

**Narrator:** Tom Hamilton (TH)

**Company Affiliations:** United Grain Growers (UGG), Agricore United, United Steelworkers

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**Summary:** In his first interview, lifelong grain handler and United Steelworkers union president Tom Hamilton discusses his grain handling career in Thunder Bay. He begins by discussing his first interaction with grain elevators: working for one day at UGG A to be put on the elevator hockey league roster. He then describes hiring on at UGG fulltime, starting work in the car shed on the boxcar dumpers. He recounts his impression of the elevators as dusty and dangerous places, and he shares stories of workplace accidents, fatalities, grain theft, and other shenanigans that management turned a blind eye to. Hamilton then describes the differences between UGG A and UGG M, including differences in work culture, physical structures, and equipment. He discusses the closure of UGG M after UGG's amalgamation with Agricore as well as other changes, like the implementation of food-grade cleaning standards. He recounts the troubled introduction of women into the Canadian Grain Commission workforce, the lawsuits for harassment and inappropriate conduct, and the changes to workplace conduct policies. Other topics discussed include occasional collusion between grain elevator companies and the CGC, alcohol and drug use in the elevators, UGG's program of shipping niche grains, and stories of altercations between coworkers.

**Keywords:** United Grain Growers (UGG); Terminal grain elevators—Thunder Bay; Grain handlers; Car shed; Railcar unloading; Boxcar dumpers; Grain dust; Health & safety; Alcohol and drug abuse; Workplace fatalities; Workplace accidents; Grain elevators—Equipment and supplies; Grain blending; Ship loading; Grain varieties; Amalgamation; Agricore United; Women in the workplace; Workplace harassment; UGG Elevator A; UGG Elevator M; MPE Pool 1; Labour unions

Time, Speaker, Narrative
NP: It is June 17, 2014, and the interview is taking place at my apartment in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and I will have our interviewee for today introduce himself and tell us a little bit about his connection with the grain trade.

TH: Tom Hamilton and I worked in the grain trade as an employee at the various companies and the union from 1978 until 2011—34 years.

NP: So young. So you started our really early?

TH: No, I started about five years later than a lot of the other guys. A lot of them started at 18. I started at 23.

NP: Were you born in Thunder Bay?

TH: No, I am not from Thunder Bay.

NP: Where did you grow up?

TH: In various places but in Madawaska, White River.

NP: No places with elevators?

TH: No, I had no interest in elevators at all, at any time.

NP: What was your first experience with grain elevators?

TH: I knew people who worked down there, and it just happened to be that I was an electrical apprentice, and I found that the fellow who I was working for had never registered me as an apprentice. So it was a bit of wasted time in my career. He was basically paying me 40 percent of the journeyman rate and telling me I was an apprentice, but he should have been paying me a full labourer's rate. I quit and just went down to the elevators to get some steady money and ended up there for 34 years.

NP: How did you end up in Thunder Bay?

TH: We moved up from White River for high school. There was no high school unless you travelled for 50 or 60 miles. So you couldn't do any extracurricular activities.

NP: Did you have any experiences with the elevators as a high school kid?

TH: No, never toured them. I did play hockey for the UGG [United Grain Growers], McCabe's. So they hired me on for one day, so my name would be on the payroll. After I was there for three or four hours, they sent me away. Then I was legally able to play for the hockey team.

NP: Was this a usual procedure?

TH: They did it with a couple of us who came out of hockey or fairly good hockey players. They would sign us up and make us eligible. We appeared on a payroll list but never got paid anything, but it was just a technicality.

NP: The league was pretty competitive?

TH: Oh yes. It was a very good league, the elevator hockey league. It is still around in different forms.

NP: Who is it?

TH: A different name.

NP: Who were some of the people playing at the time you started?

TH: Jack Malcolm, Danny Edmunds, Joe Kolic, Chuck King, Walter Pressinger, and Traer, I think, Chesterman, Antoniak—all kinds of very good players.

NP: We had one person that we interviewed talk about the hockey team, which I guess started long before you started working. He was commenting on how he quit the league because people like you were being brought in. It was being competitive, and he had been injured.

TH: It was a very rough, very competitive league. It was fun to play in, but a lot of us had come from that type of hockey and played up to the junior level and stuff like that. It was a very good league. A lot of guys went on to play with the Twins and things like that afterwards. It was an intermediate, and for some of us it was intermediate from junior to something else. Then there were pros that came back, and there were lots of good players. There was lots of that stuff you were talking about. I guess fake players because I was. It would be 1973, five years before I started working at the elevators, and I was listed as an employee who could play.

NP: Was there one team better than the other or was it highly competitive?

TH: No, both sides were excellent. UGG was excellent. Pool 1 had a very good team, and Sask Pool 4 had a very good team. A lot of times it was us and Pool 7. Then we always went to tournaments, excellent tournaments. Good teams in Red Rock and Nipigon and people like Alex Dampier and Pierre Pelletier. We would pick up players from around the league—lots of fun.

NP: How long did you play for the league?

TH: Until I moved to Calgary in 1976, and then I played again when I came back, but too short a period of time.

NP: You were around a lot of elevator workers, which made you somewhat familiar with the kind of work that was done?

TH: No. We didn't even speak about the elevators. We just played hockey and that is what we did and talked about that stuff. In fact, I can't remember any conversation other than that day when I was at the elevator pretending to be hired where the elevators even came up.

NP: The time that you decided to work at an elevator in order to make some money, was it difficult for you to choose where to go and apply?

TH: No. I had friends that worked at UGG, both at McCabe's and at the one on the waterfront. The father of one of my hockey playing partners was Bob Antoniak, who was the superintendent at UGG, and Ray Cousineau, who was another superintendent—at that time he might have been foreman—knew a lot of the people who I knew who worked at the plant. So, he was actually the guy who hired me. Bob Antoniak kept me on. That was in August 1978.

NP: Did UGG just have one plant at that time?

TH: No there were McCabe's and UGG A at that time.

NP: Which one did you work with, or when you were hired on you floated between the two?

TH: Float between the two, but initially my main house was A House.

NP: Describe your first day on the job. Do you remember?

TH: The first day on the job, they had us training because they had hired so many people. The thought was that Ray had hired a bunch of people because if you didn't, when Antionak came back from holidays, he would hire the people that Ray wanted his people in there. So we had double crews, and I started on day shift up on the distributing floor, and that would never happen because you would start on what we called the "shit gang" the sweeping crew. If you were lucky, you were in the car shed. But I started inside training on what we called the spouts on the distributing floor.

NP: How do you think you rated leap-frogging the system?

TH: There are all kinds of people who were leap-frogging the system. There were 20 of us hired in the same day, I think.

NP: They couldn't all be sweeping?

TH: No. they couldn't all be sweeping. It was a good idea to train them. Of course, in those days there was a lot more training going on, but when Antoniak came back that all ended, and we went back to our proper positions until we earned our way inside.

NP: What were your initial impressions of the elevators themselves?

TH: They were big, confusing. They were very dirty and dusty. I had not worked in dust conditions before. It was a hard time getting used to the dust, but after a while you get used to it very quickly unless you were allergic, which I wasn't.

NP: What were the operations like? Let's go back to when you got demoted back to where you should have started, what were the conditions like? The boxcars were starting to be replaced or still in use?

TH: We had one hopper track out of six at A House. The rest of them were all boxcars, so there were three receivers that were boxcars, and then there was an extra track on the far end of the shed that you could do full tankers. It was all boxcars. My job there was mainly on the dumpers. I would stand inside the dumpers, and the door breaker would come down, and I would be pulling material out as the grain was coming in to make sure it didn't get caught up in the grating going down into the hopper. They liked for us to wait till the end of the car, but we liked to ride the dumper as it went back and forth while the grain was going, so we could grab the stuff that was coming rather than climbing down and cleaning it out later.

NP: Describe this dumper operation?

TH: A whole part of the floor and track was separate from the rest of the floor and track. It was on a big semi-circular pivot or gear. It would literally tip up to 45 degrees with the boxcar clamped onto it. Depending on what way you tipped to the right or to the left an arm would come in and direct the flow of the grain out of the car into the grating or the hopper.

NP: Where exactly would you be standing?

TH: I would be standing inside starting off level. They would break the car door. The grain would start to come out, and they would let that run down for a while, and they would insert the arm in, and it would tip, and I would tip with it for the 45 degrees on one side and the 45 degrees on the other side. We would usually do about seven tips to get the 40 to 60 tonnes of grain out of there.

NP: Almost like a teeter-totter?

TH: Yes, just like a teeter-totter.

NP: You were in the dumper and not in the car?

TH: The fellow who was running the dumper actually stayed stable. I was on the axis of the dumper, so I moved with it, free of the dumper operator so the car and myself or anyone else who was there moved with the car.

NP: You said you liked to work as the grain was flowing because then it meant that you would not have to do so much cleaning out of the car once it was finished.

TH: And less chance of it plugging up because in those days you had all kinds of paper linings and things like that. Wood wasn't too bad, but it was mainly the paper linings and plastic linings that would come up and clog it all up and you would have to go in and clear it out anyways.

NP: What would you use to assist with the flow?

TH: Sometimes a poking stick. Generally, we would go in with our hands and grab the stuff and pull it out and after, if something got through, we would use a long like a pipe pole, 20 feet long, and stab the debris and bring it up. It was mainly handwork.

NP: A lot less physical than having to shovel with the cable shovels?

TH: Yes. At McCabe's you still shovelled, but we didn't use the cable shovels, any of us. They had switched over by that time to the electric bobcats. When I worked there were no augers or cable shovels that were in use regularly, except for in emergencies at either house. You were either using a bobcat. Sometimes you had to go in and sweep out stuff, but there were no cable shovels. They were still around the waterfront of course, but just not at our place.

NP: You said that the elevators were big and dusty and that was before the latest round of--.

TH: McCabe's had no air in the annex, and there was no floor in the annex. It was all open bins. So any grain coming in, it just billowed around in the annex. You couldn't see from me to you. You couldn't see three feet.

NP: In spite of the conditions, was it a relatively safe place to work?

TH: No, no. It wasn't safe, but that came later on. We struggled for a long time to get the place to be safe. There was a lot of drinking going on. There was a lot of very uncareful work just being done the way we always did it.

NP: What would be some of the common injuries that would occur?

TH: Actually, there were very few injuries. One of your previous interviewees got crushed on a boxcar. He was on a ladder, and he went in and hit part of the dumper. I believe that is what happened. You probably remember him describing the accident, Rick Mandrell.

NP: No, that was one of Dr. Epp's interviews.

TH: Okay. He got his leg shattered. And every now and then a cable would break. Of course, there was back injuries all the time. But a lot of injuries were not reported in those days. You just went on and worked. There were cuts and stuff like that, but very few serious injuries. There were more murders and suicides than there were serious injuries.

NP: Murders and suicides?

TH: We had one murder and about five suicides.

NP: What happened with the murder?

TH: The murder was an issue with some money being owed, and the person who the money was owed to be also one of our employees who came into the elevator, threatened one fellow, and the next day went out to the fellow's house and threatened him again, and the fellow shot him through the door. He was judged not guilty by reason of self defense.

NP: Interesting.

TH: We had another fellow come in—it would never ever been handled the same way—but he came in carrying a gun into the plant. He had some family troubles. Everyone saw him carry the gun in—well not everyone but management and other employees—but that wasn't necessarily unusual in itself because we had guns in the plant to shoot ducks and geese. People used to shoot other birds and vermin, and things like that. Sometimes at midnights, we had duck supper, or goose supper. So the gun wasn't unusual but circumstances around it. This fellow was never one of those people who did that stuff. At the end of the day, he took the gun with him and one of the foremen, who currently still works, saw him as he was coming in for night shift, and the foreman did a double take, and the guy went home and shot himself in front of his family. We believe the intention was that he was going to do something in the plant.

NP: Was he on bad terms with other people?

TH: He was under an awful lot of pressure at work. We didn't know all about it until afterwards. Some people did, but it wasn't general knowledge, I think. He was under a lot of pressure from the foreman. He was one of the head guys in the car shed with production stuff, eh? He had other family issues, which we were not privy to. But it became obvious later but too late.

NP: The suicides not work-related I would assume but just people--.

TH: Work related in the way that there was a lot of drinking that went on in those days. We always called it later on, and it became to be known across the waterfront as enabling situation. We had some pretty serious alcoholics in the plant. Two of the suicides were probably directly caused by drinking issues and alcohol issues over the years, 20 years down the road.

NP: And the fact that starting to insist that you no longer drink, is that what--.



TH: It was pretty well cleared up by the end of the 1980s, except for a couple of plants where you had some committed people and management people included. Where there were management people involved, there was also more likelihood to turn a blind eye to some of the goings on in the workplace.

NP: Yes, like management that smokes and enforcing non-smoking?

TH: Yes, that type of thing. Management that drank, and so they didn't mind if the other people did as well.

NP: Over the time that you were there, and you said 33 years, the drinking issue really changed around, and what do you think happened?

TH: Yes, there was a big change that we noticed at one of the plants after one of their fellows, after a night, was found floating in the slip, and that would have been Sask Wheat Pool. Ours, it started to change when they actually started putting management people on the off shifts. There were never any management people from 4:00 to 12:00 or midnights. So, you would be pretty well on your own, so the work would get done but not in the way that the work gets done now. There is much more emphasis on efficiency and production. In those days, you had to get certain things done to allow the operations of day shift to continue—like make room on the cleaner deck, for example, and make sure the machines could run that clean the by-products. There was never any dumper going on nights. There was on 4:00 to 12:00 but not on midnights.

NP: Why would that be, just a question of—?

TH: To use that shift to get everything ready for the next two. So, if you had extra cleaning to be done to clear out your ship--. Cleaning could never keep up with the dumping speed in those days in most plants that I was involved with, McCabe's and UGG, nothing went to the annex until it was cleaned. So you always have shippable product in the annex. There were a few exceptions but not much. Everything went to the deck. So, if the deck didn't clean it fast enough, you had backups on your dumping. The way they rated everything was cars per shift. That was how you made your money. The foremen were rated on that and judged against each other on the basis of that and things like that. We would have certain things we would have to do on nights to make sure that conditions were optimal for dumping the next day. That was done, but the meantime there was a lot of free time where you had all kinds of opportunities.

NP: Drinking, given your age, were drugs also an issue?

TH: Oh yes, not as much as drinking but all those things go together. The age of the people involved and the habits of the culture, the youth culture, and even some of the old guys. We called one of the old guys Goldmine, and he was probably in his--. It was hard for us to tell because the generation before us looked so much older than we did. We would look at pictures and see 45-year-old people who looked like they are in their high fifties or early sixties. This guy might have only been in his forties, and we thought of him being close to retirement or even death! He somehow got a taste for what used to be called Columbian Gold, and you would hear him say with his accent, "Where's my Columbian?" Someone would provide him with this stuff. But who knows. He was from Europe, which is a different culture over there. They may have had more access over there. I don't know. He was quite happy, and he was one of the few older guys there.

NP: Were there pushers on the job?

TH: Oh yes. I remember in the inspection office, the head inspector came in one day and there was a fellow there cutting up. I can't remember if it was both his grass and his cocaine or what. They had very accurate scales there. So he was able to use the inspector's scales, which he was very familiar with and go and measure it all up and bag it all up! The foreman never saw him doing it, but the inspector certainly didn't appreciate his equipment being used.

NP: Anything they could do about it, or just again turned a blind eye?

TH: I don't think he was doing it again. He had been doing it for quite some time. He may have just stolen the piece of equipment and done it at home from then on. There was lots of that going on.

NP: Was theft a problem? What could you steal from an elevator?

TH: People stole things like welding equipment. I remember going out the door—a big welding machine—[inaudible] on a trailer. Lots of conduit and pipe and a whole bin of oats—not one of the biggest bins, but a medium-size bin. But I forget how many tankers that held. I think it held four tankers. When they went to ship, it was gone. It was at the very back of the elevator. They opened it, and over the period of time, it was there. They had taken it out the back. There were trucks coming right up to the back of the UGG elevator. I don't know if the bin was full, but the oats all disappeared.

You would see trucks going out steady. There were people who worked on the tracks all the time and they would have a system going with the dumper operator. So he would leave a certain amount in because you could leave up to a dust line and the government would check the dust line in the cars. So the grain had to be at least down to there and that meant there was always

something left. They would try and leave a little extra in the cars and send it down and these people would all bag it all up down on the tracks. Some people made very good money in bagging and selling grain, for years and years.

NP: Yes, I interviewed one fellow who was on the P&H land area and his family, that was their second business.

TH: Lucrative business.

NP: Everybody knew it was going on.

TH: Every plant had them. Every now and then there would be some effort to chase them away, but that went on for my first 12 years at least. That was part of it. You know about the houses that were built from wood from the elevators? Some of those boxcars had beautiful hardwood inside them. It didn't take very long for a big crew to go in and strip all that beautiful wood out of the boxcars, before the railways had a chance to take them all away.

NP: Did any elevator employees moon light as part of these--?

TH: Yes. Like I was telling you, the one guy who had the connection with one of the main people who bagged grain. He was a dumper operator, so he was able to make sure that he would leave a certain amount in the cars.

NP: And get a kickback or--.

TH: Yes, they had a partnership and probably paid him with cases of beer or something like that.

NP: But more interesting is how they could empty a whole bin and people saw trucks coming and going like who would have overseen that operation?

TH: One example later on, we were changing over McCabe's to handle malting barley. One particular season, and we happened to have McCabe's full of sunflower seeds. You couldn't have any sunflower-seed contamination in malting barley at all, none. So, their idea was to get all the sunflower seeds out completely. Nothing on the floor and nothing in the bins. So a number of boats came, and we were shipping them. I was on midnights I guess on one of the last ones—had to be the last one—and there were spills in the basements. There were always spills from the seeds.

We were cleaning that stuff up, and I think by the end of the next day, they had to have all the seeds out. Then they were going to be bringing the barley in. The boat had to be inspected by the malting people who would come in and make sure it was acceptable. One of the things was that the sunflower seeds had to be out. That night there were the bags that the trimmers used for making partitions, those bushel bags, and we had probably, along with the grain trimmers and everyone else, and I can't remember how many hundreds of bags of sunflower seeds went out. Everything was cleaned and went out in bags in people's trucks. In Current River, there were at least three places where bags were stacked ten high and four deep and distributed around to people or sold sometimes for \$10 a bag. The stuff I had was given away to people.

I remember the one foreman looking out the window on the morning—it was light by then—and seeing one fellow's truck going by. It was just loaded down with the bags. We had a foreman on that night with us that time, who was well aware of it and the whole deal, and he agreed with all that stuff. Then the foreman on day shift looked out and he said, "Where does he think he is going with that?" We said, "That was what we were told to do. Clear out all the sunflower seeds. Get it out. None in the plant." He said, "I don't know about that." That was the last truck that went out was that one. It was just laden. The people were driving back and forth all night.

NP: Was anyone ever disciplined for that? Did they ever fire people?

TH: For theft?

NP: Yes.

TH: That culture was changing in the early to mid 1980's. One guy I remember just before he retired was still going on figuring, "I have been doing this all my career," and they warned him don't touch it. He ended up being suspended for the next three months, but they didn't fire him. He was retiring at the end of the three months.

Then another guy was taking sand that I think the railway had brought in—Bezac's brought in—to use for some of the repairs that they were doing. So, it wasn't our stuff in the first place. He said he'd asked about taking it and no doubt he did receive permission from one foreman, but the superintendent saw him doing it. He wasn't hiding it, and they fired him for the theft. He insisted it wasn't theft. It was given by this foreman. I am sure that is what happened as well because that was a standard procedure. He ended up not fighting it. He left and he said, "I can't work in a place like this anyway—too many idiots." [Laughs] Those are the only two I know in all the years who were actually fired. Usually, we would ask if we wanted something. There was no problem.

NP: Just to go back a bit. You worked at UGG M, so that was the place I understand that had a pot operation on the roof?

TH: Yes, that was before I got there. There was a fellow who was hired the same day as me. I am not sure exactly where the operation was, but I thought it was downstairs, but it might have been on the roof because I never saw it. We saw the fire when they had to burn it all. They were ordered to. Nobody was ever charged or anything. They just took out all the plants and they burned all that pot there on the property. The people who grew it were required to do the burning. So there were lots of tears that day. [Laughs]

NP: And a lot of people who were clustering to take advantage of the burning.

TH: Yes, lots of them, including the foreman! [Laughing]

NP: That is not something that people wouldn't see? People working in that elevator would have been well aware of all of it?

TH: It was all well known. There was nothing hidden in those days. There was very little hidden of anything. The only thing you would hide were your foreman or your superintendent if they were too drunk to work. So you would take them down the tunnels and hide them away or your co-worker. Those were hidden but it was well known. We had a superintendent that would go in his office and lock the door. As long as he didn't see it then, it wasn't happening. That was his thought on the matter and that went right through to the 1990's. It was his habit.

NP: The outsiders, the people from the Canadian Grain Commission [CGC], again blind eye or part of the whole--?

TH: The sunflower seeds at McCabe's, there would not have been any of them there that night, and the Grain Commission was just as involved as anyone else. There was no difference really. We have pictures, which you might have seen of their inspection tables, and the inspection table is entirely covered with bottles of booze. The standard thing to give a Grain Commission employee was bottles of booze or in some instances cash. But in our experience, it was all booze.

NP: Did you feel that that influenced the behaviour of the inspectors at all?

TH: Oh definitely. There was no arm's-length relationship, not at all.

NP: Would they look the other way as far as inspections were concerned?

TH: Oh, they would look the other way, but they could still turn vessels down and things like that. I remember one of our earlier superintendents having to fly to Montreal with a Grain Commission guy from here and examine the shipment down there and get it certified. It was certified by the time they came back. Whatever happened, you would know. But the guy here wouldn't certify it. They still did their jobs as best as they could. But there was a lot of collusion between the elevators and the Commission. We were putting burning grain on the ships at some point, so burning canola—rapeseed we called it then.

NP: How could you burn--?

TH: Pellets were burning. You couldn't see in the basement. We would stand on one side and the other side of the belt. I would be one side, and the other person would be on the other side, and we would be breaking up the burning chunks, so they would go along. Every now and then, we would bring a sample up. I remember they stopped us loading in the one tank because that was where it was going to be right over the bunker C—I think they called it—some type of oil. And this wasn't stuff that we bought that was burnt. This was stuff that was burning in the bin.

NP: Why would they do that?

TH: Why would they burn?

NP: I can understand why they would burn but--.

TH: They had to get rid of it somehow. Normally what you would do was that when you were cleaning out a bin like that--. And it happened earlier in 1978, where we would actually divert it out to the side of the elevator. This particular time, we were shipping that burning and hot stuff directly onto the vessel. It should never have been going up the legs, ever.

NP: Why was it?

TH: There was lax concerns. We used wooden boards to keep the belts straight down there in those days. Those belts shift back and forth on the loads, so we would jam boards into the belt to keep it straight, so you could ship. It is friction and the boards would burn, just like lighting a fire rubbing sticks together.

NP: I just can't understand why an operation would allow that to happen, given trying to keep the customer happy?

TH: Our main concern was getting the stuff out. Once it was out and on the ship, it wasn't our concern anymore. They would tell us what to do, and that is what we would do and take it out. I can't see someone ordering--. There is no ship's captain today who would ever put that type of cargo on their vessel. They wouldn't do it for safety reasons. Whether it is gas or a flame, whatever. It is already hot. Some of it was burnt right out, fine, because it is not doing anything else. But if the grain is still moist and heated, they don't want any of that in their holds—none. They have to go across the ocean or where they have to go with it.

NP: In this instance, could you get away with it from a customer perspective because it would have been a small percentage of what was into the--.

TH: A customer might have bought that stuff.

NP: Oh, really.

TH: Then they would do pressing of it to get the oil out, which was completely burnt out, and there was no oil in it. If it isn't, you still have an ability to get some oil, so lots of M's customers bought anything.

At McCabe's, Bill Green had a program set up, which we really enjoyed working on because we tried to make McCabe's profitable and keep it going. He did this niche marketing, so the things that were normally garbage, the company would try and find markets for. We would clean to those specifications, so it made the job very, very interesting because you were not just running grain through. You were actually creating different products as you went through. You had to have trained people, and you had to do your job very well. It all came out in percentages, and it was all checked. That was one of the areas where the seniority system would screw up in the way that the companies used it because some companies would allow bumping. In that case, they should not have allowed bumping into that job because that had now become a specific skilled job. But the senior guys would bump into it. Then they would go back to the old way of running, which screwed up all of our splits. So all the work you had done for two weeks—and it specifically happened in a number of times—was ruined by one night of somebody else being in there who didn't know what they were doing.

NP: What do you mean by splits?

TH: When you are going through a machine, you have different products coming out in different areas of the machines. We would set the machines up so more of this would come out. You might lose some of the good grain into the fines, which were the smaller ones. But we wanted more fines. We were getting more money for the fines. So, we would do that at the cost of the good grain and try to get as much fines out as we could.

NP: I think it is sometimes called blending?

TH: This was not blending, but this was a specific product that we were getting out of the grain. Normally what you are doing is that your specific product would be the main seed—the canola seed or rape seed or whatever you want to call it—itsself in this instance. In one particular case, I am talking about normally, it would be called refuse. That was what we were getting out of it. So, we are getting as much of the small stuff out as we could. That was the product. We would lose more of the good stuff into the small stuff and not worry about it because we were selling actually the small stuff. We would go up to our tolerances on the big stuff in the small stuff. That had nothing to do with CGC. That had to do with the end-use customer and what they would create.

We would create a product that they wanted. So it made it really interesting. More and more of that happened over the years with all grains with wheat and everything else. But that was all in conjunction with the CGC as well. CGC would call something, for example a [No.] 2 Red, but we didn't care if it was a [No.] 2 Red. It made no difference to us because what we were doing was blending different varieties with maybe different milling characteristics. It had nothing to do with the grade of the grain. As long as we did that, we would blend three or four different varieties. In one particular case, that would go over to make the bread for the English Royal Family, to Warburton Bakeries. Again, it made it interesting. So, when you were shipping over from these large elevators, you had to have specific tonnages of certain varieties of various wheats. So, it wasn't just a matter of going down and opening bins and running to the vessel. You had to do it.

In the old days with the blending, certainly in our plant, the regular employees were very, very involved with the blending in conjunction with the inspector. We did a lot of the control from the tunnels ourselves in conjunction with the inspector.

NP: To keep it within tolerances?

TH: Yes. We did our own opening and everything else. Later on, when they were just throwing people into the tunnels, they were just throwing people in who knew how to open bins, that's it. They didn't know how to open bins so much to get so and so many tonnes in per hour into that system. So they really lost, dropped the ball on training there because they lost a real resource in the blending. Later on, the blending didn't really mean that much anymore.

NP: I would like to talk a little bit about culture of the various elevators. Comments here about actual culture differences, so when you started were there still a lot of non or not very proficient English-speaking people? Did the elevator, UGG in Current River versus UGG McCabe's, did they have in themselves different cultures?



TH: Yes, McCabe's and Elevator A definitely did have very different cultures. They came from different companies. Some of those people from McCabe's came from Thunder Bay Elevator. Some of them were also original McCabe's employees and the whole different way of working than at the house in Current River.

NP: Say a bit more about what causes you to say that. What were some of the situations that made you realize there was a different culture?

TH: One thing at McCabe's, there was a bobcat house and a whole different way of receiving. Were there four or five receivers? There were five receivers, but on each track, you had, let's say, five hoppers. You could go and dump all these cars and leave them sitting in the hopper while the receiver, the actual receiving legs, they would be directed to the actual receiving legs. So the five hoppers on one track would all go up one receiver. You would dump five cars and you couldn't do anything else until those five cars were all taken up. They had to be taken up linearly, and they couldn't be taken up parallel. They had to be taken up in serial, one after the other. So then they would sit around and wait. That was what you did. You sat around and waited.

They also came out of the old shovel-house mentality, where you only did so many cars per day. If it was 10 cars or 30 cars or whatever it ended up being. I remember at McCabe's it went all the way up to 100 as technology improved and work habits and everything else. But initially I think when I started, there were only 10. Then it went to 30. So, they were on a 4:00 to 12:00 shift. Most of the times those people were at the Landmark Inn by 8:30 or 9:00. Whereas we at A House, we went in to work our shift. We worked our shift and maybe possibly overtime after that. There was none of this early quit, work like crazy and don't work at all. It was steady work all the time. That was probably the major difference between McCabe's and Grain Growers A House. The one was where you reached a certain goal and that was all you did. Whereas A House was steady. You just kept working until the clock said you were off your shift.

NP: The people who worked there were they from different backgrounds?

TH: Yes. A House they were just moving out of the Scots. You mentioned earlier something that people with language difficulties. In my opinion, when I first started there and the Scots were there, I had a far harder time understanding the Scotsmen than I ever did any Italian that ever worked on the waterfront. Yet they had a prejudice against the Italian because they said they didn't speak. They didn't speak Scot, but they spoke English clearly. Some of them didn't and some of them couldn't read. But most of the Scots could read. A significant number of the Italians and Europeans didn't read in any way.

NP: In English?

TH: In English, yes. They all could make themselves understood very well. Yelling, there was a lot of that, and they did very well making themselves understood. Those Scotsmen used to speak down through a ship's tube. They would be upstairs talking through a metal tube like they do on the ships going down to the bottom with your ears stuck to it. Who knows what was going to come down that tube other than the Scotsman's voice.

It did take us a while to get some of the Italians into positions where they could use the radio. I remember Joe Farastic coming to me and saying, "Tom I would like to apply." He was an excellent worker and very good at any job he did, but they didn't want him to apply for the posting because of his language issues. As far as we were concerned, he had no language issues. He was clear as anybody. But there was prejudice there. Anyway, he applied for the posting, and he got it, and remained in that position very successfully until he left the elevator.

NP: You mentioned Italian. Was it because A House mainly had Italians or were there other non-English groups?

TH: We used to say the main hiring for the A House was the Italian Hall. The previous superintendent drank there, and he would hire people right out of there. Then there are the family connections. Number one, they are small, and they are good workers. Mostly small and good workers.

NP: What does small have to do with it?

TH: Because the elevators weren't designed for six-foot people. They were designed for people who could get into small places and do work. Sammy and Shorty at McCabe's had to go down—in those days you kept overtime—and they would have to go down into the sunken receiver pits, receiver leg pits, which were something like eight feet deep, and you went in and cleaned those things out. I have done that many times and things like that and I am not small. Running around in the basement, it was much easier for small people. If you have seen the designs, and I know you have, they are not meant for tall people, but they are made for short people! Woman would be another thing, but unfortunately there are not many hired.

NP: If we switch over to McCabe's, you said some came over from Thunder Bay Elevator. What was the ethnic make-up there?

TH: It seemed to me it was more Polish. Just as I was starting, it was more Polish and European, but not Scots and English. You notice I don't say Irish. There were very few. I would say more European.

NP: Czechoslovakian, and Polish, and Ukrainian?

TH: Yes. We had them in our plant as well, a lot of the Balkan states and no Asians and no Native Americans, or one or two maybe, no coloureds of any kind, no women.

NP: In spite of possible language differences, would you say that most of the time people worked very well together and got the job done?

TH: Oh yes. There are always certain people who just don't work in a big operation. In those days it was a big operation, where you had 235 people at Grain Growers. I believe that was just at UGG with three shifts. Some jobs there were three or four people doing that job, so you are only doing a small part of the job. Then your job was done, and you would go down the lines. There are always people to cover. So, you always had certain people who just don't work. They are well known and that was the way it was. But over the years, very few of them survived because as you lost people, you had to have people who learned to work. Everyone did learn to work and did work well together. People sometimes would denigrate the Italians, more specifically, or Hunkies, but not to any serious extent, and not in my career anyways. We worked very well together all of us.

NP: You had started to talk about the difference in operations between A House and what became M House. You were talking about the grain receiving. What other differences were there between those two elevators that were notable?

TH: You couldn't do things as fast at McCabe's for a number of reasons. It was the design. It was an L-shaped design, so everything that came in, it couldn't just walk into the annex. It had to go up onto the bin floors and onto these cross belts, so you had to make these various turns. The same as coming out of the tunnels, belts were coming perpendicular to each other, so you are not feeding in line, but you are feeding perpendicular to each other.

Loading onto the belt at that point is problematic. You had to be very careful when you were shipping not to overload and, secondly, it was critical that your grain was distributed so you were not stuck on what we called the "short belts." Short belts were generally loaded perpendicularly. If you had a long string of stuff in the car shed, you wanted to make sure that there was space—1 Receiver going on 1 Belt in the annex, not 5 belt. As soon as you went to 5 belt, you had to go through the draft later, and then they actually had a "trip" that would move back and forth on a perpendicular conveyor. It was very awkward, and that was the way it was designed. That slowed everything down.

Then shipping was all straight from the scale—high-spout shipping. There are two high spouts, so the ships had to move back and forth to load. Whereas at A House, we could ship from anywhere in the elevator, including using receivers, right off the receivers. Just before I got there, and maybe the first couple of years, we could always ship right from the cleaners, but so could McCabe's.

So those things--. We just moved various slides and do that. That flexibility cancelled each other out. Any grain in our plant at A House could be shipped to any hold on any boat without shifting the vessel.

NP: That was a feature of the in-line elevators? Like the one where the workhouse is in the center?

TH: Some of the in-house elevators are still high-spout elevators. I think Viterra still uses high spouts on theirs. Ours had a gallery. Pool 1 had a gallery, and we had a gallery. The gallery allows you to move the grain trippers on grain conveyors to various different shipping bins. Any shipper, and if there are four shippers, 4 Shipper can access any one of those shipping bins that goes from the bow of the ship to the stern. There is huge flexibility. Where 4 Shipper at McCabe's could only go on 2 High. And 2 High is set physically in the wall. It only moves this way and that way. It couldn't hit if the bow of the ship is up there. Nothing from 4 Shipper could go to the stern until you moved the vessel.

NP: Were there any aspects of McCabe/Government Elevator that was an advantage?

TH: Oh yes. When I worked when it was full, and when the cleaners were full and all the jugglers were all working properly and the various slides were working properly, you could dump and clean out of that place through that cleaner deck very, very efficiently. Even some of the shipping aspects--. Because you would be cleaning two or three sections and throw that right onto a shipper and right onto the boat. I thought the cleaner deck really worked well. But our place used to have some of that stuff, but it was all removed pretty well, when I got there. I didn't see all the flexibility we originally had. Plus, it was a very enjoyable place to work at McCabe's.

NP: Why was that?

TH: It was small and at the end we had a small crew working there. For so many years, when you are trying to make sure that the plant is going to exist, you really get into a team atmosphere working there both with management and the people who work there. There were some of us who became more specialists at McCabe's and part of a crew and people they would call to go over there when things needed to be done. There was quite a bit of pride taken in running that little operation. One time they were—and I wish we could find the plans—they were looking at three-sided loading at that place: the end, the Pool 1 side, and where the tugs were over at the Thunder Bay side. It was a huge plan, how that whole property was going to be developed. It was a wonderful plan and McCabe's at that point would have been one of the major, if not the major, plant in Thunder Bay. It never happened, of course, and it stayed as it was. There were lots of structural problems in McCabe's.

NP: Such as?

TH: I don't know. Is it condemned now?

NP: Not that I am aware of.

TH: In the '90s when we were cleaning bins, first I would go down underneath and sweep off the flooring and check for cracks in the actual flooring from underneath, and then up top when we set up our equipment, we set it up on planks so you would spread the load over eight feet instead of two feet because there were structural problems with the floor. We had engineers coming in and gauging the cracks in the wall on the shipping side regularly. I remember going down the bin with a magic cube flash camera taking pictures of the cracks. Of course, it doesn't work, but you can't tell the engineers that. In fact, Jack Malcolm, who you may or not know, John Malcolm he ended up being the mechanical superintendent at UGG. I don't know if you have interviewed him, but a good guy to interview. The engineers wanted to go down and look at the cracks, but they became terrified when they looked down the bin and saw what they were getting into, whether it was fear of heights or dust or whatever it might be.

I went down and they sent me this magic cube camera to go down with the flash working. You know what flash does to dust and even a little bit of dust on the flash. There wasn't that much dust. The engineers were up on top, and we had one of those big old [inaudible] chairs. So they were leaning and looking straight down below and Jack Malcolm standing with them. I didn't know but what they were telling them was, "Wait. As soon as Tom presses that button and the flash goes off, stand back." And the guy says, "Why?" and he says, "That flash could ignite all that dust, and he is going to come flying up out of there." And they jumped back, wouldn't go anywhere near that hold. We knew it was all a joke. It would never work. We would not have been going down doing it if we didn't think it was safe. But the engineers are clueless as far as that goes.

NP: Those bins then, dangerous when full but empty would probably stand for a long time?

TH: I have always wondered about that because when they are full there is more stability given to the grains. The whole building—if it is full—is that pressure and weight means is something more dangerous or does it actually stabilize all the empty spaces, so that the plant is actually more stable? I don't know, an engineer would know.

NP: When it came time to decommission the elevators—when we had the implosion of the elevators, all of the mergers—then it was a pretty easy decision, would you say, to close down UGGM?

TH: At that time there was another factor came in as we bought Pool 1. The company I worked for became Agricore United. It was called a merger. It was ruled to be a purchase, but it was a merger of Manitoba Pool and the former Alberta Pool and United

Grain Growers. Manitoba Pool and Alberta Pool had become Agricore, and we were United Grain Growers, so we merged as Agricore. So we acquired Pool 1, which is a very good elevator.

NP: Next door to--?

TH: P&H.

NP: Parrish & Heimbecker?

TH: Yes. At that point having Pool 1, it was an easy decision to decommission McCabe's. I don't think it was taken very lightly, because it was a soft spot in lots of people, management—and including management in Winnipeg—heart for that place, and that property, and the potential for that property.

You have heard, yourself probably, in intervening years some thoughts about someone buying Pool 1 and using that for storage but shipping—almost like Pool 4 was connected—shipping across to some type of facility on that property at McCabe's. I think the Harbour Commission, Port Authority, talked about something like that. Whether they were going to put biofuel type stuff in there, or whatever it was. Use of that property and I guess it still is because it is still all owned by the Port Authority, and they've never sold it. The potential is still there. So, that did make it easier to close down, because you had Pool 1.

NP: What were the features of Pool 1?

TH: A higher capacity and faster dumping and shipping all the way through. Not the old part of it, the part that is closer to town, but all the out-shore part of it was all redone. A lot of the equipment was brand new. Manitoba Pool did a really good job of keeping their elevators clean and well maintained, which had gotten worse around some of the other plants, certainly the ones that I worked in. Manitoba Pool 1 was probably one of the best on the waterfront at that time. You couldn't match pure production with us or Pool 7, but it could run a long time without needing a lot of repairs to it. Pool 7 is basically falling apart. They were always working on that, and they have been doing contracted crews in there since the early 1990s. They never stop. Pool 1, you could actually run it and neglect it for a while, and it was a good place. It takes less people to run. It takes 15 people to run it.

NP: You said Manitoba Pool ran a clean shop. UGG, where would it fit from your experience at various elevators. Which ones--?

TH: It went way down hill even with the preventive maintenance and stuff like that because where they could cut non-production costs they did. The maintenance went way downhill as well as the cleaning went way downhill. We were always after them to do

something, and in some years, they did. In the 2000s even, we did major projects, but not to the same extent as Pool 1. Like dealing with fungus over at Pool 1, whatever they used in it, they made sure it was all gotten rid of. Things were handled very well. But then, when we are sitting in another plant, the tendency was that the grass is greener on the other side too, unless you knew different. But I worked in both, so I knew what it was like.

NP: If you were to give out good housekeeping awards across the waterfront who would--.

TH: Richardson and Pool 1 for sure, and not counting Canada Malt is a different story.

NP: In what way?

TH: Because of the malting plant, there are different requirements. All of us ended up being food grade, under HAACP. It is a set of standards like ISO standards. But all of our plants, including grease, became food, and you can eat the grease in the plant. It was food-grade grease. UGG A House became under that standard. Viterra came under that standard, and all of the plants did. Anything that was going into a good line and also in conjunction with CFIA. Everything was checked. A lot of the stuff they used to do--. Like people used to go to the bathroom on the belts and things like that. Garbage was on the belts.

NP: They used to go to the bathroom on the belts?

TH: Regularly, because you couldn't leave and there was only one bathroom in the whole plant, and you know how big it is, so you had to go to the bathroom on the belts.

NP: And where would your--?

TH: Into your Cheerios. I remember our superintendent, when we were cleaning in 2001, I remember that because it was September 11th, he said, "This is an elevator, not a hospital." But he was proven wrong. We ended up coming up to a cleaning grade. It was if you were serving in restaurants almost. It was very, very clean.

NP: Did that really require a whole lot of change other than some obvious ones that you would like to see change?

TH: Yes. You had to get away from the culture doing it. And remember there was smoking then, too. So cigarette butts that would go on and garbage, food garbage. You would see things going on there. I saw a cat go onto a ship when we were loading a ship! Dead animals and all kinds of things.

NP: Wouldn't they be picked up in the scales?

TH: No, they can go right through. The cat that I saw went into # 2 Hold on one particular ship into the 6 Shipping bin. We stopped loading right away. That cat was alive. It either had got upstairs somehow and jumped onto the belt after, or it had survived coming up the leg and it was perched on the belt, looking at it as it went into the tripper and down into #6 bin. So I shut it off right away, shut off the grain and by the time they got the bin closed on the vessel, the shipping main closed, I remember John Matychuk was the one looking for it all over the hold and they couldn't find it. We went in the bin after and checked and we couldn't find it anywhere at all, that cat. So it got buried in the grain in the hold. But it was alive when it was on that belt. It was looking right at me, just like my cat at home.

NP: We skipped over a story when we were talking about the language issue, and I remember you telling me before. So, could you tell us the story how innocent issues can sometimes escalate?

TH: A friend of mine who had started at Manitoba Pool and he was sent to the car shed and was working there with so and so person who was of Italian heritage. My friend is fairly rigid, and I don't know if he is prejudiced or not, but he likes to be able to understand English. Anyway, this guy didn't speak English very well. Close to 10:00 came along and the Italian guy came up to him and says, "Go for coff." and my friend says, "Jeez, what did you say?" He says, "I tell you, I tell you, go for coff." My friend said, "If you say that one more time to me, tell me to do that, I am going to plow you one." He says, "What you talking about? Go for coff." The guy plowed him. The thing was the guy was saying, "Go fuck off." But the Italians when they say that, "Go for coff," that was true. He did plow him. [Laughs]

NP: Did he go for coffee?

TH: He learned that, when he went for coffee. That was one of the issues he was going to have to learn to understand, broken Sicilian.

NP: If I was the Italian guy, I would be really annoyed.

TH: He was upset. They all had to go in to see Brian Mallon, who you interviewed, and they straightened it all out. There were lots of other physical incidents that happened over the years. One guy chased another guy down—not at Pool 1, at our place—all the way down Secord Street. Or was it Cumberland? He was going home to Secord Street. He was having a tiff with one of his co-workers in the car shed, so he went right onto the sidewalk and literally chased him with his vehicle when the other guy was



walking, trying to kill him or injure him as badly as he could. The other guy dove off and managed to escape, but they had a running feud. They went after each other with those long pike poles they use to clean out the hoppers, I was talking about earlier. They were going after each other like lances. One going two together, 20-foot poles and trying to run each other through. One was German and one was Italian.

NP: Was drinking involved or just animosity?

TH: No, sober. These people were sober. It was straight animosity. That animosity existed every day at work between those two. One of them worked at #1 track and the other one worked over at #5, so they were separated and most of the time you didn't intermingle there. All your work crew ran parallel with your tracks, so you were doing all your relieving there. Rarely did you go across to the other side. You had your area of responsibility and that was where you stayed.

NP: I have heard a couple of situations where people were actually dangled over the edge of elevators or into bins?

TH: Yes. We had a fellow who was hung out a window from the scale floor. In those days all the windows opened. We did our cooking and everything up there. I can't remember why—if he owed money to the coffee fund or something like that—but anyway they hung him out the window above the car shed roof. He would have had about a 50- or 60-foot drop from there. But he was pulled back in.

Another fellow threw a black banana at one friend. He was at one end of the scale floor and his friend was in the middle of the scale floor, and as a joke he threw it at him. Well, that friend ducked, and it hit one of the other people who was on the scale floor at that time, who happens to be one of the fellows who runs the fishing boats out here, Ronnie Gerow. Ronny is a big, strong character. A rotten banana hit him full on, and as soon as my friend realized that he had missed his friend and was going to hit Ron, he had already headed out the door. Ronnie is big and fast. So, he went out, and we had a fire pole on the scale floor. As long as you hit the fire pole—how to slide down fire poles—you were gone. Al started sliding down the pole and all of a sudden, he came to a stop, because someone had him around the neck and grabbed his clothing, hauled him all the way back up the pole. Then he was taken inside, and he was dangled over the side until many apologies had been made. It was like that.

NP: You had mentioned that there were not very many women working at the elevators. That is an understatement, right?

TH: In the actual industry where I worked, there was none in our plants, either McCabe's or UGG. Cargill had hired people even in the 1970s, they hired people.

NP: Why some and not others?

TH: I couldn't say at all. I know a number of women who were hired at Cargill and whether they stayed or not. I know there are woman there now. I don't think there are any at Richardson. There is at least one at Viterra to this day. There may be another one there because I am not up to date on the current hiring. As of last year, there was only one, Leslie. At Richardson, I don't think there are any.

NP: There was an effort at some point?

TH: One time there was an order made that if you were doing any hiring, you would need to hire Aboriginals, females, this and that. That happened to be at the time when the elevators were all downsizing. Certainly, Sask Wheat Pool didn't do any hiring for years and years and years. As you probably know they were more trying to get rid of people, not hire them. A lot of the other places, of course, went down—and you're aware of the figures—going down from close to 2,000 people to under 200 people. So there wasn't many opportunities for hiring. Just trying to maintain the work place and people that you had as best as possible, getting people called back. So really there weren't that many opportunities. On the government end of course, women, Aboriginals, and Asians, and everyone was hired. So we had interaction with females with the government end of things.

NP: You have a unique perspective on this because you were working with the union, so you would see issues from that side. But also, you were part of the work force. How were women received, the few even on the government side? How were they received?

TH: Even as late in the early 2000s, there had been a suit against the CGC and against UGG. In a lot of places what was plastered all the walls and on the lockers and everything else was pornographic photos. She sued them both successfully and ended up getting a settlement out of both of them. Everything was basically taken off. It was funny. They were required to do harassment training and sensitivity training and they did. It was very poor, but they did it.

It was neat when they did do it at UGG. One of our guys—and at least one, if not more, but one that I know of—spoke up and said that he objected to all this very, very much as well. He wanted it removed from the personal lockers because he had to stand opening his locker, and he would see things in there. The rule we always tried to have in place was if you wouldn't have it at home in your living room, you weren't going to have it in that workplace. And things were cleaned up, as far as I know, in most of the plants I've been in, in all of the plants. Anyplace I went I never saw anything.

NP: Did you feel that management pretty much recognized the time had come?

TH: It didn't recognize the time was coming until the lawsuit came, until they were charged. That is the way it always is. It is with safety. It is with any of these types of issues. Until someone compelled them to do it, they don't do it.

NP: Were individuals charged or was the company charged?

TH: CGC was, as the main employer, and UGG was, as the building that the main employer was housed in, where these female people had to work throughout that plant. They said no, the female workers had no reason to be throughout the plant. Well, yes, they did, even to go up to load cars, to load boats and to do anything else at all. They had to go up. In one case, to go up to the washroom, you had to go up through the men's lunch room to get to the washroom that these women could use. Obviously there could not be anything in there either. There never was supposed to be in the first place, whether there were females in there or not.

Early on, females were treated as sex objects and taken down to the boxcars and empty boxcars and fooled around there, by consent. That was all early, early days. There were lots of females at the government end often were not allowed to work in certain elevators where they may have had a husband or a boyfriend in there, or it was suspected that they might be. If that was a blanket policy, they said, "Everybody, you cannot be working because you may be in conflict." That's fine. But unfortunately, in CGC, it wasn't an evenly applied policy. It depended on who you were and who you were seeing or whatever it was.

NP: That you couldn't work in an elevator where--.

TH: Janice Trush, for example, was going out with Barry Trush. Barry was a foreman, or a superintendent at Richardson and Janice was a CGC employee.

NP: She shouldn't be working at Richardson?

TH: In her position, she definitely should not have been working there because she was an inspector, and Barry was one of the ones who were shipping. But in some cases, they would say, "No, you can't work there and just be reasonable and maybe we will have somebody else sign off or whatever it is." In other cases, they just totally banned the people. Usually what would happen there is that they would ban the people. It would be more of a scheduling thing to have certain people in elevators that had high overtime. Richardson had high overtime, so favoured people get to go into Richardson's for monetary reasons. The original idea of the banning wasn't followed through on a consistent basis.

NP: Banning meaning?

TH: Banning the person from the plant, if they were involved with someone who was in--. The example I gave was with Janice and Barry was a good example because of Barry's position and Janice's position.

NP: Would it have applied, too, if it was brother/brother or father/son or was it just a--?

TH: It should have. Again, it was a loosey-goosey policy how they handled it. It would depend on who the people were, who were in those positions. In the old days, it was a joke that there was any type of arm's length, anyway. The collusion was unbelievable.

NP: The collusion was unbelievable?

TH: When you worked directly with CGC, you colluded with the CGC in doing a number of things with vessels. It would have to be done in a way so that CGC wasn't too compromised at the end. If you are doing something like canola, and you can use a different sieve to get a different result for your dockage or whatever it is, then you can do that type of thing. You can change your paperwork to show that. You just don't show that you have done it with a different sieve. But you can say that you shook it out, just not on an O28. You shook it out on something else.

NP: What was the advantage to cooperation slash collusion?

TH: Booze for one thing. Trunk-fulls of booze would come in to the CGC people at Christmastime and at various celebrations and things like that. They would be called down, and we used to call it "the shrimp." The shrimp would be arriving. I never saw any money change hands, but it was often, often booze. It was a favourite status. You always wanted to get an inspector who was known to be more flexible.

NP: They all were not?

TH: Some of them were not flexible at all. Some of them didn't buy into this system at all. Some very good ones, some people I know who are working to this day, they never bought into those systems. They were more the young ones that are my age. What I am talking about is the older generation—people who would have been fully adult and well into their career in the mid to late 1970s. Most of those people are gone. The younger people, some of them followed in that tradition but nowhere near to that extent. Now you might see at Christmas time one bottle come in and given to the PI 4 and in there, or it might even be a coupon for a restaurant. That is not enough to make you change. That is something acceptable as far as I am concerned. It doesn't make you change your--.

NP: When you came in, it would have been just as the old guard was actually starting to retire. Was there an appreciable difference in any way, in anything with the new workers versus many of the war vets?

TH: Are you talking our people, our workers?

NP: The war vets versus the newer kids on the block?

TH: We didn't have a lot because remember we worked with a lot of the ethnic people. They were not necessarily war vets. They were people who came in and worked in the forest industry in the 1950s and the 1960s. We had a few of the vets, but not many. Not like CGC. At CGC, these people were hired back at the end of, when, 1946? Somewhere around then. They would have been 30 years in by 1976. I think they kept hiring those people right through the '50s, early '50s. I can't say, but in our crew in our elevator, there were more the ethnic people. People who came over in the 1950s and in the 1960s. The war vet thing wasn't really a factor with us, but it was with the CGC because it was a militarist attitude in the CGC, much more so than in the elevators. In the elevators, it was more of a very cooperative place to work, even with the superintendents. It was much more personal in the elevators.

NP: Just to finish off the women situation, it was unfortunate that it had to go to a court case to have behaviour more welcoming.

TH: It was mandated then by the companies that certain standards had to be upheld. Richardson would have been the leader in that. When it was mandated, Viterra—and I can't speak for Sask Wheat Pool—but Viterra because I was there, but their rules were very, very clear about all kinds of harassment and about all kinds of things whether to do with women or anything else. The fooling, around male-to-male fooling around. For example, I worked all winter with one of our millwrights who never ever called another millwright who I worked with by his correct name or by a male name. He was Suzy or Alice or whatever, like that. We did that for years. This was something else. But as soon as you moved to Viterra, they absolutely would not tolerate that, even though it was tolerated between the two of them. It didn't matter. That example could not be allowed to circulate around the plant. They were very strict. To this day they are.

NP: Did you feel that women left because they didn't feel--.

TH: Absolutely. Women left the CGC early on in the early 1980s and even up into--. Some very successful women left the CGC in the 1990s or maybe early 2000s, who had been there for years, who couldn't be there, just couldn't be there in a Thunder Bay situation anymore. Some of them are still with CGC in a different place.

NP: Why would that be?

TH: Thunder Bay's attitude was really, really bad.

NP: Thunder Bay?

TH: Thunder Bay.

NP: What do you mean Thunder Bay's attitude?

TH: CGC Thunder Bay is very bad in all of the CGCs across the country. You see that from the union issues that came up in Vancouver, Montreal, Winnipeg. They were not the same issues that came up in Thunder Bay.

NP: What would be some differences?

TH: Their issues were more around work and hours of work overtime, not treatment. Not treatment. Quebec is entirely separate on its own. They didn't have the issues at all that we had in Thunder Bay.

NP: Why not would you say?

TH: I don't know, as I didn't work there. I knew people who did work there, and they very much enjoyed the atmosphere in the Quebec CGC. Vancouver again was another one. Whether there was a higher turnover and people left earlier or there was a new wave of management that came in that maybe took the CGC in a different direction. We never had new managers come in here in Thunder Bay.

NP: What were some of the grievances like? What would be Thunder Bay grievances?

TH: Hours of work, where to work, disrespect in the workplace, harassment in the workplace. There were a number of harassments. The first harassment grievances that came in were women against women. In fact, that has probably the majority of them. Because what happens with the women is they come in and they take on the male personality. To get somewhere, they become tougher than those males they had to compete against.

NP: The hours of work and employment?

TH: Just general treatment in the work, work-life balance, general respect in comments and conversation, constant demeaning comments when women are talking or giving an opinion as opposed to when the men are talking. There is a new word about it. You might have heard it. It is called mansplanation. Did you hear that on CBC?

NP: No.

TH: I don't know if it is a book about it, but I think the definition is when women are forced to listen to men go on and on—*blah, blah, blah*—explaining it all to you. It is always 90 percent of the time they know nothing about what they are talking about, so now it is called mansplanation. There was lots of that in the CGC.

NP: I think this is probably, since we are close to 1:00, this is probably a good breaking point. But we will need to have you on the hot seat again. [Laughs]

TH: It will have to be later on because now I am getting into the busy time with the Blues Fest. So there really isn't any time between now and July 9th.

NP: We'll sign off right now and then we'll schedule something.

**End of interview.**