

Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI)

Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Vince Westacott

Interviewer: Don Bouzek

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Location: Edmonton

I ran the mailroom at the tail end, I did all the buying of paper, I had to get all the peoples' cheques out to them from St. John's to Victoria. My phone would be ringing on Sunday mornings about 6 o'clock. Vince my cheque isn't here. Getting through Toronto airport was a real tough grind. But I learned through experience. They had old fashioned ideas at the plant, I wasn't one, I thought... They used border brokers, I didn't think very much of border brokers and I had a hell of a time getting... I had salesmen in the States that I had to send information to and one thing and another and get stuff back from them. My name is Vince Westacott. I started at the plant in 1947. April, something like that, 1947. And I worked until 1988, November, actually to the end of 1988. I worked a few months for Pocklington, he was owner of the plant at the time, as advisor or whatever. But I quite enjoyed working over those years at the plant. I got along, I think, quite well with the people. Starting back at when I started, I started in the Standard Department they called it in '4. My boss was Ray Chisholm. He was an Englishman, a real stubborn type of guy. He wasn't too well liked by his staff but we had no choice, we liked him or we didn't work. In those days there was a line up of people trying to get jobs. I was out of the army then. I got out of the army in 1945 I believe, '46, after serving with the 3rd division. I landed in France and went through with the division and wound up at Edmonton, But anyway, getting back to the plant, I ... Northeast end. I'm at 12127 - 53 Street. I lived for quite a while when I was first working at the plant in the Highlands on 64th Street and 14th Avenue. They were building new homes and I have a big family of 7 boys. They're scattered all over. My wife felt they should all go to University. They didn't quite make it, but anyway.

When I started? I was a standard checker, they called us, We used to go out into the plant and accumulate information, production sheets that the foreman and his staff would make up. The

idea of the standards department was to pay a bonus to the people that exerted or the gangs that exerted extra energy and did more than what's considered normal. This was all time studied with a stop watch, We were in a sense policemen too, because the foreman had a tendency, the more production they got, the more money their people would get and the better it looked for them as being a foreman. So we were out there and we would try and check, If they put down they did 50 calves or split 50 calves and they only did 40, we were supposed to be able to check that out.

And we weren't really I popular in the plant because we were watching them fairly close.

Anyway, I was in this job, and we would accumulate those figures and the girls would multiply the number of pigs times the time, etc, and they'd get a figure and come up with it. And we'd post the outputs daily in the departments. It was something for the fellows. They were keen to get a good output and work hard. They didn't want any slackards along the way because if one fellow wasn't pulling his weight it would pull the whole department down. So consequently, it had an evening effect. They all worked hard and it worked out quire well. Yes I worked in quite a number of departments. I checked the killing floor. I imagine I checked most of the departments, I don't remember. One department I checked over the year was the hide cellar. We would have 2 or 3 departments that we'd check at a time, or maybe even more, I forget. But quite a number.

There were about 5 checkers I guess for the plant. The hide cellar was real smelly. The first thing I would do is go down there and talk with the fellows. I hated going into a place, walking in and walking out. I'm not that type of guy. I would talk. And I learned a lot about the packing plant just through talking with the fellows. A lot of the things that they didn't like, I'd try and pass them on to the people that could fix it. That was only reasonable. A lot of those fellows would work like a dog but they wouldn't say too much to their bosses because they were afraid. But they'd talk to me. I don't know why, but they would.

There was. There was a real sense of family. Tommy Dean was the superintendent during the early times, assistant and superintendent for a while. He was a real down to earth fellow and he used to walk around and talk personally with the fellows. He just wouldn't sit in the superintendent's office all day. He would get out and mix with the people. I think that had a bear. As a matter of fact, later on when I knew more about the plant and had more influence I guess or whatever, I used to have my coffee with the men on the workers' side. I would put on a white coat and, so what, you're sitting beside somebody that's a little bloody, but you could learn what was going on in the plant, We had people come from Toronto and they'd say, Vince what are you

doing over there? And they would come and sit around and listen to the complaints and the bitches or whatever. It was a good deal. I thought that more of the top brass should, not that I was top brass, but the top brass should listen and mingle with the troupes to get the information they wanted and find out they could learn a lot. For years I sat and listened. But anyways, that's kinda getting off the track,

Can you talk about the strike in 1948?

... I imagine I'd been at the plant the best part of a year possibly, or part of a year anyway. I remember having to go out into the plant and work for Ernie Shaw in the table ready meats. He was a foreman of the Sausage Department. I was washing big stainless steel pans on a rotating brush, mechanical thing. Oh it was a tough old job, and the stuff, I didn't know how to do it really. But I learned, I did that for a couple of days and I worked at various jobs out in the plant. I don't remember having any problems crossing the line, unlike the strike in 87 or '86. But anyway, that's about all I remember about the first strike. Oh I do remember there was a lot of tension among some of the fellows. I can remember names like George Kozak, Pete Casper, and a few. Some of them were scabs. One of those people I mentioned was a scab. They were, not coming to blows, but they were working with knives and cleavers, and I would hate to think that they'd use one, but it almost came to that. We had to separate them. But anybody that wasn't a union member was frowned upon. They were outcast. I don't know the reason for not joining or being a union member, other than money, or unless he really didn't believe in the union. The union was there to help them and it had its good points. I guess it had its bad too. I think the only bad point is they had to pay union dues. Anyway, it served a purpose, a good purpose in those days. As time went on, it changed a lot, I think the union did. But in the early days it was good. It was a place to take your beefs. It was difficult for the average Joe, the average fellow I should say, to go up to his foreman and say, this isn't working well or I'm not happy about this. His foreman would slough it off and maybe it wouldn't go any further in most cases. Where with the union, they could take it to management. It would be at least thought about and it was considered and whatever. It was a good tool to help the workers, I think. Yes the union was in the plant. It was a strong union in the plant when I first started, yes it was. Over the years the union, they were after more money, with good reason I presume. I know I started at \$25 a week at Swifts. As time went on mind you, I got more and more. I think I stayed at \$25 for quite I forget how

long, maybe a year or 6 months. But at the time I joined Swifts I wasn't married. I got married a couple of years later and then of course I was more interested in money then than I was being single. It was a very interesting experience, I can tell you.

Time study work? Oh, I imagine I was in time study for 5 or 6 years in the Standards Department. Then I went out to the plant and I was out in the plant for at least 10 years, maybe more. Maybe 15, Then I went back into the office and I was involved in the mail room. As I got used to things, the manager came into my abode and said, Vince, how much you paying for those pencils, or how much you paying for this? The Purchasing department was doing all my buying for me. I wasn't really happy about it because I would order one thing and they would get me something else. There was problems, lots of problems. So I thought, to hell with this, I'll do my own buying. So I did, They said, you can't do that. I said, I'm doing it. So for years I did all my own buying. I got what I wanted, I kept the people in the plant happy. I'd order markers by 100's at a time. I'd go up to the Purchasing Department and they'd get me 10. Well 10 wouldn't even be enough for a day, people would come down and get them. It worked out real good. I did my own buying until I left the plant. I did all the air traffic there. Mind you, I shouldn't tell you what I did. I did the air traffic my way. One of our managers, Bevins, was flying to Toronto. After spending some time with his girlfriend in town, he'd go back to Toronto with his wife, or Hamilton. I wanted to get him cheaper fare rather than going down and buying a ticket, buying it in advance. Oh no, no, he wouldn't think of it. He told me, oh you buy from this person. I remember I was buying carloads of paper. They said, Vince I want you to buy from a friend of mine. A friend that he knew. He didn't say a friends of mine, but it was a friend of his. He said, give him a contract for a year. I said, I don't do business that way, I put it out for tender and they look after you better. In a couple of months if you order again, they're interested in keeping your business and you get better delivery, better attention. He said, I'm telling you. So I phoned up Pocklington's office. The only time I went over his head. There was Doug Horey and Peter Rama on the line. I said, you know, Henry Bevins wants me to buy paper from his friend and I don't think it's the right thing to do, and I'd rather do it my way and get better deals, Pocklington answered me by saying, well you don't listen to me, why the hell should you listen to him. Or something to that effect. And slammed the phone down. Cuz one other time he wanted me to do this thing and I said, well you go jail for me Peter. And he slammed the phone down. That maybe cost me \$100,000 or two. No, but anyway.

I was what they call a department clerk. I worked for the department heads, like the Beef Department would want information. They would want production and they would want to know what percentage of the pigs were loins, what was the percentage of hams, and one thing and another. We'd give figures like that. Also, freezer inventories, freezer control, everything going into the freezers we'd keep track of and record, then we'd have inventory every month and we'd have to balance come hell or high water. The amount that went in minus the amount shipped had to be the end result. It was basically a clerking job. No, I had an office and I spent 75% of my time in the office. We used slide rules in those days, and I can still use a slide rule fairly well. We had cantometers, they called them. They had rows of numbers on them for adding rather than anything else. I spent quite a number of years at that, 10 or 15, I'm not even sure. But it was a fair time, I was in the Beef Department first. The Beef Department included the carcass beef which was shipped whole, like they were just split and shipped out. And then they had the Primal Cutting Department, which was primal cuts. And the canner and cutter, which was bulls and cows they cut up for hamburger or whatever. Then there was the SCR, Special Cutting Room, they would do special cutting for various cafes that wanted maybe more or less bones left on the rib. It was special cutting room, basically means what it says. I worked in the Beef Room for a number of years, then I went down to the Pork Department and worked there a number of years. Incidentally, during this time I was in the plant, we used to have pigeon shoots. Tommy Dane, assistant superintendent or : possibly the superintendent at the time, I forget, and Frank Marsden was our yard foreman, Vince Westacott and our controller... I forget offhand. They'd provide shotgun shells and we'd take our shotguns into the plant on Saturdays, Saturday morning and we'd fire hundreds of rounds and shoot hundreds of pigeons. Right inside, actually I took; my shotgun up to the 6" floor and fired out the window onto the roof. The superintendent, Tommy Dane, he would punch holes through everything. He was quite a character, but he was a good guy. I imagine I was in there possibly a dozen times. The yard foreman would bring in part of his crew, Frank Marsden, he's still alive too, to scare the pigeons around. There was a lot of banging. We got permission of course from the police department. That wouldn't happen today I'm sure. It worked out fine, we had a lot of fun. At the time, they had an ice house. They used to cut ice at the plant and they had a pond and they'd cut this ice, and Frank Marsden was in charge of that. They'd pull out the ice with horses. Pope Johnson was the foreman in charge of the fish and ice department. They used to have fish there. They had a big ice house and they would use ice for

cooling in box cars and also in trucks. They'd use ice before they had these thermal king units to cool, they'd use ice to keep the meat cool going across Canada and whatever, or in trucks, ice would be their only way to cool it.

Oh the beef system. Actually, Len Richards would go out into the plant and time people cutting up portions of the animal. He would make an average of the times he, with a stopwatch, he would record an average of the time that it took to trim a loin or to do various portions of the cutting. He would say, this is the standard. A normal man, everything being equal, he should be able to do so many an hour, He should do 3 an hour, 2 an hour or whatever. If he did more than that, he would be given a bonus. They had a mean average where they would give nothing was a 60. I'm not exactly sure how this went. But a 70, he would give 10 points per day. If it was a 70 all day, like if it came out the end result was they got a 70, each person in the gang would get 10 points. If they got 100 points it was one hour's work. Some days they'd make 80s and 90s. So they would get possibly 35 or so points for a day. They'd get several hours extra pay at the end of each week. They were accumulated on a weekly basis. It was quite an incentive for them to work. That stayed in place for years and years. Maybe a few years before I retired it ceased to exist. But it was in place I think until Gainers took over. When Gainers took over there was lots of shivering and shaking among the office staff, because a lot of the fellows figured there were duplication of jobs. We had a controller. I'm jumping quite a bit. But anyway, we had a controller from Gainers came over, he was the boss, head boy. His name was Ivor Richardson. I got along fine with him. We'd go up for meetings and they'd say, Vince, you should not disagree with him. I'd say, well I'm not going to say white if it's black. So he'd ask me to stay after the meetings and I'd explain to him. So anyway I never have been one to just go along just because everybody else went along. I felt that I'd better do what I feel like doing or I wouldn't feel good about it. So we had some real do's, Richardson and I. I would listen to him but a few times I was right, quite a few times. He would thank me. He said, you know Vince, I was thinking of trading you in for people we had a Gainers. But he said, I've got lots of those other people there that say yes to everything I say. I'll get rid of them and keep you. That's basically what he did. He got rid of some of them. But he appreciated the fact I guess that I was being honest with myself. Just because he said something, I didn't say yes, yes, yes. I've never been that way.

Over the years, okay. In the early days, the superintendent of the plant was god almighty almost. He was responsible for production. He was the fellow that they looked up to him. Especially

fellows like Tommy Dane, he was well liked. And the manager of the plant of course reported I presume to Chicago, which was our head office. It was a worldwide organization. We did business in England and Denmark and all over. Through Chicago. Our head office for the Canadian operation was Toronto. Toronto plus Edmonton sent our results to Chicago and anything we didn't know whether we should or whether we shouldn't, Toronto and possibly Chicago made the final decision. As time went on, Chicago got out of the business and it became Toronto was our head office. There was a bit of a change then. Things a little boggier maybe. But it just didn't run quite as smooth. Then as time went on, the management basically stayed. We had a superintendent, they changed from time to time mind you over the years, and the same with the managers. The managers, I can think back, Will Rogers and Hammer and they were all real good guys. They had to work hard, they had jobs to do. Then when Pocklington bought it, that's a big jump mind you, things changed quite a bit because he had brought Gainers and Swifts together as one. Gainers was more or less a meat market and they weren't used to dealing worldwide and weren't as big as we were. Their ideas were fine for just a small business but not for a large one. Pocklington had the top brass was from Gainers. Matter of fact, the superintendent was Harry Bane. A real good guy, I met him for coffee a few days ago. But he wasn't the man for the job at Swifts. So that all got straightened out as time went on. They just found that it wasn't working out well with just the Gainers people at the top, so they switched around. In the end result, a lot of the Swifts people gained control and it went smoother. And the plant, before I left I picked up the end results of the profit/loss statements since the plant opened till the end, and it made money all the time, except maybe the year that Pocklington took over, things were a little different, It was making money but it was going out to quite a number of his numbered accounts etc. He was buying an aircraft when I was there, an Israeli jet. The teletype machine would get sheets of paper 8-10 feet long describing this thing. I remember Pat, the girl on teletype said, Vince look at these. But anyway, it was viable. And we had a \$2 million a day cash flow at the plant when I retired, and an additional \$250,000 a day from our US sales people. We had actually 2 salesmen in the States and they did real well. That was in eastern or should I say western Canada, western USA, Washington and California. They basically took the west and that was it.

The lines speed up? Oh, the killing rate was determined, that was just like putting your foot on the accelerator. If they killed more hogs or more cattle, the people would have to do more. And

they could only do so much. Mind you, they had a couple of shifts on, I believe, later on there. Consequently they'd have to either have more personnel working or overtime. There was lots of overtime too. The plant people weren't too keen on. or overtime. That's hard work. So they'd hire more people and longer hours, possibly shift work too, Some shift work. Mind you, they couldn't work 24 hours a day, because they had to clean the plant up on a daily basis. They had government inspectors wandering through, and cleanliness handling meat was a very important factor. I think a lot of attention was paid to the fact that the plant had to be kept real clean. Our voucher department wrote cheques anything that came into the plant that we bought, we wrote cheques for. That would include, at the later stages the Toronto end of it closed down, so that Edmonton was doing all the cheque writing for Canada. We used to have cheques, lots of them. Matter of fact, there was a problem with a cheque. They wanted me at one time, I don't know if this should go on that machine or not, but I was told to hold back the cheques, run them through the postage meter then hold them back, to make it look like the post office wasn't delivering them. This was millions of dollars, if I held them for any length of time: That would be to pay the suppliers, yeah. The plant would look like it was making more money if you held all the cheques back. I wouldn't do it, but it was suggested. That: was an interesting day, I can tell you. Especially when I

Said no. But it was a very good place to work. Actually I got along with most of the people. Although, maybe a few weeks before I retired, I had numerous people above me, one person told me what to do. But very rarely did they interfere with what I was doing. But one time I was called into his office and he said, Vince you can't get along with anybody. I've had more complaints. I said, well I don't think that's right, but if you say so I'll try and get along with everybody. I still don't know who I didn't get along with. But it wasn't very long after when I retired they handed me this pin and said, Vince, or I presume I was easy to get along with or they wouldn't have given me a union pin, made me an honorary member of their union. Maybe they're happy to get rid of me, I don't know. Looking back over the years, even people, I can think of a person who was : -punching out or he was going and getting another person to punch out for him. So I said to this individual, now listen, you punch out on your own. If you want to go early tell me and I'll fix it up. But I said, don't punch out early and then get some other guy who's going to get into trouble for it to punch your card as they walk by this corridor. Oh yeah, he wouldn't do it no more. The next day he did it. So I said, I told him I was going to tell his

foreman. So I said to him, his name was Tony, I said Tony, I'm going to, so I did. Johnny Clingspoon was his foreman, told him. They got after him and he was sent home for quite a few days or something happened. But I was always, I never, I always warned them in advance if I was doing anything to jeopardize their pay. Which I think is the only way to do it. Yes, yes, that's right. I don't know too much about in the late 80s, but in the 70s and '60s that's the way it was. The union was thought of quite highly. Maybe 98% or more of the people working there were union members. It was well backed by the rank and file. The plant top management appreciated the fact that the employees had a union and there was very little conflict. If they had problems, Johnny Ewasiw or some other person involved, there would be a meeting and they would try to straighten it out. I imagine 99% of the cases it was straightened out to the complainant's happiness.

Yes. In the early days yes. From within the plant. They came up through the ranks, right up through to the manager. Jack Hammer I think at one time ran around as a mail boy years and years ago. And I know young fellows that I had working for me, one of them took over manager or controller in Regina. WE had a branch house there. If you had any ability at all and were willing to work, you were placed accordingly. They took care of their employees. Later, yeah, it was a little different. Later on they brought in managers from eastern Canada that I don't think knew too much about the industry. WE had a fellow, Bolains, I'm sure this tape will have Bolains' name on it more than once. Maybe I was one of the few that got along good with him. Because if he said something, he meant it. He had a son was a salesperson there, sold in Washington and the States and I got along with him. He was a Jewish fellow and I thought he was a down-to-earth person. If he said, don't do that, and you did it, most likely you'd be out the gate. He was just that type of fellow. He wasn't at all underhanded. He had rules and he'd let you know what was going on. One time he had Gretzky hockey sticks in his office. He always kept his office locked. My office was the old manager's office at the time. They built on a new section, real posh corporate office. This was after Pocklington took over. His son was in town, John was his name, John Bolains, and his dad had all these hockey sticks in his office. So John said, Vince you want a hockey stick? I said, sure I do. So he and I were going down, and I could pretty well get keys for anything. We were going into his office and his dad came back, forgot something, and he caught us getting in. Boy he was mad. He said, you guys should know better than that. Anyway, I didn't get a hockey stick, the end result. And I felt real sheepish. Cuz I said,

if I wanted a hockey stick the only way to do it was to ask him. But his son, big tall guy, said, c'mon down Vince and I'll get you a hockey stick. All we got was hell for the deal. Live and learn, eh?

Yes there was. Mind you, most of my social life was taken up by 7 boys, I had a big family. Also I was involved in the army, I was in the militia. In the '60s I had a cadet corps in town. They had bowling competitions. They had a bowling competition years ago, this would be in the '40s I guess, and I wasn't a very good bowler. It was 5 pin. It

was down on 101st, just south of Jasper, Time to bowl for turkeys, I had 200 and something, I won a turkey. Everybody thought no way: But I did. I bowled way above my head when there was something at stake. We used to have annual Xmas do's, They were quite nice. Then they started getting a bit rough. People drinking a little too much so we kind of slacked off on them. Then they had an annual picnic was introduced, I'm not sure when, but possibly in the '70s. The annual picnics were nice. They were real good. I went to those. Even after I retired, I went to one I believe.

During the strike, it was quite a deal. Because I figured the union guys were okay, but I didn't get really involved in the money, I was dealing with personalities. So the fellows said to me, Vince don't ride the bus. They were going to tip it over or something, so I didn't. I didn't want to take my car in to work, because they'd scratch it. Not the Gainers people or the Swifts people, but the people that were sympathizing with them from out of town or other members of various unions, They told me, Vince don't take your car in, because we can't control everybody. So I used to take my bike. I'd ride up and say good morning. First I'd stop at the south gate. There were 2 policemen sitting in a police car sleeping, morning after morning, and I'd wake them with a loud rap on the window. I said, are you guys getting paid? I'm sure those guys remember it. Then I'd ride around to the west gate, the main gate, and the union guys, my friends, would hold my bike and I'd take off my pant clips and I'd say hi and speak to them. Pocklington had 2 cameras on the roof, filming everything. One morning, and he would be in the plant. He had a hard time coming in and out. So he stayed there most of the time, and a lot of the top brass stayed right in the plant. But I was one~ of the very few that crossed the gate every day. I could have been the only one, I'm not sure, but very few people went in and out., So anyway, one morning they called me into the corporate office, Peter and his crew. Vince, what did they do. Did they hit you, did they hurt you? I responded by saying, no they said good morning to me, that's more than you people have

done. I turned and walked out. I thought, geez, I'm in trouble now. But that's the way I felt so I said it. Some of the fellows didn't like that response, I found out later. Then one of the fellows there we had was Pocklington's right hand man, a red headed guy named Doug. He wanted my office so he could watch the plant people better, because I looked right out the main gate. I said, okay I'll take yours in the corporate office. Oh no, you can't have mine. Well, I said, you get the hell out of mine. That's fair enough. I didn't like the guy anyway. But during the strike, it was lots of work. I didn't actually work in the plant or do anything. I was involved with getting things into the plant if possible. I had a courier service, Mercury Messenger or something, that I hired. They got through, got things through into the plant. - That's mail and documents. But it pretty well stopped things cold. They hired a bunch of, we had 90% of the people working at the plant were good Ukrainians who knew how to work. They brought in some small Asians who just couldn't do the job. It was just for look. Pocklington brought in some Vietnamese and various. The reason they were brought in was just to show the union, this is my opinion mind you and anything I say is my opinion, just to get the goat of the guys that are out on the line. He brought them in for a while in buses but they had an awful time getting them in. It wasn't successful at all. And the end result was there was very little production turned out, if any. They would possibly clean the floors, but they didn't know how to use knives a lot of them. It was a lost cause. Once the strike was over, it was back to normal in no time flat. People came back in, As they were promised, Pocklington, I use the term Pocklington cut he's well known and he's on kind of a: downward cycle right now. But anyway, he made big promises one day and wouldn't keep them the next. That's my understanding. I know he did have the plant out behind the main office building talking to them and telling them how great things were and how great he was going to be to them, and then back down and went the opposite way. So the people had, this was just prior to the strike, they had reason. They wouldn't have struck if they didn't have any problems, I think. But it was a very good place to work, I found, and I got along, well I can't think of anybody that I didn't get along with there at the plant. Pocklington had a civil engineer working there, Earl Horton. Pocklington had him as a civil engineer. He was going to build a plant south of Calgary, another plant, and Earl was working on that. Then later on Pocklington decided he wasn't. Earl was a good Conservative or Liberal, one of the two, I think possibly a Liberal, no Conservative. He was a Conservative, now that think of it. Anyway; he got let go because Pocklington decided not to. When the government took over things really started to

happen, Most of the departments got a new fellow in charge. Like for instance, Ed Campbell had been in charge of the Transportation Dept. for years and years. Ed was a real good guy. He knew a truck from a bus and he knew something about the business. After I retired the government took over. There was another fellow sitting in Ed's office. Ed was in there too. I said, who's he? Oh he's my boss, he's the new government appointee. I guess I embarrassed Ed a bit but I said, the other fellow was there too, I said, does he know anything Ed? Ed blushed and walked out of the office. He said, Vince he doesn't know a truck from a school bus. And they paid them all \$100,000 or something a year. But the government has lots of money, my money too, damn it. Who came back was Earl Horton. This is getting real personal. I can see I'm gonna lose money here. Earl was sitting doing nothing in his trailer at the back, he was an engineer. I said, how come you're back? He didn't say too much. I said, well heck, I've got a civil engineer, one of my sons, maybe he should help you. Earl said, Vince. Basically he didn't have anything to do. He said it in a nice way. But he was a good conservative and he was working. The government was paying him. He worked there for I don't know how long, as long as the government had it I guess. Some of this we might have to take out. Some of these people, if they saw it, it's the truth mind you. But it would hurt them. I didn't feel comfortable at all. I didn't feel too comfortable when Gainers took over, and I felt less comfortable when Pocklington took over. Because there were holes in the loading dock we didn't have money to repair. And he was taking out lots of money every month out of the plate. Our controller at the time was Italian, I forget the name. Namby pamby kind of guy. I guess you don't have any choice. The boss Pocklington says do this, you do that. Most people would. I felt that if you have a job to do, you should at least tell the boss that you don't agree with him if he's on the wrong track. I didn't feel at all out of line doing that. But anyway that's the way it worked. I did my best there and I enjoyed my years at the plant.

I can think of a lot of the fellows down through the years. Oh incidentally, we have a seniors club, I should mention that. Swifts have a, oh years and years ago, about 15, 20 years ago, they started a group at Swifts. Circle S Club. Where all the retirees were welcome to have a luncheon. We held it at the Masonic Hall on about 118th Ave & 55th St. It worked out real good. We used to meet the second Thursday of each month. We'd have soup and sandwich there, we'd make our own soup and sandwiches. We had numerous people go through. As a matter of fact a lot of the good ones are dead, that were hard workers. Then came along a time, I was involved a bit, then

one of the fellows had a stroke, the chairman or head of it. They said, Vince would you mind taking over? I said, I'd rather not. They phoned back and I said, well okay I will but on one condition, that I'll make quite a few changes. They said, fine, fine. Once they get you in, it's easy to agree to anything, But anyway, right away I got a new hall, a real nice hall. Not that the Masonic Hall wasn't good, but for the same price I went up and got the Ballwin Hall, which is nice parking: You can put a couple hundred cars there rather than parking on the street. In the winter time the fellows had a hard time getting out of their cars with snow banked up and one thing and another. Everybody seems quite happy with it. We have, as a kind of president or whatever, I think I do my share of the work. We used to buy our desserts and now I have the women make cakes. When I was involved with it, I got swifts or Gainers to donate. The other fellows said, oh no, we don't want to take anything. I said why not? These fellows have worked 40 years, 100s of years accumulated service in that hall, they can give us something. I went up to the plant and I knew who to see, give me anything I wanted. I'd get 100 lbs. of turkeys and hams and anything at Xmas time, I didn't overdo it, but I got...