ: Right.

LOCKER: You rotate the days.

SCHWARTZ: That would make sense... So what would you say a typical day was like then, as a shift foreman? What kind of things did you do?

LOCKER: You walked the plant. You had to check in on the pulp side where they were producing the pulp out [in] the end of the machines. You'd work up to the bleach plant, where they were going through the process of bleaching the pulp. Then you'd go over to the digester buildings where they were actually cooking the pulp. They'd flush it out into a huge vat outside the building. Then they'd wash it out of there and they'd put it in storage. Then they'd bleach it and then it comes out the end of the machine and they'd bale it.

SCHWARTZ: Wow. So... how long were you a shift foreman for then?

LOCKER: Oh boy.

SCHWARTZ: [Laughs] About...

LOCKER: Oh, at least... I can't remember. It was several years and then I went to... I didn't realize I'd been retired for over thirteen years. It's a little hard to remember [laughing].

SCHWARTZ: I understand.

LOCKER: I went... We had a building called the paper board plant.

SCHWARTZ: It's called the what? I'm sorry.

LOCKER: Paper board.

SCHWARTZ: Paper board, OK.

LOCKER: And it was where we used to receive newspaper and magazines and all that stuff. We'd slurry it up to make boxes out of.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: Remember the old boxes you had [with] the nice white outside and the grey inside? That was... we made board there at GP, at that time, and shipped it onto the boxing companies where they would make boxes out of them. And that's all out of waste paper. But then we decided... the year they gave me the job they also told me it was time they were going to shut down the plant, the paper board plant. So I spent the next year getting it ready to disassemble it and I thought I was... boy, that was my job, I would be settled for life, retire there. But it didn't work out that way. Shortly after that I got a job in distribution.

SCHWARTZ: Job in distribution. What did you do there?

LOCKER: Well I was over at the chlorine plant at that time working as a shift supervisor for the chlorine plant itself. A good friend of mine who had been the distribution manager was retiring.

SCHWARTZ: What was his name?

LOCKER: His name was Bob Foster.

SCHWARTZ: Bob Foster, OK.

LOCKER: And I was kind of picked to take his job. That was the one that took care of... We had two barges: the Robert E. and the Elaine D.

SCHWARTZ: And what was that first one?

LOCKER: Robert E.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: These were used for hauling. The Robert E. was used for hauling salt back and forth between the bay area in California and Bellingham to make chlorine, and it also had a... You could haul that on the deck and then below deck you could carry liquid chemicals such as lignin and/or caustic soda, sodium hydroxide.

SCHWARTZ: And what is that used for?

LOCKER: That's a byproduct in the process of making chlorine.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: And so that when you made the chlorine, which we used for bleaching and or for selling, we sent it out to cars. We also made sodium hydroxide which we sold by the rail car and/or we had an abundance of it so we shipped it by vessel to paper mills in northern California and other places.

SCHWARTZ: OK, and what would other – because you said you sold it – what would other companies then use it for?

LOCKER: Sodium hydroxide?

SCHWARTZ: Yeah.

SCHWARTZ: Lots of things?

LOCKER: Any place you need for neutralizing something. It's, you know, like an acid base. Sodium hydroxide's a base, acid's an acid.

SCHWARTZ: Right, OK, and... was the Elaine D. then similar in what it did?

LOCKER: No, Elaine D. was a barge made primarily for carrying 1200 tons of chlorine gas – liquid, 1200 tons of liquid chlorine. It could carry also sodium hydroxide in the four hulls it had. It had a central hull [in which] they transported sulfuric acid.

SCHWARTZ: Sulfuric acid, OK.

LOCKER: That was used mainly in the pulp mill. And the Elaine D. was made just for travel between here and – I'm trying to think of the town they used to go into, it's in Northern California, right on the coast. There was a big paper mill there.

SCHWARTZ: OK. So what were your responsibilities then in that job in those parts?

LOCKER: When I went in it was the movement of the materials out of Bellingham to the various terminal – the various plants that needed the material – scheduling the barges for the trips through, taking the barges through their Coast Guard. Coast Guard had to examine the vessels at least two times every five years which means they wanted to go into the hulls – examine [the] hulls - [to] see if there [were] any stress fractures, cracks within it, [to] see if they were safe to be at sea. And so we had to take them, dry dock the vessel, and we went through an extensive examination at that time. And that was my job to put it in there and see that it passed, and if it didn't pass, [if] there [were] things wrong, [I'd] see that the things were corrected. [I'd] go back and tell the Coastguard, "Yes, these have been corrected." Then they [would] come back down and look at them again and say, "OK, they're perfect."

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: That's where we would go when we would go.

SCHWARTZ: That's a pretty important job then.

LOCKER: Well, it was a good job. It was a fun job.

SCHWARTZ: And then did you have that job for the rest of your time there? What did you do next?

LOCKER: Yes. I had that job for the rest of the time until they closed it out. They cut back. I was a strong believer that if I had terminals throughout the country, I had to go see those terminals physically, not just talk to someone on the phone.

SCHWARTZ: Right.

LOCKER: And they started cutting back on transportation costs – the funds for that – and I was put to stay at home and do it by phone. And once that came I said... you know...

it's just the writing was on the wall. They were going to get rid of the barge just eventually and which [they] did. I ended up selling one when I was there and then another one was sold just after I left. That's where I parted company and I retired.

SCHWARTZ: And you retired then, what year was that?

LOCKER: 1993.

SCHWARTZ: 1993. So you'd say you worked there... What year did you say you started working there, late '58 or something?

LOCKER: No, I went in there probably early '56. I was there thirty-six, thirty-seven years.

SCHWARTZ: That's a long time.

LOCKER: Well, it was a long time, but I went there looking for a job and they gave me a job. They were very good to me, treated me and the family well, paid me well, gave us a good base to raise a family. I have no complaints.

SCHWARTZ: So then, when you went from working in the lab and then you traveled after that a lot more through the company. When you came back why didn't you work in the lab again, out of curiosity?

LOCKER: Well, they probably thought that I had enough more experience that I was more valuable starting at shift foreman than moving onto the superintendent of the plant – not plant, it was manager of the paper board mill and then manager of distribution for the [inaudible]. It was a move up type of thing.

SCHWARTZ: OK, OK. So I'm going to step back just for a second. I'd like to know how you think the community felt about Georgia Pacific towards the beginning of the time that you were working there. Do you know if there was like – because it was such a big deal in the community – I'm wondering, you know, was it a positive thing, a negative thing? How did the community feel about it?

LOCKER: I'm sure it was mainly positive. Sometimes it wasn't. I can remember when we were living down at the Mt. Baker Apartments. On occasion the digesters would have a burp and you'd get gas coming up, stinky gas coming up floating through town and everybody, "Ewww," – going to be all upset with the mill, [but] it would go away. It was things like that. In industries at that time things like that happened until they... you got to put restrictions on everybody and the state and the federal government started putting restrictions on us. But if you go back a bunch more years, go back into the early 1900s and see what was happening at that time it was on a small scale, but it was still happening. It kept going and going and going. There [were] pros and cons. People weren't happy when they burped. And there was always... they said, "Oh yeah." Of course, after years of my working there I'd go home [and] tell the wife, "Oh, geez, you

smell the mill today?” and I’d say, “God, doesn’t it smell like money?” [Laughter] She didn’t agree totally.

SCHWARTZ: [Laughter] She didn’t totally agree with you! Yes, I do know what that smells like. We used to live down in Oregon and – I can’t remember what town it is. There’s a town you go through on the way down there and there’s a big, big paper mill right on the highway and I can remember the smell going through there.

LOCKER: Oh yeah!

SCHWARTZ: Then it was just like, you know, I liked it when I was little because it meant we were going somewhere cool! [Laughs]

LOCKER: It happens. But they worked... I’ll give them thirty percent of the [inaudible] pulp, timber pulp. They worked hard at trying to keep it as clean as they could. They realized that when you have a smell of something that escapes you’re losing money. That may sound a little... Well they’re only doing it because they really need money. But that’s what business is, I mean, you’re in the basis of it.

SCHWARTZ: Yes, I understand that. So how did you feel about the restrictions that were then put on the company? Is that something that frustrated you at all or did you just understand [it] as necessary?

LOCKER: No, no, no. It was definitely necessary. At the time, I might have thought, “Geez, well then what are we doing, pumping all this stuff off into the bay?” At the time, that’s what we did. The same as in New York City when they would take barge float after barge float of garbage out and dump it. That still blows my mind. That really blows... ‘Course they can look at the effluent out of a mill as garbage also, it’s same way. But we never found that it really was that detrimental to the fish. We had fish and seals and everything coming right into the harbor. In fact the guys used to catch crabs off the wharf and cook them while on shift.

SCHWARTZ: Really, on shift?

LOCKER: Well I didn’t catch them.

SCHWARTZ: How did they catch them on shift?

LOCKER: Well, they [would] just set their crab trap out and go pick it up, bring it in, throw them in the boiling water, cook them, and then eat them.

SCHWARTZ: [Laughing] Wow! I’m trying to imagine that. That’s pretty cool. That’s really amazing!

LOCKER: Some of the guys even fished off the wharf – I won’t mention names – but they would fish down off the pier while they were on shift.

SCHWARTZ: What kind of jobs would those guys have that they could just go and...

LOCKER: Well, most of them were the log people. They were out there feeding logs into the...

SCHWARTZ: That makes sense. They were already out there, didn't... [have to] leave the plant to go fishing!

LOCKER: No, no.

SCHWARTZ: So, how do you think the community then felt, I guess, as you worked through the company? Is it something that's changed a lot through the years or just kind of the same positive idea that there's lots of jobs [but] negative about the kind of smells every once in awhile? I mean, did you think that there was a real shift at all in feeling[s] about the plant?

LOCKER: Oh, I think there was. We were [interrupted by waitress]... I don't think there was a shift in feeling. You always have, within a large company/corporation, you have polarized areas. You have your working crew of people, you have the professional people that are salaried that work in the plant, and sometimes there's friction between the two. But I think, all in all with the majority, especially now, when you go back – and I'm talking to guys that were there during the time I was there – and realize now how good a job they had, and now that it's gone and they're out looking for something else, how they could have looked at it maybe a little differently, then it might not have been gone so early.

SCHWARTZ: Right, right.

LOCKER: They want, from a union standpoint – don't print this – [dialogue edited for content.]

You have a plant this big [inaudible] sitting downtown, in the middle of a big growing community, [it's] pretty tough. It really needs to be situated out in like Ketchikan, Alaska where they put their plant.

SCHWARTZ: That is something that I have always found very interesting about Bellingham is that there was such a big industrial area and [then] you have the college which is then turning into a university and I think those two populations are very interesting because you don't usually have both in a city, that I've noticed. Like you said, you expect it to be out in Alaska, you know? [If] you don't mind me asking you this, you don't have to answer this at all, but how did you feel about unions in general? Did you find it positive, did they bother you?

LOCKER: No, no. It's like I've always told even the guys. I don't really care for unions. I mean, when I went to work for somebody I would go to work for them. I asked them for

the job and if I don't match up to what your needs are in the job then you should fire me. ... OK, now that I've watched young people come in, and God they're just hungry for the job, need the job, got to have it. The minute they get the job, I'm union, I'm in the job thirty days [and] I got everything and I'll do what they want and you can fight it out with my union. That's not a win-win situation.

SCHWARTZ: Right.

LOCKER: And I think that and I believe that unions are a necessary thing, just keep the leaders of the company... we got to keep them in line. They can be as bad as the union officials if you look at them bad. But I've known them, one of the union officials, all the time that he's been in this country, and he and I have butted heads many times. But he had one thought in mind: he wanted the betterment for the guys in the union. He did a good job for them and he did a lot of fighting for management under the same thing, realizing that maybe we're going too far [inaudible]... And it's a give and take situation and it worked out for him.

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

LOCKER: It's just a... That would be a... You ever thought [about] going to interview somebody you might want to interview him.

SCHWARTZ: What's his name?

LOCKER: Jim McCandless.

SCHWARTZ: How do you spell that last name?

LOCKER: M-C- capital-C-A-N-D-L-E-S-S.

SCHWARTZ: I'll have to mention that. I'm sure someone would be very, very interested in interviewing him.

LOCKER: He is a fun man to interview.

SCHWARTZ: There are actually a few students who are really interested in the union side of things though.

LOCKER: Well, he's the one to talk with.

SCHWARTZ: Excellent, Excellent.

LOCKER: He's the top man.

SCHWARTZ: Thank you for letting me know. I'll have to contact him and find out. So what do you think a good, I don't know, general way to say it would be? Unions are required but there's got to be some kind of middle... give and take between the way...

LOCKER: There's always got to be a give and take in order for us to move on, same thing in our government. In our government right now there's no give and take if I want this and you want that and we're falling in a hole and I think we're becoming a second class nation.

SCHWARTZ: I understand that. Let me... I just want to check and see where I am on the recording here... Good, alright, cool. So were you the only one in your family that worked for Georgia Pacific in Bellingham, or any relatives?

LOCKER: No, my fourth son came in for a short time. Back in those days you could bring your kids in during the summer. You used to be able to bring them in so they'd have summer jobs when they came out of high school or while they were in high school. They could work during the summer, make a little money for college, buy their own clothes or whatever. And then it became... somebody sued. They [said] that, "I didn't get a job when I needed it because they hired their own kids."

SCHWARTZ: Oh.

LOCKER: And they stopped that, there was no preferential from then.

SCHWARTZ: OK, so then what were the qualifications of a person, do you think, hired for GP? Well, I'm sure there was... was there a big...?

LOCKER: Just like any time you hire, depends on the line of work you're hiring in. To a lab, then, you've got to look for their background of chemistry and analytical work. Anything they've done there and can they do what you're willing to do? Have they worked with the equipment that you've got on the premises or can they learn how to do it? If you're a laborer, you have a strong back, a willing person to work, put you in there and put you at that job. Then you can almost be directed into it. When you're working in a profession stand point of view, where you've got pipe fitters, mill rights, electricians - things of this nature where you might be going to use them in a departmental - maintenance people, where they have to have a whole knowledge of all the system that's within that one department - chlorine is going to be different from the bleach plant - then it is over in the inline on the pulp production.

SCHWARTZ: So, whatever the job is that they're hiring them for?

LOCKER: Whatever you have to hire for, yes.

SCHWARTZ: Excellent. How do you think that different people in the plant felt about each other working, I mean in terms of employees?

LOCKER: Between employee to employee, or employee to union to management...?

SCHWARTZ: I'm thinking mainly employee to employee or employee to management, just within the company.

LOCKER: Well, within the company [inaudible]... When my son came to work, my youngest son, [when] he got in there he was married and had a child.

SCHWARTZ: And which son was that?

LOCKER: Scottie.

SCHWARTZ: Scottie.

LOCKER: I told him – that's when I was in as a shift foreman – I [said], "When you come to work here... I want you to you work hard. If something, a machine breaks down, I don't want you to go lay down and go to sleep, [or] pick up a broom [and] go sweep someplace." Well, he did that and he caught, from the people on the line, "Don't do that, go over and do something else. Go sleep. Go hide someplace." He wouldn't do it. But that's the way I taught my kids because the company had done no disservice to me and they'd done everything right for me as far as I'm concerned. I wasn't about to have it thrown back in their face because my kid did.

SCHWARTZ: Right, it really reflects back on you.

LOCKER: Well, yes. But he's done well.

SCHWARTZ: Good, excellent. What does he do now?

LOCKER: He's a dry waller.

SCHWARTZ: Dry waller, cool. [50:32-52:09 material unrelated to interview edited out] So what do you think... I'm really interested in this question: [what has been] the greatest change in the plant since you started working there? So, from the time you started to the time... do you think the plant changed a lot or...?

LOCKER: Oh boy, yes. We used to have the open... we had all... where the stink came up town, you know? OK. They had huge – they looked like wine vats only they're monstrous – and they were open and they'd blow the pulp mixture in there with the acid and try to evacuate... pull the air off it. Well... we get a bump every so once in a while and we have an odor go up town. It didn't work. Now they're all encapsulated and everything. [Inaudible] When they blow it they can vacuum out all the gasses and send it back through the tower and help to regenerate new sulfuric acid by sulfide [inaudible] liquid and it's just so much better. It's so much cleaner, so much nicer.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: But that's all luck. See, a lot of times with companies, too, it takes time to... find the final solution of how to do it the best way. And then when you do you've got to find the final solution. I don't want to pay to get to that point and still make money for the people that are the stock holders.

SCHWARTZ: So did a lot of those changes happen as you worked there?

LOCKER: Oh yes.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: Yes, we made great changes there.

SCHWARTZ: Did that change the way that you understood the work that you did there?

LOCKER: Oh yes, it helped.

SCHWARTZ: It helped a lot?

LOCKER: Yes.

SCHWARTZ: Excellent. So I'm assuming that that would be a really positive thing for the community as well. [They] probably saw that as a really...

LOCKER: Oh yes, they definitely [did].

SCHWARTZ: When changes like that occurred, when jumps in technology happened... or was that something that GP really tried to go out then and tell the community about a lot so that they can say, "Oh look at these positive things that we're doing!"?

LOCKER: I don't know that they did that.

SCHWARTZ: You don't know about that?

LOCKER: I know when we went out and found that... A lot of it was word of mouth. I don't think we went out and asked a direct question: "How much did this help or how much do you think this helped?" I don't think they went out and had people write articles for them saying this is what we're doing down here. We would tell them what we're doing and we had a staff of engineers that could do that any place, any time.

SCHWARTZ: And did you find that you had your ear kind of down to the ground about thoughts about the plant around the community, or [was] it something [where] you just kind of did your job and you just kind of paid attention to what was going on with you?

LOCKER: Well, you completely stayed... had to keep your ear to the ground in the department that you're with because that's one of the things... that you're mostly familiar with in looking at. We became aware in our meetings what was going on in other areas of the plant but I stayed within my own department...

SCHWARTZ: Right.

LOCKER: ...because I had my hands full doing that.

SCHWARTZ: [Laughing] I understand that! Then what do you think were the most significant events in the plant or happening around the plant? So at the time you worked There...

LOCKER: The big changes, the biggest changes?

SCHWARTZ: Big changes or maybe even outside events like things that were happening around the time that you were working there, if they affected the plant at all or just kind of the plant would run almost in it's own little kind of bubble. I know it depends on the industry really but...

LOCKER: There was constant growth, not just within one department. There [were] changes made... a lot of them that all made a difference all together. But if you made it a change in the amount of logs you could kip in a day, instead of sending them out to a pile and going for fresh fish you would, somewhere down the line, you would speed up production, production would go up. If you could keep the effluent lower... the lower you could keep the effluent the faster you could go. So one just led to the other.

SCHWARTZ: I understand that! So would you say that – it's kind of an interesting question and you might not know – but how outside events like, you know, things like maybe the Cold War or big events in history, affected the attitudes of the people within the plant? Did things like that affect the way the plant ran? If something happened did it change production at all?

LOCKER: No.

SCHWARTZ: No, didn't think so.

LOCKER: I couldn't speak to that.

SCHWARTZ: Just curious. Do you feel environmental legislation then affected your job? We've already talked a little bit about restrictions. Is there anything else that you would like to be able to speak to about that subject?

LOCKER: I think we were very environmentally conscious of what was happening. So I think as a group we all worked on the same thing. I mean, I worked on the boat that went out and took samples, and we were diligently getting the best product for the samples that

we could. Sometimes, you know, they'd say, "Well, we want to go down ten feet, we want to go down twenty feet for bottom," and we would go down that far. [Irrelevant material omitted] You tried to be as precise as you could. I mean, we could have just filled up a bunch of bottles, took them back to the lab and say, "OK, we're done, take the day off, let's go out crabbing or something." But it didn't work that way. We went out in bad weather, good weather. That's another one you could talk to: a Mr. George Thomas.

SCHWARTZ: George Thomas?

LOCKER: Yes. He was a person within... he was a kind of an engineering technician that worked within the mill. He was the big worker on all the pollution control out in the bay area, in the boats we had. [You'd] get a good background.

SCHWARTZ: So did you say that then the better... the more efficiently the plant could work, it would be better for both the environment and the company?

LOCKER: Oh yes, very definitely.

SCHWARTZ: Excellent.

LOCKER: Well, I think that's what they finally decided also. If we can... all of a sudden we needed lignin, and then when we went into the marketplace to get rid of the lignin... Because once... they said you can't put it out in the bay... you have it back then in the mills... [so] what are you going to do with it?

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

LOCKER: Will it accumulate? We built many umbrella storage tanks all over the place to hold the thing. Well, then we said, "Well, we go to sell it, we got to do something with it." All of a sudden the feed industry opens up on the east coast and then it opens up all around the country and then it opens up on road and we'd already been into the seamen industry with the bricks harder and concrete set faster. But it still set harder, but it's still workable! You can work [inaudible]... All these things together, everything came together and all of a sudden we had to find a way to get rid of all the lignin. Then we sold the lignin at such a rate that [inaudible], then all of a sudden we ran out of lignin.

SCHWARTZ: That's such an interesting... [interrupted]

LOCKER: Then mills that were set up on ten year basis, they were still selling it but this mill is closed now so we don't have a lot of it. This mill has got different type of lignin than some of the other mills. The ones that we used to go through down south are caustic digestion and it's a different smell.

SCHWARTZ: OK. So is that because of the process or the kind...?

LOCKER: Yes.

SCHWARTZ: OK.

LOCKER: It's the process.

SCHWARTZ: It's the process.

LOCKER: Cooking acid, one you cook it on a bi-sulfite cooking acid and the other one is hydroxide type of digestion.

SCHWARTZ: And which one's ours?

LOCKER: Oh, I can't tell you that. [Laughing] I'm not that much of a chemist. I know the one that smells like cabbage is the caustic one.

SCHWARTZ: [Laughs] Caustic, cabbage, it's easy to remember. That's a very interesting development that at first it was something that's dumped and then it's sold and then suddenly you're running out of it because everyone needs it so much.

LOCKER: Well, we developed a need for it and then all of a sudden the mill says, "We're going to shut down."

SCHWARTZ: Yeah.

LOCKER: And then they have to go out then and try to find it someplace else. They're finding some of it. They're finding it in Canada. They're finding it all over the world, you know, in different places.

SCHWARTZ: So what would you say would be the best thing about working in Bellingham, particularly at this plant?

LOCKER: At that time? It was a lot smaller [of a] community when I first started and it was [inaudible], the college was smaller. But as things go, the college gets bigger, community got bigger, and now that we're in traffic jams. God, I hate to drive up and down the Guide Meridian.

SCHWARTZ: Oh, I know. I hate the Guide... [it's] tough. So is that why you kind of moved more out into the county?

LOCKER: Oh, no. I moved... my wife out there in 1962.

SCHWARTZ: Wow.

LOCKER: Just shortly after we were married... well, within five or six years.

SCHWARTZ: So that was the house that you moved in?

LOCKER: Yes. We moved out, I took her out and drove her around the country and stopped at this little farm. I said, "There is a lady across the street that wants us to buy this place real bad. She said she'd help me get a GI bill." Then got a GI bill and I [bought] a new house.

SCHWARTZ: [To] pay for college?

LOCKER: So, she went and got and poured a bunch of bleach down the little well that was on the place to try to get it past the well. And we bought a corner piece of ground, twenty-five acres [for] \$14,900.

SCHWARTZ: And whereabouts is that, out in the county?

LOCKER: It's out... you out go just out of Ferndale and it turns into Bay Road, running towards the bay. We're right at the top of the hill, valley view and Baker.

SCHWARTZ: It must be really pretty out there.

LOCKER: Oh, it's... We're going to sell it. It's too big for me now. My boys are all grown.

SCHWARTZ: Must have been good to have land that they could all romp around on.

LOCKER: Of course. A lot of good memories.

SCHWARTZ: So, what do you think the best part about working at the plant was, would you say, or did you have a favorite thing?

LOCKER: Actually all my times were favorite[s]. I enjoyed them all. I came... Management gave me the breaks. They thought I needed it and I was very pushed for time and... when they moved me to the manager of the paper board mill I said to myself, "Geez, am I really ready for this?" It was a big business, these were all new people that I hadn't worked with before, old, established workers that knew the job and knew how to handle the management guy that was in there and all that kind of stuff. And you have to earn their trust as well as they have to learn that you're not in there to be a bad guy. And if you can do that and work with them then it becomes just a fun, fun job. I really enjoyed working with the people. There were times when I butted heads with some people, had to back up sometimes and say I'm sorry but then there were times when I didn't say I was sorry.

SCHWARTZ: So, for the first most part within each job, did you generally just work with the same kind of group of people, or were there a lot of kinds?

LOCKER: Oh, there was a big cross section. There was an ethnic cross section, attitudes up and down like a yo-yo. [Name omitted] and I butted heads. There [were] people who tested you. I mean, they knew how to test you.

SCHWARTZ: What's an example of an event where you and [name omitted] might have butted heads on?

LOCKER: Well, maybe not [name omitted], but a fella he worked with in the lignin plant. This was when I was supervisor in the lignin plant south. This is where [they] took the lignin and spray dried it and dried it in powder form and bagged it up and shipped it out. He was operating the driers and he was senior then – been for around a long time and worked with them before – and I was fairly new on shift and I always thought, you know, [if] I asked somebody to do something, I'd expect them to do it. Well, we had a light that was out, above one of the little tanks... and I asked him to get a ladder and change the light bulb. [He said], “No that's the electrician's job.” [I said], “Well, come on. It's out, the electrician's at the other end of the mill, it's on swing shift, and unless you're doing something, I'd like you to do it.” [He said], “Call somebody in,” [and I said], “No, I want you to do it.” [Then he said], “It's just, if I go up in that ladder I'm going to fall off and hurt myself.” I imagine he would have stumbled against something before he went up the ladder. And he and I butted heads. We weren't very friendly talking to each other for quite awhile. But over the time it mended and we laughed about it.

SCHWARTZ: Sure, sure. How long did you work with him for?

LOCKER: Oh, I worked with him some [time]. ... I've known him ever since I was at the mill, but he started the mill as a young man laboring about the same time.

SCHWARTZ: Did you ever feel that you had to compromise beliefs for the sake of the company – you don't mind answering that kind of question? – just anything you could speak to about that kind of thing?

LOCKER: Give me an example.

SCHWARTZ: I'm not sure of an example, actually, to tell you the truth, but just something that you might have had [to do].

LOCKER: No, I never compromised myself. I'll say I never tried to compromise myself.

SCHWARTZ: Never tried to. What would you mean by that exactly?

LOCKER: I'm trying to think of a situation [in] which I would not try to compromise myself.

SCHWARTZ: So, if you talked to people about working at GP how would they respond when you said, you know, “This is what I do at this plant,” or if you ever had to tell anyone, if someone asked you?

LOCKER: I don't know, I think it's about going back to the... depends on when. If you're talking about the latter years everybody was getting to the point when they were saying, "I think I'm going to lose my job! What am I going to do Lock?" I said, "Well you're going to have to go out and find something else, I guess. Should have thought about that awhile back, I guess." Earlier on I would have told them they were good people to work for. I found a job [like] what I was asking for and I'm damn glad to get it. I had a baby and I needed help. They gave me a good job, gave me good pay, gave me good health insurance...

SCHWARTZ: Good health insurance is important. Did you feel then you were pretty comfortable throughout the rest... of your career there?

LOCKER: Oh yes. I started to work there [interrupted by waitress]... I started at \$1.92 and a half cents an hour and I thought, "That's not too bad." I was pretty ecstatic.

SCHWARTZ: And then how long did you work every day? You know, eight hours, ten hours?

LOCKER: Oh yes. I was working two jobs. I worked up at the Horseshoe Cafe from twelve until eight in the morning and then run like the dickens to get to the mill by eight.

SCHWARTZ: Wow.

LOCKER: Which they let me go a little early and [inaudible]... from the Mt. Baker Apartments, the Horseshoe, and down to the mill and then back.

SCHWARTZ: So when did you sleep?

LOCKER: When I got off at the mill. I'd go home and sleep at night for a couple free hours.

SCHWARTZ: And then when did you stop working at the Horseshoe?

LOCKER: Oh, I only lasted a year. I couldn't make it anymore.

SCHWARTZ: What did you do then?

LOCKER: Night Cashier.

SCHWARTZ: Night Cashier. So how would you like future generations to remember the work that you did?

LOCKER: I don't know.

SCHWARTZ: I mean, like your grandkids, and how would you like them to think about it?

LOCKER: Oh, just the work ethic.

SCHWARTZ: Work ethic?

LOCKER: And they have that already.

SCHWARTZ: That's good. That's a good thing to pass along. So, this is kind of a very generic question. What do you feel is your greatest lesson in life? Is there anything... an overarching lesson that you feel that has really governed your life, or something that you learned at some point? It's a very overarching question.

LOCKER: I guess, never be of the mind that you're absolutely right about anything because I found [that] at times emotion gets involved and that a lot of times if you let emotion take control of you, you're lost.

SCHWARTZ: So, is there anything that I haven't asked you about your life or about Bellingham or the plant that you'd like to add?

LOCKER: My wife said, "Tell her," to tell you that the best thing was in those years, the first years down at the mill it [was] the wives, all [the] mothers, all the wives were not working mothers. They were mothers to the children. They would come to the mill, all in cars, and wait for their husbands to come out every night, and they'd sit there and talk long before we'd get out and they'd jabber, jabber, jabber. And then she said that was the best time. She'd sit with all the wives [who] came down to pick up their husbands [and] take them home.

SCHWARTZ: Would your wife be willing to be interviewed, or one of the wives, do you think?

LOCKER: Oh, she might. Probably. I'd have to ask her. I don't think she'd mind.

SCHWARTZ: It would be another interesting perspective to get.

LOCKER: Oh yes, well, she'd give you a good perspective.

[Laughter]

SCHWARTZ: How did she feel about your work at the plant?

LOCKER: Oh, she did, it was fine, up until the point when I went on the road for a year. I was gone 220 out of 365 [days].

SCHWARTZ: Must have been hard.

LOCKER: It was, you know. It was because my kids were in the – not the rebellious age – they were at the testing age. “We’ll test Mom and see how far we [can] go.” She did the job, and we were living on a farm and we had cows and stuff and the bull would get out and she’d have to try and get the bull back in the field and she’d go out. She’d tell you about the red moo-moo. She got chased in the barn. She had one little one in the house crying and she was out [with] the bull...

SCHWARTZ: So, did you guys sell stuff from the farm as a kind of supplemental income at all, or was it just for you own...?

LOCKER: It was for the boys. We kept them in 4-H, they had their 4-H animals. Then they milked the cows that they had, then we drank the milk, of course. Raw milk. No pasteurization.

SCHWARTZ: I never did 4-H, but I did FFA so I understand. I understand farm work. I’m right there with you. Alright, excellent. Well thank you very much. I very much appreciate the interview and, yeah, thank you!

LOCKER: Well, I hope I helped you. You’d do better talking to one of the [inaudible]... Have you interviewed Perry?

SCHWARTZ: I’m sure someone has or someone will if they haven’t. So we’ll get somebody to, I’m sure.

LOCKER: I worked for him at the lignin plant and we’ve been friends for a long time. He’s a good man. He’s a good one to interview.

SCHWARTZ: I will. I’ll have to do that. Thank you. I can stop this now, I think.