

Narrator: William Parrish Sr. (WP)

Company Affiliations: Parrish & Heimbecker (P&H)

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Summary: Owner of Parrish & Heimbecker William Parrish Sr. discusses his and his family's involvement in the Canadian grain industry. He begins by recounting the history of the P&H company's formation and its early years of business, as well as describing its expansion into buying country elevators and building the terminal at Thunder Bay. He discusses his first role in the company in the country elevators loading grain cars before moving to head office to do bookkeeping and eventually grain trading in the Winnipeg Commodities Exchange. As he moved up the ranks, Parrish describes the initiatives he was involved in, like consolidating country elevators, purchasing and building inland terminals, expanding the Thunder Bay terminal, and diversifying the business into feed, four, and Butterball Turkeys. He discusses the major changes in the industry, including the amalgamation and buyouts of small grain companies, the amalgamation of the Pools, new crops being grown, the introduction of large hopper cars, and automation of elevators. Other topics discussed include the UGG A collapse in Thunder Bay, Canada's reputation for quality grain, the Canadian Wheat Board's role in marketing, P&H's ownership of lake ships, the demise of the Wheat Pools, and the computerization of trading.

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| Time, Speaker, Narrative |
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| NP: I am going to start recording, but I will tell you what I am going to ask. We have set up a series of questions for various groups in the grain trade and mostly all of them we are asking general questions about career, challenges, changes, accomplishments, interaction with other groups in the grain trade, contribution to the success of Canada as a grain trading country and some specific |

questions about Thunder Bay, because that is where a lot of us are from and are interested in your history. Those are the questions that we are going to ask.

WP: Okay, I will do the best that I can.

NP: As it is said in the release form, if there are any questions you don't want to answer just feel free you don't want to answer, and at the end, you will have a chance to decide finally on what we do with the tape.

WP: Okay, let's have fun with it.

NP: I guess because your family has been a long term in the grain trade--. And I should probably introduce you because other people listening to this tape won't know. I am talking to Mr. William Parrish, Senior—I understand your son is in the business currently as well—who is with Parrish & Heimbecker. Maybe we could start right back at the beginning with just if you could give us some history about the company that your family has been instrumental in guiding through 100 years approximately?

WP: One hundred years next April 14, I think it is. I can say that my grandfather come out from Uxbridge, Ontario before the turn of the century with his father. They had flour and feed business in Ontario at Uxbridge, and he decided to move to Brandon before the railways were in. They farmstated for a few years, and then he got in the grain business in Brandon with his dad. Mr. Norman Heimbecker came out from Hanover, Ontario, where his family had a flourmill. He came out about the same time maybe a year or two later. My grandfather originally was in partnership with a company called Parrish & Lindsay. I believe the Lindsay building here in Winnipeg is named after Mr. Lindsay, but I am not sure. My grandfather and Mr. Lindsay parted company. Mr. Heimbecker was working with the company at that time and my grandfather and Norman Heimbecker became partners.

My grandfather was 50 when he started the company and Norman was 30. There is a picture I have but don't have here, but it was in the Grain Exchange of the original people that started the grain trade, and there was a picture of W.J. Lindsay is in it, W.J. Bawlf, and W.L. Parrish. He was one of the original starters of the Winnipeg Grain & Trading Association, the Winnipeg Grain Exchange I guess, but it was a different name at that time. He lived to be the oldest member of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, and Norman Heimbecker was the youngest member of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

They made a good partnership. They moved into Winnipeg, and they started the business. My grandfather had other interests. Mr. Norman Heimbecker pretty much stayed with the grain business. He had some brothers, and his brothers came into the business. Clayton Heimbecker ended up as manager of our Toronto operation and a director of the company, very successful and was well

known all over Ontario. Harry Heimbecker went out to Calgary and became manager of our Alberta division. He was also a director and eventually became a chairman of the board.

My grandfather also got involved in some other companies. He was involved with modern Dairies and Monarch Life. He was chairman of the Winnipeg General Hospital. So he was quite active in politics. He ran for, I think, the Liberal Government, an MP, Member of Parliament, but he didn't make it and was defeated. But he was very active in many areas of the business. Norman was pretty much more interested in the business, but he and my grandfather remained good friends and good business associates until my grandfather died in 1949. Norman lived a few years later. He broke his hip and was hospitalized. I think he died in 1963 or something like that. That is the career of these two men.

NP: What was your grandfather's name?

WP: William Linton.

NP: Ah, so your namesake.

WP: Yes, my dad was named Frederick William, and I am William Bruce, and my son's name William Stewart. I might add that his sons didn't carry the William name on, but that is life too.

NP: How old were you when your grandfather died?

WP: My grandfather died at '49, and I was 23. I had been in the army for one year. My grandfather also started a big farm, maybe one of the biggest dairy farms in western Canada. The legal name was Parkdale Dairy Farms. It was Parrish Farms up towards Lockport. It had three big barns, and we bottled our own milk! He started that in 1924, and the milk marketing board came in and then we had to sell the milk to registered dairies. We eventually got out of the dairy business, but we still had the farm until 1981 when we sold it to the Hutterites. It was a 3000-acre farm, and it was quite bit at the time, so that was another interest that he had. He had an interest in Coleman Collieries out of BC, which was a coal mine. My grandfather was an entrepreneur kind of a guy more in a lot of things, but his first love was the company and along with Norman they made a good team.

NP: Was your dad involved in the company as well and what were his years?

WP: My dad came in after the First World War. In 1919, he joined the company and went out to Alberta for a couple of years, and then he came down to Winnipeg and spent the rest of his career in Winnipeg. A lot of his time was spent on the trading floor in

those days. The market was very active. In fact, that is where I ended up eventually. He became president of the company, and he died in 1961. He was 66 years old. My grandfather lived until 89, so he was a pretty good age.

NP: Do you recall your dad and your grandfather talking about the good old days at the start of their businesses back in the late 1800s, correct?

WP: He came out to Brandon in the late 1800s. We started the company in 1909. My grandfather was a unique person in his way. I will give you one story to show you the kind of man he was. It was before the war, and I was 17, so that would be 1943, and my cousin Bob Spear--. And we are still friends, and in fact we had lunch together today. My grandfather was living in the Royal Alexander Hotel in the spring and fall, and then he went down to visit his daughter in California in the wintertime. He was lucky enough to get away. He was a widower at the time. He was 80 years old, and Bob and I were 17, and he took us to Toronto, and he wanted to do some business. And we went down with him, and it was very interesting. He gave us both little books and he said, "Now you write down everybody you meet, the name." And we went on with the railway to Fort William, Port Arthur then got on a ship and went across, and we had to name all the ships. It was very interesting, but for an 80-year-old man to take two 17-year-old boys, he was that kind of a guy who had character. He knew a lot of people and he was easy to make friends.

NP: Did he do a lot of travelling then for his work especially in the grain trade, which is our focus?

WP: He was quite an interesting character. He had the coal mine out in BC, and we had offices in Toronto then, and he quite a bit of travelling. My dad came out of the Army in 1919, and of course he followed with the company, and then he died at 61, and I started the year after the war. I was in the Army for one year and got out in late 1945. I started university in the fall, but I didn't do very well. So then I went into the grain business. I am a flop, a university flop. [Laughs]

NP: In the early days when your grandfather, and your father too, were developing the business, did they have contact with international clients or was there a lot of the trading just done through the Exchange?

WP: Our company is pretty well Canadian, and our main theme in those early days was we would buy grain, usually from Thunder Bay and sometimes in the country from country elevators, and we would ship it down east. Clayton Heimbecker had built these connections with the feed mills and flourmills, so our business was pretty much in Canada. In those early days, the future markets were very active, and we did get involved with some American connections and did a lot of trading.

In fact, there was a doctor—and I am going to say his name is Edwards, but I might be wrong—but he was a big shooter, and he was trading quite heavily. And we carried his account for a while, but being kind of a conservative nature of our company, it got too

rich for our people so we got out and eventually it blew up. Those days everything was hedged you know. There was a great deal of trading on the trading floor. Our bylaws in 1909 were unique in one way. It was moved by my grandfather and seconded by Mr. Heimbecker that no manager should speculate in the grain market. But then they worded it very carefully, “Anymore than he absolutely had to.” We always got position because you’re buying grain from the farmer and sometimes you can’t put it out back-to-back, but the main theme was speculation is a tough way to make a living. Usually, it is your downfall.

NP: When you are talking about speculation, it makes me think about what happened in 1929, and of course both your grandfather and your father would have lived through that?

WP: Yes, they were both in the business. I think again our business was buying grain and selling it to flour and feed mills, and we had some speculators but very limited.

NP: The impact of the Depression, of the market collapse in 1929, would have been less severe?

WP: Yes. We never lost money in our company. We didn't make much in those days, but we were able to keep our heads above water. It didn't affect us because we were not speculating and we didn't have those huge positions, which are happening today as you know.

NP: Did your father and grandfather’s company have physical plants?

WP: Yes, I think our first plant was the terminal at Thunder Bay. No, we had elevators in western Canada because we started in 1909, and by 1912, we started buying elevators. In 1919, we bought some more and some of these smaller companies were going out of business. There were over, I would say, over 50 or 60 elevator companies back in 1948, and now there are maybe three or four. In those days, there were allowed smaller elevator companies and for one reason or another they either wanted to sell out or they had to sell out. So we slowly bought into more elevators across western Canada. We then in 1920 built an elevator at Port Arthur.

NP: Is that the elevator that is still there now?

WP: It is still there now, and it is still operating. We are one of the very few that have operated through the whole theme. What really happened after and particularly the Pools, to some degree UGG, built huge terminals down there. Cargill had their one terminal, Pioneer had their one terminal—and they were much bigger than ours—and we had a terminal.

There were other companies like Intrusion had a terminal which was Federal Grain, which was bought out by the Pool. I think there were 25 terminals down there at one time and of course there is maybe half a dozen. In 1920, we built our first terminal—not the whole terminal but a workhouse and some tanks—and then we kept adding to it. As a matter of fact, in those early days, there was talk of making it a headquarters of all the grain companies in Thunder Bay, which was Fort William, Port Arthur. Norman Heimbecker bought some property on Citadel Hill, which, being an old Thunder Bay girl, you remember where that was in Port Arthur. It is on the top of--.

NP: High Street.

WP: Whatever it was, he was going to build a house up there, and then of course the trade stayed here so he didn't do that.

NP: The trade stayed here. And what do you think that decision occurred that the head offices would not be in Thunder Bay?

WP: I think maybe the main thing was that Winnipeg was a bigger centre, and these men were pretty driven. They had built in 1919, I think, the Winnipeg Grain Exchange Building, which is the largest building in the British Empire at that time. They put the trading floor in, which took up two floors of the building, which then it did establish that the trade was going to stay here. But there was thought that they might have moved to Thunder Bay before that, and then it was established they never did move. I think we've covered it pretty good.

NP: I am going to turn now to ask you about your own career. You said you started shortly after the war. Had you always thought that you would go into the industry, the family business?

WP: No.

NP: What were you going to do before that?

WP: I came out of the army, and I had met some good friends there and one was Vic Norbert who ended up as senior vice-president of the Toronto Dominion Bank. He and I were going to go to California to study plastic engineering. It was my determination not to go in the company. I was going to do it on my own. However, like many plans of any young people, it doesn't always work out the way you plan it, and Vic went into the bank in Winnipeg, at Toronto Dominion, and I was at loose ends. And eventually my father said, "You had better get doing something. There is an opportunity in Olds, Alberta." So that is where I started in the grain business in Olds, Alberta.

NP: Doing what?

WP: I was a grunt. I was unloading grain, making feed. Harry Heimbecker, who ran our elevators in Alberta, did something rather unique. We had an elevator, a normal elevator like we handled the grain, but he also put a chopping mill up beside it, like a small feed mill because in those days most farmers had animals. So he thought, “Well, I’ll get two sources of income—one from the grain and one from the other,” and that were very successful for a two years. Of course, then the bigger feed mills got built and we lost out. But that is where I started. I was there for about six or eight months.

NP: What was it like loading grain back in those days?

WP: Dusty, and we worked long hours. But I was young, and it was a good experience.

NP: Was it still the day of the horse and buggy in Olds?

WP: No, they were up to small trucks. They were not up to the big trucks they are now. There were quite a few elevators in Olds. I think there were about six or seven grain companies, so it was quite a good grain point. Then I went to Regina for about six or eight months. It was an interesting experience there, and then I came to Winnipeg.

NP: What do you remember about Regina? What sticks in your mind when you worked there?

WP: The manager of the plant also looked after 30 elevators, and he also did all the construction. A most unique man.

NP: What was his name?

WP: Thomas Andrews. I used to travel with Tom Andrews. We would drive out to the country to visit, and he had to hire and fire 30 places, and he had to try and figure out what they were doing. He was a very unique man.

NP: Was he from Winnipeg?

WP: No, I think he was from Saskatchewan. He taught me a great deal. And then I came to Winnipeg. But that was good experience for me. I was young and just out of the army. That was my career out in the country at that time, and then I came into the office, and I started with the bookkeeping. They had big ledgers about six feet wide. You had to write all your grain tickets in.

NP: What happened to those ledgers? Are they still around?

WP: No, I don't think so. I doubt they are, but they were quite unique. You had all the damn grades across the top. Then they put me onto the trading floor, and I started to trade. They were very busy days in those days. It was pretty intimidating. The activity is from 9:30 to 1:15, and my job was to fill orders that were given to me, that either came in through the telegraph or through the phone, and I would get them from our offices in Vancouver or Calgary or Toronto and where we were trading with a company down in Chicago too, J.S. Templeton.

My job to start with was the limit orders. In other words, if it was down below the market, my order was to buy it, and of course I would start yelling it when it came near it or vice versa in the selling order. Then eventually I would start doing market orders, which were pretty exciting. It is something like auctioneers. They are [inaudible] brightest people in the world, but if you are good at it, it is an exciting time. The busiest time is usually at the opening, at 9:30, because a lot of people put order in—and why, I don't know—but they did for the opening of the market because they wanted to fill up. Well, they had to fill up within the first two minutes. It was a pretty hair-raising time when you have every guy in the pit trying to buy or sell whatever it is, and usually at the close the same thing.

Buy a 100 May wheat at the close, and you have a very limited time to buy it. But it was very good and exciting, and there were all sorts of characters. But on the pit the trading floor there was everybody you could imagine from the railway to bankers to shippers to millionaires to guys that had taken the bus down to the trading. It was the most unique entrepreneurial experience.

NP: Where was the Commodities Exchange at the time you started?

WP: When I started, our office was on the sixth floor, and that was the same floor as the trading floor. The trading floor was in this big building built in 1919, which had two floors. They had about two or three pits in there. Along one side were all telephones, and in the middle at one end was the railway. Both CP and CN had telegraph services because most of the orders came in by telegram in those days. There was a story that one guy knew Morse code. He would stand leaning up against the pit, and when he heard a big order come in before the guy from the railway could type it and give it to the messenger and run it to the pit, this fellow could go it. Sometimes he won and sometimes he lost. That was the story anyways.

NP: Who were some of the characters that were operating?

WP: There were all sorts. There were brokers, of course, good future brokers that did a good job. Some of the brokers were not as good, like anywhere. You would give them an order, and they would go glassy eyed and fill it. God knows where they were going to fill it. So you had to sort out who you were going to give the order to.

NP: Who would brokers work for, just about anybody then?

WP: They would work sometimes for us. I would fill most of the orders because I was a company trader. Richardson's had traders, Cargill. One of the most interesting people was Mr. Ken Powell. He was a very, very successful man, and he shipped 32 million bushels of malting barley to the United States, before the Board. He was, I would say, a very unique entrepreneur. The most entrepreneurial man I have ever met.

NP: What makes you say that?

WP: He was very successful, and he could see a good deal. He would see things that people wouldn't see, like this malting barley. It was there to be had and he made it happen. I will give you a story. He had traders in there trading on the floor the pit. But every so often, he would come in to trade, and he would come in and start buying. There would be an awful ruckus in the pit, everybody yelling and screaming, and he never raised his voice. He just kept bidding and bidding a little, and of course, all of a sudden, people would see what he was doing, and they would start selling to him. Of course, the market would start moving up and people would say to me, "You know that Ken always got the Midas Touch. As soon as he starts buying the market moves up." After a while, I asked Mr. Powell one time. I said, "What is your side of this?" He said, "Well Bill, I wanted to go down. I was buying it because I wanted to price the grain." But you would never know it. He stood there like a poker player. He was just a very interesting character.

There were guys like Alex Purves, who had a terminal out at Thunder Bay, Inter-Ocean Grain. He was quite a speculator. He would get trading in the pit, and he was a round-faced man. He wore little granny glasses, and he used to trade flax a lot, and he would bid it away, and he would get red in the face. When he was wrong--. You know, it was funny. In those days, you kept everybody's bookkeeping in a way, and we knew Alex was wrong. The market was going down, and he would go away and leave it to his manager to get out. Of course, his manager would come in and make a great deal of noise, but he would have some guy selling on the other side and he wouldn't be buying. As I said to somebody, these fellows were playing like a game.

NP: Stakes, big stakes.

WP: Big stakes. Those are a couple of characters. Richardson's were very pronounced in the pit. They had two or three traders, and in fact, I give George credit for starting the canola market and making it happen. In the futures, he gave his trader Roy Clark the instructions to trade every day. If they were buying it, you sell it, and they would sell it, you buy. I understood it cost Mr. Richardson a good bit of money, but he did establish--. He was like a market maker. I give George a lot of credit for that. I can't think of all the other characters.

NP: Mr. Powell, you said he was in business. Did he have a company?

WP; Yes. It was called K.A. Powell Canada Limited. He also had a connection in UK called Rank Powell after a very successful family company over there called Rank, and he also had a Vancouver office, Powell Lester. In fact, we eventually over that office. I knew Mr. Powell very well, and I also knew Vern Lester who was the other partner. Mr. Powell wanted to sell out, and Vern wanted to retire, so that is how we bought it out in the West Coast. The company grew in leaps and bounds, sometimes small leaps, but we slowly got more elevators. We must have had 75 or 100 elevators in the heyday.

NP: Was that all three prairie provinces?

WP: Yes. Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but not too many in Manitoba. One at Moosehorn, which is up north of here about 80 or 100 miles was started. Mr. Norman Heimbecker was going to church, a Lutheran Church, and he met a fellow. He said, "I am from Moosehorn." And he was going to church, and he said, "You should have an elevator up there." So we built one, and it turned out to be our best elevator for a few years, believe it or not. There was a lot of land broken and a lot of grain grown, but then it eventually went back to cattle. It didn't produce very good grain, but for a couple of years it was a heavy grain handling point.

NP: We started out by talking about your career, and you said you started out in the Commodities Exchange. Is that where you spent most of your career?

WP: I was quite busy. I ran the farm when my dad died, and I had a farm manager, and that took up some of my time.

NP: Was that the dairy farm?

WP: Yes, the dairy farm. By that time, we had moved it into grain and beef cattle, and we still had the 3,000 acres. I traded on the floor all morning, and by that time, our executive suite was pretty cleaned out. Mr. Heimbecker gone, my grandfather and my dad, and a fellow by the name of Mr. Dower, [inaudible]. There was nobody left but me. So then I started to build a new team. I got

wonderful gentlemen who is still alive and is still our secretary, Jim Asquith. Jim was doing our audit. He was with Price Water House. A very, very sharp person, and he came in as our comptroller and then eventually our secretary-treasurer.

Another young man in those days was John Field. He came out of Montreal and was working for a grain company, and he came over as our trader. What made me feel much more comfortable, I needed some horses and so both of these fellows--. And I spent a lot of my time down east in Toronto with Herb Heimbecker and in Vancouver and Lethbridge and Calgary with Harry Heimbecker. The country elevators were what I was trying to develop at that time. Really, it was de-developed because we were getting out of a lot of our elevators. We were swapping and selling and tearing them down, so we went through quite a phase of downsizing you know.

NP: When would that have been? What years would they have been?

WP: Those were the '70s, and I should be able to tell you more clearly, but they were the "70s and '80s, and that was when all grain companies realized they had too many elevators and they were not handling enough grain.

NP: What had changed?

WP: I think the biggest thing was that the trucks got bigger. There were almost elevators at every site. There wasn't much room to expand in the elevator business. What we did at our stronger points, we built another bigger elevator with a bigger scale and a bigger driveway and everything else. As the trucks got bigger, we got more efficient. When I started, an elevator manager handled let's say 80,000 bushels of grain a year, which is about 2,000 tonnes. Our bigger elevators now are handling double that in a day. You can see how the horrendous change came. But it came slow.

We got our first concrete elevator at Transcona here in Winnipeg. It was an engineering feat of the world. It tipped over. If you ever drive out by Springfield Road, they put the workhouse on piles. So it stood up, but the annex was 1 million bushels and a huge thing, and they felt it was out in the bald prairie in those days. It was built in 1912, so in those days it was just on the prairies. They never did soil tests, and they didn't know enough about soil testing in those days, and it tipped over. They started to fill it up on one side. They righted it and they used them for awhile.

NP: How did they do that?

WP: I have the book, and it is most interesting. Today I think they would have walked away from it. But in those days, they started to dig out one side. In fact, there is a guy by the name of Ken Scaffold over at U of A Engineering that did the study on it, and he invited me to a dinner at the Wildwood Club with about 50 engineers, and he gave this presentation. I am glad you asked.

NP: Yes, I am glad I asked, too.

WP: They dug out one side. Now, the thing that sunk down into the ground, and if they had left it that way, it would have come down about 60 feet down to the ground. The engineer was very bright, and he said that that would be too far down to the ground. It was on an angle, and he put a pile down here to stop it from going down any further. Then he put piles across here higher up, and then they put thousands of jacks, and they jacked that building up on top of these piles. It really was a horrendous undertaking in 1912. They showed pictures of men digging with shovels. Then they were putting mud into a little buggy with a horse. Then they got a conveyer belt because they had to take all this mud out. Eventually they got it righted, and they used it for a few years.

But again, sometimes you find that people do things for the wrong reasons. They built it in Winnipeg because all the cars came through Winnipeg, and they thought that if we stop these cars off, we can lend them and then ship them on and then get the gain of the blend. I guess some fellow, four or five years after said, "Well, why we don't do that in Thunder Bay instead of doing it here and re-doing it?" There were 85 people working out there at that time. They had eight unloading pits, so they did it in big style, but it stayed empty for a long time. Richardson had it during the war. They filled it full of wheat when there was a surplus.

NP: During the Second World War?

WP: Yes, in the '40s and in 1970. I used to go out there on a Saturday, and I would look at it, and I thought, "Well, my God, if I can fill that with wheat, the Wheat Board pay carrying charge--." I thought, "Usually our little 25,000 bushels, and this is a million bushels," and also the farms were getting bigger. We took a chance. But I remember going down to the basement and there was about five feet of water in the basement. Of course, when they righted it, the water table was quite high. So anyway, we took it on. We were young and more stupid, I guess. We started and pumped out the water. The water didn't come back in. Duff's Ditch, the floodway, had been put around and had taken down the water table, not perfectly but it certainly saved our bacon because we were going to have a lot of water that we had to do something with. We took it on.

Then we took over Moose Jaw. It was a Robin Hood flourmill that had closed down there. It was a big flour mills in Keewatin and Winnipeg, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Quaker Oats, Robin Hood, and Lakes of the Woods, and Ogilvie's all had these big flourmills. Then as they were shipping flour around the world in bags. Well, then the people that they were shipping to get pretty smart and they built their own flourmills. So all these flourmills became available. We didn't want the flourmill but their elevators. The

flourmill people built concrete elevators in those days, long before us country elevator guys, because wooden elevators were so cheap to build. There was a 1.5 million concrete elevator in Moose Jaw that we took over and about 800,000 bushels at Saskatoon. Those got us into the concrete elevators business.

We didn't have that much business, so I looked at location. I didn't care about market share because I didn't have any. But it was a few years later, and I think it was about 1974 or 1975, that Weyburn Terminals built a concrete elevator, and about that time that Cargill built the two ones at Elm Creek and Rosetown. But we were ahead of the curve. But we didn't build them, but we were able to buy these things. We put the biggest driveway and the biggest leg we could get a hold of. In those days, I thought and maybe you remember when you went to a filling station the guy had to go out to fill your tank, and if he isn't there right away you drive away. You were not going anywhere but you wanted instant success. So get the biggest driveway, so that fellow can be gone as quick as he could. I think it worked out.

It took a while to build the business because we didn't have any customers. But slowly they grew. Those were our concrete elevators, and then we started to build them. We built our first concrete elevator in Yorktown in 1980, then North Battlefield in 1985. So we were picking the centres.

The only thing that we did wrong—and I should have known better—the railways said, "Oh, well Yorktown and North Battlefield, there will always be a switch engine. You don't have to put a big spot in." Wrong. I should have known better because I was down in the States and they were putting big spots in, and we went down to a place called Salina, Kansas, to look at some concrete elevators before we built Yorktown in 1980, and they were putting 60-70 car spots. I should have been smarter.

NP: How does that car spots work?

WP: Well, now the new car spots the smallest one is 25 and the biggest is 112.

NP: So by car spots you means spaces for--.

WP: Hopper cars for loading grain into a car. The biggest ones I think are 112 cars. They can load them within 12 or 24 hours, something like that, which makes it very efficient for the railways, where you can put a whole train load of cars in there. And they did give the grain companies by then some money to facilitate them putting these big tracks.

NP: So it would be sidings essentially off the main line?

WP: That is correct. When it really started to move was when Sask Pool built 12 big concrete elevators, and of course, that got everybody the game. We built one at Yorkton, one at North Battleford, one at Falcon, one at Bow Island, one at Clear Lake. Then we took over the other concrete elevators.

NP: In the meantime, the elevator that was built in 1920 at Thunder Bay, you said that the entire thing was not built at that time. What part was built first?

WP: That's correct. The main workhouse, and we still use it. It was run by ropes, and now of course, you got gear-unit drives. The cleaners had a big, long belts and stuff, and of course, they'd have been [inaudible], and we had to deepen the slip to handle the bigger ships. I would say our terminal was certainly the smallest one down there. We did add some capacity. I think the last one was built in 1961.

NP: So it was essentially silos?

WP: Yes, grain silos. We ended up with about 45,000 tonne space, which is pretty small for a terminal, and we can unload about 22 cars. We were trying to get a little larger for it, but we certainly are not in the club with the big guys, but it is still profitable, because we run it pretty clean, and it works out.

NP: It is a lovely elevator!

WP: Oh, there you are.

NP: I like it.

WP: Good for you. Good for you.

NP: It is quite elegant, I think.

WP: Yes.

NP: Who designed it? Do you remember or do you know that?

WP: I am going to say C.D. Howe. It might have been another company that designed the original one. I know C.D. Howe built part of it. An interesting story, at the time around the '80s, I think, or '70s, UGG had a terminal. They had decided to deepen their slip. They were taking the fill out of the slip and putting it up on the bank to fill it in so that they can make better track. They disturbed the equilibrium of the bank and the terminal fell over into the water.

NP: The UGG?

WP: Yes, the UGG terminal, and maybe you were there when it tipped over?

NP: No. Was this the UGG M Terminal? The UGG near the one nearer?

WP: No. It was the McCabe House, and it is further down. A and B. I think it was the A House that would be rebuilt.

NP: Down at the north end?

WP: That's right.

NP: Okay.

WP: It tipped into the slip. There was quite a kerfuffle and eventually dug it out. Then the insurance company got very worried that they were going to have all the terminals, evaluate the terminals every year. We had our terminal evaluated by a major engineering company here in Winnipeg. The guy phoned me or wrote me a letter and said, "Your terminal has moved four inches." I thought, "Holy mackerel it's moved four inches. I'm dead meat!"

NP: Which way?

WP: I am dead meat because nobody would insure us and so forth. So I phoned the president of the company, and I said, "Are you sure this is right?" I will always remember his words, "Our engineers never make a mistake." I thought, "Oh God!" And anyways, I thought about some of it. There was a nice young fellow, and I will always remember his name, Ron Brenner. I said, "Ron, I have got this problem." Well, he said "I don't know if I can do anything, but I will go down and I will see."

NP: Who was Ron?

WP: Ron was an engineer, a small engineer who had a small engineering firm. Sometimes they are the best. He went down there, and he looked and looked, and he studied how they did it. Now it sounds very simple now, but they were sighting off a breakwater. There was a light on the breakwater. You remember the breakwater out there was a light on it? That is what they were using to sight the terminal. The terminal wasn't moving, the breakwater was moving! They sent me the bill, this big engineering firm, and I sent it back to them, and I said, "No, I am not paying it." I told them the story and never heard any more.

NP: How did he know the breakwater was moving?

WP: He set his tripod exactly where they had it, and he sighted it and I guess he could see that it had moved a little, and he thought, "Well." And he did some stabilization tests on the terminal, and he said, "No, the terminal is not moving, but that breakwater with the ice hitting it, it was the one that was moving."

NP: When you are talking about moving, it was sort of moving and not moving and staying?

WP: The ice hit the breakwater and just shifted it a little, and it showed up because this engineer was using it as a reference. That was an interesting story.

NP: He was worth his salary then!

WP: Yes, he was a good young fellow.

NP: As a young kid, I guess, what were your first memories of the grain trade?

WP: I guess I could say that I grew up living with my dad and my grandfather. They would talk the grain business, and I would listen. But I wasn't going into the business, as I mentioned to you. My first experience was at Olds and then Regina. I spent my lifetime in Winnipeg. I guess I was a little bit of a rebel. That is not the right word, but I didn't want to be conventional. Before I built Yorkton, I went to see Mac Runciman at UGG. I said, "Mac, I think there is a better way of building elevators. I think they are building them in the United States." So he said, "Well Paul Earl--." Maybe you are going to interview Paul. Paul is out of the university now. He said, "Paul, we will let Paul go down with you."

NP: Who was Paul?

WP: Paul Earl was with UGG in those days, and now he is out of the university. He just wrote a book on the demise of the Pools. Paul is a good friend of mine, and I have got to say that I would like it to come out that Paul was not an engineer and not in the country operations. But he went down and maybe he gave a report to the boys, and they never bought his story.

But the other guy was Art Tooth of Pioneer Grain. I went and saw Bruce Macmillan, or somebody, was president of Pioneer Grain, and I knew Art pretty well, and I said "How about going down and look at what they are doing in the States?" I remember Art was a boisterous kind of guy, "Wooden elevators are good enough for us," he said. So anyway, this outfit came up from Salina, Kansas, Gravis International, and they flew us back in a little plane, and that was the first time I have ever seen centre-pivot irrigation, where the big circles where they pivot. I looked and said, "What the heck is that?"

Then he told me. I got down there, and they were building these concrete elevators, and I said, "Well, they would never be any good up in Canada." "Why is that? I have built 20 of them this year." I said, "But we have a lot more different grains and grades than you guys have. You have corn and wheat and soybeans. We have flax and rye and all these other damn things." So we never did do business with them, and UGG didn't do anything. Paul came back, and I guess his voice was in the wilderness like my voice was, and nobody else was doing anything.

I guess I had a little exposure in Ontario where they had concrete elevators, and I had my experience out at Transcona. So, I found that concrete was not a bad way to go. But I wanted to build something in Yorkton as we were downtown. We had to go on the edge of town. Of course, the Americans, they still had wooden elevators too, but they were building these big concrete elevators and that was in 1980. I don't think our people started until well in the '90s. I could not get anybody interested.

NP: When you look back on your career in the grain business, is there something you are especially proud of that you accomplished over that time? It sounds like the concrete elevators were one.

WP: Yes, that was one. And I am still alive. I still go to the office, but not every day, but I go one or two times a week. That is an interesting question. I feel very fortunate to have been in good health. I have seen an awful lot of companies and an awful lot of my friends that have disappeared. I think a lot of that should never have happened, but that is another story. I guess I am proud that I was able to make the right decisions, I guess, and work hard.

NP: No regrets about ending up doing what you didn't want to do?

WP: No, I don't think so. My uncle Elmer, and he said, "Bill, it doesn't matter what you do, but whatever you do, don't change unless you find something better." I never found anything better, and I have often thought I got in, and it was something like going

into any business. You start off as a grunt, and you just keep puddling along. As I said to somebody one time, “The only reason I advanced was people died or retired or quit.” The next thing I know, “Bill, take that job.” I ended up, I guess, I could have been more successful or done things differently, but I think I have made a little dent in the world.

NP: The last time that I talked with you, I picked up a pamphlet from your office about the Butterball turkeys. How does that fit in to Parrish & Heimbecker?

WP: I guess we look at our company, which will be 100 years old next April, of two families staying together which was remarkable to have one family stay together one generation. It is astounding. I am going to drift a little bit away from Butterball and will come back.

Herb Heimbecker in 1964—that was after Burt Cross died—there was a meeting of directors. There was Harry Heimbecker, Herb Heimbecker, Fred Danchford, and myself. They made Harry chairman, Herb president, and me vice-president. That was about 1964, I think. Herb and I were together before that, but all together 50 years.

Now, we had differences, and he used to make me bloody mad at times, and more likely I did the same thing to him. But we had maybe a drink or two and get back to earth, and we were all right, and we were good friends. In fact, he had divorced his first wife, and I was his best man at his marriage. We had a good bond. He used to say, "Bill, you are the pussycat, and I am the mean guy." He was rougher and tough, I think, but we got along well. His wife said to us one time, and we were sitting, just Herb and I and his wife, and she said, "What do you attribute your success of you two guys being together that long?" Which I thought was a good question. I am glad she didn't ask me. I don't know what I would have said. Herb thought for a while and to show you what kind of guy he was, "Lack of greed." Neither of us ever worried about taking advantage of saying we want to make a success. You see the mess that is in the [inaudible], but neither of us ever thought that, but now I will get back to Butterball. Our business had grown originally elevator terminals, and we had two ships on the Great Lakes.

NP: What were their names?

WP: *Superior* and the *Hudson*, about 100,000 bushels and twin decks, and I worked on them one summer and that was another experience. Then we opened the Toronto office, and then we got into the flour and feed business. We bought Knechtel Milling at Hanover, later called New Life Mills, and then we bought Ellison Milling out in Lethbridge from Rita Ellison. We were in the flour milling business. We had the terminals. We bought a terminal in Owen Sound. It was started by the local community. Eventually, they wanted to sell out, and we bought that out.

Then our president of New Life Mills, which was Knechtel Milling, Cec Mayer—very good operator, and he still the director of our company—he improved the flourmill, enlarged it, put in modern equipment, and then he built up the feed business. He got about three or four feed mills and a number of farms. In those days, the farmers got old, and they wanted to sell out and we bought some [inaudible]. Well, then we hear that Pocklington, Peter Pocklington, whose great catch, Gretzky, a company called Gainers. His company had bought out Swift's. Swift's had come up from the United States, and they had been horrendously aggressive. They built feed mills, bought farms and packing plants all across Canada. They had the big packing plant here in Winnipeg, and they had a turkey processing plant out on Salter Street, and they had the same thing in Calgary, Edmonton, and down east. Swift's were selling out, and they sold out to Peter Pocklington.

You might want to know why Swift's sold out to Peter Pocklington, and I will tell you. Why I can tell you this is because when we bought the business from Peter Pocklington, we got the Butterball franchise, but it was a franchise we had to pay royalties. We had to go to Chicago, and we went down to Chicago and met the chairman of the board of Swift's because that is who we were dealing with the royalties. We asked him, "Why did you leave Canada?" He said, "You know there was a premier Blakeney in Saskatchewan, who decided that he in his wisdom was going to nationalize, provincialize I guess, all the potash mines and Swift's had a potash mine. They have potash in there." The guy in Chicago—shows you how fragile business can be—he said, "What did you say? They are going to take over our business? They can't take over our business. We own the bloody business. Sell everything in Canada." That is when he sold it to Pocklington.

Part of the reason he sold it to Pocklington was that Peter Pocklington had the Eskimo Oilers. What was Wayne Gretzky? I was going to call them the Edmonton, Oilers—the Eskimo Oilers. And this guy, the chairman of the board, was involved or owned the Chicago Blackhawks. So they kind of made a bit of a bond. That is why Swift's sold out to Peter Pocklington.

But then Peter got in trouble, and actually, it wasn't a bad sale for Swift's because their business was getting--. Some of their plants were obsolete and business had changed. So then Peter wanted to sell out, so that is how we got into it. We really bought it for the feed mills and the farms. We, all of a sudden, found that we were the turkey-processing business, which we were not expecting to be. It has been very interesting and very challenging because there is a turkey producing marketing board, which sets the price on the live birds. Then you have to process them and try to sell them in the supermarkets. One side you have producers that want to get the bird prices up. On the other side you have the lovely supermarkets, which you love to shop at that are beating the heck out of you. So you are caught in the pickle in the middle. We have done a lot of innovations and have closed down a lot of plants. We had one here in Winnipeg and one in Ingersoll, Ontario. We had a bunch of hatcheries and closed them down. As the business changed, again just like the elevators, they became more efficient, and we had to reorganize.

NP: Where is your plant now?

WP: Our only plant is in Hanover, Ontario, the same place as our major flourmill, New Life.

NP: When did you take over the business?

WP: We bought the business.

NP: Yes. Approximately--?

WP: I would say the middle '60s. I hope I am right, but maybe a little later. I should know that. That is the story of the Butterball Turkey.

NP: Was Swift's a family run company?

WP: No, I think it was American, and I think it was a stock company, and they were big in the United States too, and they spread up into Canada. The other major company was Canada Packers, and of course, it went by the board too. Both companies miss the boat, and I give Cargill credit. They were very shrewd. They got into the packing business in High River, Alberta, and what they did--. And they were just copying what had been done in the United States. In the United States, Chicago was the beef/cattle and beef killing plants of the United States, and that is where all the cattle went. Amour's were huge and [inaudible]. There was Iowa Beef and another one, and it went out to where the cattle were so they saved moving the cattle, and they killed the cattle out there. A totally different design of plants, all one floor, and these other ones, they used to send the cattle to the top with a Judas goat. Did you ever know the Judas goat?

NP: No.

WP: They'd send a goat up and all the cattle followed the Judas goat up to the top, and they would bring the Judas goat down and the cattle, *pfft*. If you remember the big plants over here, they were six stories high, and that is how they were. Put now they are all one storey, and they are very efficient. Canada Packers and, for that matter—well, Swift's is sold out—but Canada Packers never went that way. But Cargill did, and Iowa Beef came up here, and they both got the big plants in Alberta. That is how we got Butterball.

NP: Earlier on you just said in passing that you have seen other grain companies come and go and some of whom should not have gone, or I guess if something had been done differently. What changes have you seen in that respect from all of the players that were in the game in '49 when you started?

WP: Yes, when I started there were over 50 companies. I can remember Smith Murphy, they were two families. One was more dominant—Smiths—and they got into a disagreement, and they said, “We are parting company, and we are selling the company,” and that is what happened with Smiths Murphy.

NP: Did somebody buy them out?

WP: Smith Murphy changed to Reliance Grain, and Reliance Grain sold all their elevators to the trade. We bought a bunch at the time—and everybody who had a chance of buying—and I think we bought maybe 20 elevators.

NP: Now Reliance, I think, had an elevator in Thunder Bay?

WP: They would have had one, and I don't know who bought it. But I know Reliance Grain made up. They were not going to sell to the cooperatives that had be their competitor. Then Federal Grain merged with Searle Grain, and they had a disagreement, and they made up their mind that they could not sell the trade, so they sold to the Cooperatives. McCabe's, Charlie Kroft was the president, and he came to us and he said, "If Parrish & Heimbecker, Paterson's, National, and McCabe, we would become quite a force. We would have a big company." I talked it over with Herb, who was our president ,and we both felt, “No, I don't think that is the way to go.” So we stayed out of it and so did Paterson. McCabe and National got together and, like lots of marriages, they sometimes don't work out, and that didn't work out.

NP: When they got together was Mr. Kroft still involved?

WP: I think he may be retired at that time. National were bigger, but not as aggressive. Really, McCabe had a more aggressive people, and it didn't work out. Canadian Consolidated, Charlie Hayles' company, it was owned by American interest, and whether they got into a little trouble or whether they lost interest they eventually sold it to Ken Powell. The story was that Ken Powell sold it a year later to UGG and doubled his money. That is the story. Most grain companies either through misunderstandings or not being able to get along together have gone broke or had to sell out or got old and wanted to get out and didn't have any family coming in. So that is how most of those companies went down.

Of course, the cooperatives is another story with UGG. Cargill stayed here and Pioneer, of course. Richardson, George, has been very successful, and he likes the business. He is good. He's not just sitting up in his office. He gets out, and he did, but I don't think he does much now. Cargill being tremendously successful company in the United States. You should get a guy by the name of Dick Dawson to chat with you. He is in the phone book, Dick Dawson. He will keep you going for hours.

NP: He was with Cargill?

WP: He was with Cargill, and I think he was vice president of Cargill. Dick is a good friend of mine and you would get quite a kick out of talking to Dick. He will tell you an awful lot more stories. He is very interesting. Now what else do you want me to tell you?

NP: When I first started working on this project, I did a fair bit of reading about the grain trade and the various companies and other organizations that came together to make the industry work. My thought was—and I would be interested if you would agree with me or not—I think there are a lot of things in the Canadian grain system that have come together through the hard work and good planning of a lot of people to make what is a fairly small country a pretty successful player in the world market for grain products. Is that a fair assessment?

WP: Oh, I would say so. Americans grow a lot more grain, but I would say Canada is a world renowned for honest weights and honest grades. I would say that the handling system now is equal to anybody. A person was telling me down in Australia, they have four different railway tracks—widths—down there which I never knew. Which is very strange. I think our system handling grain is more likely as efficient as any. I think the companies that are left are sufficient that gives the farmer a competitive bid. We just took over an elevator at Glossop, Manitoba, from Pioneer just west of Minnedosa. I went out there for the opening for taking over it and so forth. My main scene there was that the reason, I think, it is like any business, it is good to have a competitor. The worst thing is to not have a competitor. That usually destroys the company that thinks it is left. That think they are going to be the winner. I give a good example of the Pools. They had 70 percent of the business at one time, and they had it, but competition is a wonderful thing. It keeps people more keen, and you need that. I guess the car companies are the exception, and that is another story.

NP: If we are talking about, you have made a big of a mention about the grades—fair grades—what is your company's interaction with Canadian Grain Commission then?

WP: Nothing particularly. We ship wheat from our elevators in western Canada to flour. We built an unloading facility at Breslau, Ontario, that we can ship directly from let's say Dutton, Manitoba, to Breslau, Ontario, unload it, and they transfer it into trucks to go to flourmills. It is graded, and I think the grading system is good. We get frustrated at times with it because, like everything, it is sometimes causes us problems. I mean that is normal. But generally speaking, it has been very successful.

I would say maybe if there is any criticism--. And on the weights there is no criticism, on the grade certificate there is no criticism. Possibly we maybe have been too tough on growing too much high-quality wheat. Now Canada is known for high quality wheat, and you don't want to destroy that, but there is, I think, a lot of countries now don't need to make their flourmills operate and their bakeries operate on lower quality wheat. To give you an example, we went over to Switzerland a number of years ago now to study flour-milling equipment, and Buhler/Miag was a major, beautiful, lovely company and successful. We went into a number of flourmills, and some of the wheat they were milling we would not make it into feed. It was terrible, but at night we would go out and have dinner and have a piece of bread, and it was as good as you could ever get. I am not a wizard at this, but I sometimes think when you get quality, you give up on something, and vice versa. If you get volume, you want to get lower protein and the baking quality is different. The Americans are not as fussy about that. They seem to have one dark northern and be able to handle it through the system. But if we have stayed on the maybe more pure varieties.

NP: Talking about the differences in the hardness of the wheat, I guess the quality of the wheat, what changes have there been in the products that you have handled over time?

WP: If you are talking wheat--.

NP: Grains just in general, just the mix of various products. Has it sort of one started out major and dropped off?

WP: That has changed to some degree. Canola came into the picture, and I think it is more dollar worth now than wheat. Barley was a very slow mover, and the Board were concentrating on wheat in those days. There was just a limited amount of freight, hopper cars or boxcars in those days that moved, so they really worked on wheat. I think barley has come a long way. Malting barley is the same. But you know, we are selling to Vietnam and China malting barley in containers. Oats has been a dramatic increase. The Board had oats and wheat and barley—oats were out of the Board. Charlie Mayer took it away from the Board or moved it to the trade and overnight farmers found they could grow oats. The trade was much more aggressive. I think the Board—and I am not saying this disparagingly—but like any human being or group of people, sometimes they can't do everything. We shipped oats, a lot of oats to the US. We got a guy down there and we shipped boatloads, carloads, and trainloads. We are a small player.

NP: In talking with another person, they had talked about initially that oats were a very big crop, and this is way back when horses were doing everything, and horses lived on oats. Then there was a dropping off of the oat trades, and you are saying now that it has come back up, or what is happening there?

WP: Like up in Yorkton, Grain Products and I think they call themselves have built an oat groat plant, and there is one in Portage LaPrairie owned by Viterra now, was owned by, I guess, Sask Pool at one time. There is an awful lot of oats going into products and there are not that many horses, but it is mostly going into human consumption, and there is a big demand for it.

NP: So there is a rise in demand then?

WP: And farmers can make good money. In a crop rotation they maybe make as much money if not more out of oats then on wheat.

NP: Why would that be?

WP: They don't have to put the inputs in and at the price. You get 100 to 150 bushels an acre of oats, and you get \$3 a bushel. You are talking \$300 to \$400 an acre. Whereas on wheat, you are lucky to get 30 bushels to an acreage, and it is \$3 or \$4 a bushel, and you are talking \$100 in gross return. Then you have a lot more input into wheat, and you have trouble with fusarium, and so forth. Soybeans are becoming a little more popular in Manitoba, which was never when I was young. Flax has gone by the board, and it is more of a speciality crop. Rye at one time was more popular, and it has gone by the board. Canola has been very successful, and it has been an Horatio Alger, whatever call it. It has been a very interesting growth.

NP: The farmers, what kind of connection would you say between the farmers and Parrish & Heimbecker?

WP: Our company has lasted 100 years, and one of our sayings was that we are an old established company with a reputation of doing business right. And it was established when I started, and it was a lot younger than it is now. I think we have continued that way. I never did and our people don't. We are aggressive, and we try and get as much grain as we can. We try and pay as good a price as we can and as honestly as we can. I knew other grain companies that had other operations. I think we have a good reputation in the country for being honest grain merchants. Yes, from my side of it. You will have to ask some farmers whether they agree with me.

NP: We will get there.

WP: Yes, you get a few and see what they say.

NP: Any thoughts about the Wheat Board?

WP: The Wheat Board is very interesting. There are two books put out by William Morriss, and I don't know if you have ever read them. I have read part of them and actually the chairman of the Wheat Board was George McIvor for 21 years. He was the second commissioner to the Wheat Board. The Wheat Board was set up because MacFarlane of the Central Selling Agency had decided to stay long and not hedge. Because when you hedge, you have to sell the futures. He was hoping the market would turn around, which it didn't, and the government ended up with 150 million bushels of wheat.

The Wheat Board at those days were not really started because of the farmer, but it evolved in that way. In those days George McIvor had 150 million bushels of wheat to sell. A good friend of my dad's, Charlie Folliet, was head salesman, and of course, when the Wheat Board started they took a lot of people out of the grain industry because the grain companies there were no future for some of them. George McIvor came from the Alberta Pool. He was general manager of the Alberta Pool in Alberta. I used to call him Uncle George and Aunt Merl. That is how close our families were.

I think the Wheat Board has done a good job. They are human beings, and of course, there will be a lot of criticism. "They should have done better, they should have sold more, they should have sold less," and so forth. I think they do a pretty aggressive job, and I think better than they use to do. There was a time when they were not too aggressive, but they are selling now pretty good.

The main thing with a lot of farmers is that they don't really care what they get for their grain as long as their neighbour doesn't get a penny more. They are terrible in this way. I went out to the country a couple of weeks ago and travelled to all our elevators in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The markets have doubled, and they come down again, the stock market, and I said to our manager, "Did any of the farmers sell on the bulge? Sold anything?" Very few sold anything. It is going to go higher, and now, of course, it is down. I guess in my simple mind, I have always thought of being a price averager. I would sell something today because tomorrow it is going to go one way or the other, and you are either going to be better or worse. Nobody on God's earth knows where the market is going to go. But no farmers took advantage of that. So I think that is one of the strengths of the Wheat Board. A lot of farmers like that the marketing decisions are taken out of their hands. That is a little tribute for you.

NP: You said earlier on when you first started talking about when the Wheat Board first came in that a lot of companies the business there was no business left for them. Can you expand on that a bit?

WP: I wouldn't say a great deal. There were still a lot of companies still active.

NP: We are talking 1930s here?

WP: Yes, what year was that? Charlie Folliett, for example, came out of the trade, and George McIvor came out of Alberta Pool. I think some of the middle management were people that the Wheat Board attracted. There was more of a grain man's board. Now most of those people that are in there have not grown up in this environment, so it is a little different than what it was.

NP: I remember one person I interviewed saying that his father was in the business at the time, and I didn't get out of it immediately, but he said a lot of the fun was gone when the Board came in.

WP: Well, it did because when I started, the Wheat Board was of course going. Oats and barley were pretty good, and I don't think there was feed wheat, but in the early days, there was wheat trading, and the pit was just loaded with people. It was pretty exciting! Of course, when the Wheat Board took over, all that business went. The Wheat Board bought from the farmer at an initial payment price and didn't hedge so there was no reason to have a future market. So a lot of those fellows were out of business.

NP: I just wanted to touch briefly on something you mentioned earlier too. You said you spent a summer on a ship. What was it like on a ship?

WP: In 1943, we were on the *SS Superior*, my cousin and I, and of course, they were short of people because they were all in the army and away at war. They sent us down there to work on this ship. It was interesting. The dirtiest job was you know those things were coal. You had firemen, but I never got to be a fireman. Then you put the coal in here, and it burns, and you take the clinkers out and sent them out the side of the ship. Then you got up to deck hand and that was pretty good. The nicest job was wheelsman, and it was nice and clean up there, and you just looked out and had to watch the compass. We went mainly from Port Arthur, Fort William to Owen Sound, Goderich.

These were small boats 100,000 bushels, and they were owned by our company. The reason we bought them was so that we could move our product down, and we could put maybe four or five different grains or grades of grain on that ship. There was a whole bunch of little compartments, so it saved our inventory. Instead of putting down a whole hold of something, they put down a little bit. What they called it now just-in-time inventory. We invented it back in whatever year and that was that.

NP: What happened to your ships?

WP: They eventually got old, and one went to the scrap heap and the other one ended up down in Florida. I saw it one time I was driving along, and I said to my wife, "God, that looks like it was the Superior. It looks like the ship I was on." So I inquired around, and it turned out it had come down and was moving cement from Florida over the Bahamas. Then ended up on the scrap heap. We bought nine ships one time after that, and we were quite ambitious. This fellow had gone broke.

NP: When approximately would this have been?

WP: That would be about the early '80s, I think. We bought these, and there were nine of them owned by a fellow by the name of Bob Pearson. He went broke, and so we went in to see the receiver, and we gave a bid, and we got them. They were about 250,000 bushels, I think. They eventually went to the scrap heap too.

NP: All of them?

WP: Yes, eventually they have all gone now. We had some experience on the lakes with the shipping, and now we don't. We hire.

NP: Do you have exclusive contracts with someone?

WP: Yes, we usually make a contract, and we will take a ship for three trips or whatever.

NP: Just talking a bit about Thunder Bay. I'm watching the time. What are your earliest memories of Thunder Bay?

WP: The earliest memories? That was my responsibility too. I used to go down there, and I can remember starting to upgrade that little old terminal of ours, and we slowly put in bigger motors to run the thing and electrified the cleaners and deepened the slip and so forth.

NP: Did you go there as a child?

WP: No. I went with my grandfather in 1943, I think it was. We went down there, and we were pretty young, I think about 17. I guess we were not that young, but I just faintly remember travelling with him. My experience with Thunder Bay was with the terminal.

NP: What was in that area? I am familiar with the Intercity area there, so when you first started doing the expansion were the Agricore—or there may not have been Agricore at that time—was it there the one right beside you now?

WP: It was built in 1920, and I would say not. We had three locations. I was looking that up the other day in the minute book, and they picked this one, and it was on the McIntyre River in Port Arthur.

NP: They had a choice of three locations?

WP: Yes. I think was one in Fort William and one was somewhere else, and they picked this one, which turned out to be okay. But maybe the terminals that we had a lot of them were there at that time, but I just don't remember when they were built.

NP: I know UGG M was built in 1912 or 1923.

WP: It was built by McCabe, and McCabe owned it originally. Well maybe not originally, but McCabe did own it.

NP: C.D. Howe built it, and it was a Government of Canada elevator initially.

WP: Then McCabe bought it and sold it to UGG eventually. They put a pile of money in it.

NP: McCabe?

WP: They put some, but UGG put a lot of money in it and then closed it down. That was done with a lot of terminals, and it could have been ours, too, for that matter.

NP: So trade through Thunder Bay has that changed over your time with the company?

WP: Oh yes. One time two thirds of the grain went through Thunder Bay, one third through to Vancouver, which is just the opposite now—one things through Thunder Bay and two thirds through Vancouver. We have always felt that Churchill was a horrendous pork barrel at a terrific cost to the taxpayer of Canada, which nobody seems to care. They were determined, the politicians, to have a port up at Churchill, but the costs has been prohibited. They move about 500,000 tonnes a year through there, and we move about 250,000 through our little terminal. Our terminal is pretty small.

NP: Are you mostly then, from what you said, mostly national deliveries as opposed to international deliveries? Is that fair?

WP: Oh yes, we are a Canadian company. We do sell malting barley to Vietnam. We do sell winter wheat to Buffalo. We sell peas to Cuba. We buy from the farmer. We ship to Thunder Bay or to Vancouver, and a lot of it is Wheat Board grain—wheat—and the other grains we find markets for.

NP: So the majority of your trade still goes through Thunder Bay then?

WP: No, I don't think that is quite right. I would say it might be about one third directly to eastern Canada, one third through Thunder Bay, and one third to Vancouver. Something like that. And a little goes up to Churchill, which we are not very happy about.

NP: Global is warming and the melting of the polar ice cap going to change your view of Churchill?

WP: I went to a dinner the other night, and the fellow speaking had been up there for 30 years, and it has dramatically melted there is no doubt about it. I think there will be a seaway through the Baring Sea. I guess it is pretty close to being that way now. Whether Churchill will ever be successful, I don't know. Up to now, it has been a very short season and terrific costs that railway up there you know. I would say the jury is out.

NP: Your elevator in Thunder Bay has been problem-free, would you say, for a few years through the history? It wasn't off four inches?

WP: No, I would say we have kept upgrading it and improving it. But being a small terminal it is a little different. We thought of selling it or closing it and going with somebody, and that is what we did in Vancouver with Pioneer Grain. We now are in partners with Paterson on a terminal in Vancouver, but I think we found it is good to have a terminal. It gives you some flexibility you sometimes don't get with the bigger terminals. I think the terminal has been pretty good over the years, yes.

NP: One group we have not talked about is the railways and how they impact on your business?

WP: I will tell you a story about the railways. I can't remember which year it was, but I don't know if I ever got it recorded, but Gerry Vogel of the Wheat Board called a meeting for all the grain industry. There was a hollow square, and I was sitting beside a guy by the name of Bill Winslow. I remember that quite clearly. A guy that was with CP Rail, a big guy by the name of Ian Sinclair, and he got up, and he said, "Since I was a wee broth of a lad, I have not seen a change in the prairie sentinel, your wooden elevators." Well, I was young and a little more frisky, I guess, and I put up my hand, and Gerry Vogel tried to ignore me because he thought, "Bill, be quiet. You are just going to cause trouble."

Anyways, eventually he acknowledges me, and I got up, and I said "I was a wee broth of a lad, and I have not seen a change in a boxcar." Ian Sinclair was sitting beside the vice president Ray Allison, and he looked at Ray—and Ray and I were buddies—and I guess he could have throttled me, but I went on to say that on the Great Lakes, they had given accelerated depreciation to build big ships, and they did. They gave General Electric and some of these companies terrific rates so that they got some of the big ships filled, and you remember those days. I said, "This is maybe one way of solving it because the railways had not changed the

boxcars.” Maybe it triggered something, and I don’t know. I wouldn’t want to take credit for it, but after that, the government realized that they could not keep moving grains for 14 cents/hundred, and they changed the freight rates, and the Crow Rates went, and they built these hopper cars, and it was about that time when it happened anyways. And I like to take credit for it.

NP: The hopper cars made the big difference to your operation?

WP: Major. Oh, yes.

NP: I imagine it meant upgrades for you?

WP: Yes, the first one we put a spout on it, and we could load the hopper cars. It was a big deal, and of course, these bigger elevators now. You know we were a little stubborn in looking south. At least I got on an airplane and went down to Salina, Kansas, to see. We went down to Anderson’s at Toledo and found out what they were doing. They make lots of mistakes too, but they were ahead of us in the grain handling, and they had a lot of hopper cars in those days. Yes, the hopper cars, and I don’t know what the next step. But a fellow was telling me they made a bunch of aluminum hopper cars which they have. I was out in the country for a week a few weeks ago, and there were strings of them and hundreds of them and maybe thousands of them. They have 3,000 all together. Well, they are aluminum, and now the railway has changed from charging you so much per hundred weight or per tonne, and they have gone to a flat rate on cars. Nobody wants these aluminum cars to put too much into them, so I think there will be a lot of aluminum coming to the market. They are just sitting up there.

NP: Who built these?

WP: The government built a lot of them to enable the railways to get in to be more aggressive moving grain. Saskatchewan and Alberta built a bunch.

NP: This aluminum ones, is this the second generation because I think it was back in the ’80 that they had them?

WP: They were, but somebody told me they built them for the Churchill run, which now they don’t need because they can move these bigger cars very slowly up to Churchill. It was not a good deal.

NP: The aluminum is smaller than the regular ones?

WP: They are smaller that is correct. It didn’t matter when you were paying by the tonne.

NP: Lighter?

WP: They were lighter, which is why they thought they would end up in Churchill. It is not a big deal in the overall scope, but there they sit.

NP: So good relationships with railways? They always seem to come up in the newspaper articles.

WP: The usual love/hate relationship. They wanted to charge us demurrage on cars that were supposed to be spotted at our terminals, but they were still sitting in Kenora, Ontario. We would give them hell about that, and then they promised us cars, and we would bring our crew out, and they would not turn up. Then we would give them hell. But generally speaking, we noticed they are moving much more grain than they were. Of course, these big elevators, they can put 25, 50, or 100 cars in them and pick them up the next day. That makes it much more efficient for the railway. There is still a love/hate relationship.

NP: When you are talking about efficiencies at the elevator at Thunder Bay, then you must have seen a fair number of changes there in the efficiencies in that operation too from, when, the end of the war?

WP: At that time, we had those boxcars, and they use to unload box cars, and they would give the guys a shovel. You would pull it back, and then it goes charging. So they had to climb into the car and climb up to the grain and then pull this shovel back and forth. It was pretty dirty and hard work. I remember I put in what they call an augermobile. The guy would sit there in the augermobile and go in and take the grain out. It was reasonably efficient but not that good. But then the hopper cars came in, and it has made it very efficient. You have a machine that opens up and slides at the bottom and it is a fairly clean job now.

NP: It is a big screwdriver?

WP: Yes, like a big screwdriver. The only one bad thing about the railways is that they got these cars, and they were given \$1,500/year to upgrade them, and our people beefed that they never seen much of that \$1,500 and most of the cars are getting older. A lot of them can't shut the slide, and the doors are falling off the top. So that is a problem.

NP: They have seen a lot of service, and they do not last forever?

WP: Sure, you said it.

NP: With your staffing, I assume that Parrish & Heimbecker went through the same computerization?

WP: Oh yes. We put in automatic scales and that cuts in crew I would say down from about 20 to 10 when we were all through because it was pretty efficient, you know.

NP: What happened to all your old stuff?

WP: All the old stuff?

NP: I like old stuff.

WP: I know, and you have mentioned that. I went down there when I was taking over these elevators at Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw, I got thinking about cleaning. There was not much cleaning of the country in those days. But they had a cleaning charge that worked it into the tariff, and also, I thought--. And by that time, the freight, which was \$30/tonne—my simple little mind—I thought if we can clean more in the country, we would make \$4/tonne cleaning the grain, and then we would save the freight on that, and then we would sell the screenings. I remember I went down there, and they were closing these terminals down there, and I bought a number of cleaners. I was kind of the "Johnny Appleseed." And I forgot the guy. What is his name? Black.

NP: Yes, Mr. Black.

WP: Mr. Black and I made a lot of deals, and I owe him a pair of cowboy boots. I bought a lot of this stuff. I remember Lorne Hehn coming up at one meeting, and he said, "Cleaning in the country will never catch on." At one of these meetings, and I was sitting there, and I said "Lorne, I don't think you are going to be right because I am doing it." Now everybody does it, and we were in the early part doing it, because I could just see plus, plus, plus, plus if you can do it.

NP: The cleaning equipment that you took from some of the elevators in Thunder Bay ended up where?

WP: In Winnipeg, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Yorkton.

NP: In the country elevators?

WP: Yes, in the country elevators.

NP: In the concrete elevators?

WP: Sure.

NP: Okay, so it is still useful?

WP: Oh yes. All we needed in a country elevator was a cylinder machine and a screen machine, which are two different cleaners. We could clean a car an hour and they just puddle away, and we sent them up. I would say 80 percent of the grain now going to Thunder Bay, and maybe even higher, or Vancouver, is cleaned grain.

NP: Just sticking to my comments about old stuff, all of the reports that you are talking about the engineering reports, the construction diagrams and so on and forth of Parrish and Heimbecker, are all of that documentation still in Thunder Bay or is it here?

WP: I have no idea. I think they are mostly in Thunder Bay. We have a graveyard in Winnipeg, but every so often there is a house cleaning, and I would say I see our superintendent right now have a whole bunch of plans. We are building an elevator right now at Tisdale, and he has these for a while, and after it is done, and they have best intentions, but oh God, they get all over. I don't know where they are.

NP: You don't have archives in your operation?

WP: No. Not a good one. The only thing that I have of real interest was that some guy was very active when this elevator at Winnipeg tipped over, and he has got a pictorial story of it from beginning to end, and it is wonderfully done.

NP: Was that the one that Paul Earl had done or a different fellow?

WP: Paul did not do that. This was done by CP Rail in 1912. When it tipped over, some guy took these pictures and put them in a book. When we bought the elevator from Marathon and I went over and looked at it, and the fellow says "You can keep this book if you buy the elevator. If not, you have to bring the book back." Anyway, the book, if you are ever in Can West Global, I would gladly show it to you. It is just picture of it all, but it tipped over and now they wrote it.

NP: What size is that elevator? Is it still around the one that tipped over?

WP: Yes.

NP: Is it still operating?

WP: Yes, it is still in operation, and it is a concrete elevator. A million bushels built in 1912.

NP: Okay. One million.

WP: Yes, a good size. They were pretty ambitious in those days.

NP: One of the things that we wanted to do to tack in off to this project will be our next effort is we wanted to start a collection or at least an inventory of the terminal elevators or elevators of that size. They were the ones you were--. Obviously your one in Thunder Bay is an important one, so we wanted to document what historical information there is still around, so that we know where it is, and the elevators in Goderich.

WP: In Owen Sound. We do not own Goderich, but we do own Owen Sound.

NP: Oh, do you?

WP: I would say it is going to be labour of love.

NP: Yes, it would be, and all of this is.

WP: It is the odd guy that is very good, and the company is very dedicated. But I think of the elevator I built in Yorktown and Hamlin, and I don't even know if I got a set of engineering plans what it was built. I would say to the contractor, "How about giving me a set?" "Oh, next week Bill," and I would get busy and never see anything.

NP: Perhaps the engineering firms would have those?

WP: Oh, gosh. I don't even know.

NP: Even there, though, there have been the buy outs.

WP: Right. You can try but I think you are in for quite a fight well not a fight, but quite a job to even find them. I don't know how you would do it.

NP: Yes. UGG M, which we had sort of targeted for our grain elevator project, the bigger one, they have sitting in their office building—which is exterior to the elevator—they have a set of plans all the way back right to the first engineering drawings. So we keep asking them don't throw those out.

WP: Yes. We might have them down in Thunder Bay. I have never asked our guys.

NP: I should ask. That is Mr. Polhill probably.

WP: Yes. Tommy Polhill, and you can ask Tommy, and tell him Parrish says he demands you to give him those.

NP: Okay, or don't throw them out.

WP: Yes, don't throw them out. [Laughs] At least you can go and look at them.

NP: Let me just take a quick look at what I have left here. I have gone past time, and I don't like to do that. Actually, we are on the topic now. Were there any questions you thought I should have asked that I didn't ask?

WP: I am not sure. The opening you mentioned about the demise of a lot of the companies, and we never went into the demise of the Pools. I would not want to beat that to death, but there was a comedy of errors that made that happen. You can ask Paul Earl. He will give you the whole load. But I think the biggest thing was that the directors lost direction, and I guess you can say the same thing about the car companies lost direction. You can criticize them.

NP: In what way did they lose direction?

WP: They had an elevator in every town, the Pools. I think that was their Achilles' heel. You can get rid of them, yes, you can get rid of them, but not in my town. Your town. So they could not make the decision. Then they brought management in, and management should answer to a board of directors, and in this case, the board of directors answered to management pretty well. Don Loewen and Gordon Cummings pretty well ran those plants, and they were good talkers and the original fathers of the board that said, "We want a grain company, and we want it to be successful, and we want to compete." I think the directors near the end were farmers that said, "Oh I don't know what the hell to do. I don't know."

NP: Things were getting complicated.

WP: They were broke. We went through a bad time, and when we started to close down wooden elevators and building concrete elevators, there wasn't that much left over. In fact, I remember saying to our board of directors, "I will make you more money with that wood elevator in Yorkton, that old wood elevator, but if we are going to be in business, that concrete elevator will eventually make us more money." Whether that is how the Pools were very critical of anybody building concrete elevators. They gave Cargill hell about building those two ones in Rosetown and Elm Creek. They didn't give Weyburn Terminals a bad time because they were all farmers. The trade were slow in moving into the concrete elevator business. Maybe the trade were a little quicker in trying to rationalize because the problem was the Pools.

NP: With the Pools, I think one of the—and I am feeding into what you said—that one of their strengths was their connection to the community, and the big weakness was that when you close down the wooden elevator, that took a real heart out of a lot of those communities.

WP: That's right, and if you made a decision to take that elevator out, you were a bad guy. "I will never haul another pound to the Pool."

NP: Whereas the trade, as you call it, didn't have that message of--.

WP: I closed down Moosomin and said, "Guys, Mr. Farmer, I can't make any money," and grumble, grumble, grumble, but he didn't have the same affiliation as the other. I can remember a couple of places that the Pools were so strong. At Allen we would have an elevator there empty, and our manager would be standing on the driveway, and the trucks would be lined up for miles. Not miles. Well, maybe not miles, but it looked like it.

NP: It looked like it.

WP: It looked like it to him anyway. Waiting to get into the Pool, waiting for a couple of boxcars to come in so they could haul. They wouldn't haul to our guy who had space.

NP: I was talking to another of our narrators earlier on, and I was saying, again from my reading going back to the early stages of the grain industry, it almost seems that we have come full circle in relation to the Pools.

WP: Oh, for sure.

NP: They didn't exist, and they had to or at least the farmers felt that they had to, and now they no longer exist.

WP: Well, even Viterra it is owned 25 percent by venture capitalist in New York. The farmers have got nothing there. Now you can say a guy who is hauling to Manitoba Pool in Brandon, he really didn't have a big chunk of Manitoba Pool, but he did feel and did talk to the directors, and it was his company or he felt it was part of his company. But now Viterra, the head office is in Calgary. They have a few people in Regina, and Cargill is down in Minneapolis. Who is left? Paterson, Pioneer, and ourselves.

NP: What will happen, do you think, anything?

WP: It is hard to tell on Viterra. Its stock is half of what it was. They have got big dreams and whether they are going to get into more trouble I don't know. Sometimes they bite off more than they can chew.

NP: Did they shut down the whole operation in Saskatchewan then move their head offices to Calgary?

WP: Well, no. They sneakily did it. What they did--. And of course, UGG were here and Manitoba Pool were here and there were Agricore United here in the CanWest Global Building. Brain Hayward was president of UGG. They had their offices in Regina. Mayo Schmidt likes living in Calgary. He likes to have horses, and he moved out there to the executive suite is out in Calgary. I think they still have some of the accounting in Regina. When Sask Pool was at its heyday, Regina was Sask Pool. There was a big Sask Pool building. I have not been in Regina a while and I don't know who is there now. But really Viterra is a corporate or stock company.

NP: Stock company.

WP: And the farmers have nothing to say about it now. They lost a lot of money too. The farmers lost all their money on deposit that they put into a patronage dividend and then--. What else did they lose?

NP: Were they aware of what they lost do you think?

WP: I will tell you a good story about that, and this is what I believe. You and I will brag about when we win, but you want to tell me a few things that you have lost? You don't want to talk about that, and that is the same thing with farmers. I tried to find out one time. Some guy said, "Oh ask old Charlie. Charlie will tell you how the farmers came out." So I phoned old Charlie, and Charlie,

“Well, I got out just before. But my old neighbour didn't do as good you know” And I said "Charlie, you are likely lying, and I don't think I'm going to get much.” But I think the farmers lost quite a bit of money, but you never know.

NP: They may have lost money collectively, but individually maybe it wasn't enough to--.

WP: I would say right now the stock market is down 40 percent, and have you heard many people come up to you and say, "You know I just lost 40 percent of my equity"? I have heard one guy grumble the other day, but most people do not want to talk about losers but give me a winner. I want to talk about a winner to you.

NP: The same vein, the changes in the Commodities Exchange from the rip-roaring place that it was.

WP: Yes, my son was chairman of the board when they changed it, and he came in to see me one day, and he said, "What do you think about this?" I said, "I will miss it." I told him because I still think it was a good pricing mechanism. It was very complex, much more than people ever expected it.

NP: So this is when they went to the pit?

WP: Then they went to electronic trading, and we were one of the first exchanges in North America to go electronic trading. My son took a lot of static over that. Being chairman of the board, they had to beat somebody. But it was the right move it turned out. I looked at it—your machine here, your telephone, your computer—electronic trading had to come. But our people have adjusted to it quite well. So it has worked out.

NP: Now the changeover in the ownership?

WP: The ownership--. And I guess these things are going to happen. This guy paid a big dollar for it, and whether he is getting his money's worth, I don't know.

NP: Would that make any difference to the trade here in Winnipeg?

WP: No business is carried on. It as a facility, and they charge us a fee for trades, but every day, and it is like a Dutch auction. If our guys bought so much grain, let's say, canola over the night, they see the bids and they see the offers and they can offer down and then trade it or bid up. It shows right on the screen. It seems to be successful.

NP: And no change of control is not an issue like being closely tied and responsible for what is happening?

WP: No, as far as I know, we have not had any trouble, and I think I would know if we had trouble.

NP: Okay. Do you know other people I should interview?

WP: I think you should do Dicky Dawson.

NP: Dicky Dawson, okay. And where would I find Mr. Dawson?

WP: R.L.M. Dawson and here at home.

NP: R.L.M.

WP: Yes R.L.M. Dawson

NP: Okay.

WP: If you have a phone book, I will show you. I think the other guy that came over is Morris Dorosh, but I don't think Morris is the guy you want to talk to, but he is a very interesting character.

NP: Who is he with?

WP: He writes Agriweek or Agriline, and you might know him.

NP: I beg your pardon?

WP: He writes an agricultural business magazine, but he was not in the industry. Who else would I tell you to get?

NP: What about from your company, people that have retired starting with the seniors?

WP: You can get Jim Astwood, and it might be interesting for you.

NP: Jim?

WP: Astwood.

NP: What was he with your company?

WP: He was a comptroller to start with and secretary treasurer, now secretary of the company. Jim and I have been together for 45 years.

NP: Oh, I would get him to talk about you then. [Laughs]

WP: Yes, that is right, and he would work me over! Jim and I have had a remarkable relationship. As I said, one time all the office was empty. I had lots of little management and no senior management, and I had a bookkeeper that wasn't too quick, so Jim came along, and he changed everything pretty good. R.L.M. Dawson, where the hell are you? You got to be here.

NP: Who were your previous managers in Thunder Bay, and are they still with us?

WP: Frank MacLean, I think was our first one. Holman was the second one. Len Holman, I think his name was. Then there was Jack Burnett, then Larry Carroll, then Gene Prystay.

NP: How is that spelt?

WP: P-R-Y-S-T-A-Y.

NP: And that is Jean as in Eugene?

WP: Eugene, that is correct. And then Tom Polhill.

NP: Okay, so is Mr. Prystay still around?

WP: He is still alive, and Tommy will know where to get a hold of him.

NP: Okay.

WP: Larry Carroll is gone. He smoked three packs a day and that is what done him in. That is funny. Dawson, how do you spell Dawson?

NP: D-A-W-S-O-N, I think. I think so, unless he is unlisted.

WP: Richard, or maybe it's under Dick. No, it shouldn't be under Dick.

NP: Okay, that is close enough. I can probably track them down.

WP: That makes me mad that I can't see it, and it should be under R. Dawson. Randy Dawson, R.A. Dawson, R. Dawson. This one in Tuxedo is the wrong one. Isn't that funny?

NP: Now just from the standpoint if we ever do go ahead and get some things set up on the Thunder Bay waterfront, and we were looking at things that we should commemorate, what do you think would be important? Events, things that would be important? We are looking at the international or trade through the Thunder Bay area.

WP: I know what you are trying to do. I don't know. You are thinking of a park with a bronze something or other or a building or an edifice?

NP: Actually, what we wanted—and this was what our feasibility study did was—we had two options. The non-elevator option, which would be like plaques around, and we would have something like elevator row for however many are left. And let's take Parrish & Heimbecker there would be a little tour, even just outside, and you don't need to get inside, and then when you got to the Parrish & Heimbecker site, there would be an audio recording of the history of that. The other thing we were looking at was something—and remember I said something—that we were looking at trying to focus on keeping the history of these huge elevators and that we would have a building where we would house the records of those so that instead of people tossing them into landfills, we would have an important piece of Canada's history. There are photographs.

WP: I think my feeling would be that there is only 200 people left in the grain industry now or maybe 250, eight companies maybe less I suppose. The history should be saved.

NP: Two hundred and fifty people left?

WP: Yes, working in all the elevators, and that is about all.

NP: Okay.

WP: There was about 2,500 originally in the elevators, 20 elevators. I think there is a lot of pictures of grain terminals, ships loading at grain terminals, and maybe it might be a different way of doing it, but I am not sure how much your budget would be, but it would be nice to have a nice building overlooking the lake with a lot of nice windows and then a room with all the pictures of all the terminals. And maybe you could have an audio there where you could say, "This is Parrish & Heimbecker Terminal," and this would start *blah, blah, blah*, and go onto the next one and something like that, and the history of each terminal. A lot of the terminals have been torn down, but I think one could still get pictures of them.

NP: Before you go on for pictures, what kind of pictorial collection do you people have?

WP: I don't think we have very much you know.

NP: Didn't your family?

WP: There is Richard L. M. and--. Damn it all. Here is his number.

NP: Okay.

WP: [Censored]

NP: Okay.

WP: And I think I would leave Jim Astwood off. You can ask Jim, and he is in the company, but if he wants to do it.

NP: Is he still there?

WP: Yes, he does come in every day. Or you could do is say to the girl, "Could you leave this message for Jim Astwood to call me?" Because Jim, like me, I don't come out every day. That is why I didn't do it the other day. I forgot what came up because I couldn't make it that day.

NP: Something extremely important, I am sure.

WP: I am sure it was very important. [Laughs] But like I am not in the office today but I have to go in tomorrow to meet somebody at noon tomorrow. Then I have a meeting in the afternoon, but you know I might not be in Thursday or Friday.

NP: Going back to these pictures, do you have the Parrish & Heimbecker yearbook, every year?

WP: No, but a few books of all the divisions showing Butterball Turkeys and the country elevators and the flour mills.

NP: And you keep these, and is there is a history of these things going back?

WP: We put them out there.

NP: What about the Minutes Books, for example? You must have those right back to the beginning?

WP: Yes, right back to the very beginning.

NP: Okay.

WP: We are missing one, and Jim say he thinks the auditors have it and never gave it back. The rest of them are there and nobody ever looks at the books anyways. But the others were started and kind of interesting. Our company was always more conscious of people. They put out a book with all the people in it and all our employees and put the years that they were there. They had a picture of the terminal, and we had a terminal. We had a terminal then. A picture of North Battleford elevator and a couple of other things. That was back in 1954. Herb Heimbecker put out two brochures. He had a guy do it, and then Bill put out the last brochure and basically we have one of the country elevators and one in Vancouver and one in Mississauga now, and one on Butterball and one on pea processing plants, but that is all we had.

NP: Did you use to do--. And I am thinking of Richardson now, and they would have their 30-years employees or 25-year employees. Did you have celebrations like that?

WP: We have never done that. I think we gave them a gold watch, and that is in fact when I got my gold watch and am very proud of it. It is 4:30 you might add. [Laughing] But Richardson is so big that they can do that.

NP: Yes, and they have lots of people.

WP: Our company never tired to do that, though we do it at P&H Foods. They have a 25-year.

NP: Perhaps I will come by some day and see what is in your collection.

WP: You come by and give me a call before you come.

NP: Okay. Thank you very much, and this is the official turning off of the recorder here and appreciate your input for sure.

End of interview.