

Narrator: Gary Woodbeck (GW)

Company Affiliations: Paterson Steamship Ltd.

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Summary: Retired director of traffic and marine operations for Paterson Steamship Ltd. Gary Woodbeck describes his long career in grain transportation. He discusses his first role out of high school as the paymaster on Paterson's first computer, and he shares details of how the crews were paid and of his interactions with the ship's crews in port. He recalls memorable captains, habits of the crews, and changes to ship staffing over his career. He then describes moving up to assistant traffic manager and recounts a typical day coordinating with ships and ports for loading and unloading. He discusses common routes, cargos, and ships on the Great Lakes, as well as coordination with Lake Shippers Clearance Association. Woodbeck then recounts becoming traffic manager and then director of traffic and marine operations, with the added responsibilities of coordination with the Winnipeg office, of sales marketing, of staffing, and of sitting on boards as Paterson's representative. Throughout the interview, he discusses common conditions and occurrences in lake shipping, like weather challenges, wintertime storage, ship inspections, and labour relations with the Seafarers' International Union. He shares major changes, like the increasing size of ships, improved communication technology, improved health and safety standards, and newly built or bought ships in the fleet. Woodbeck shares several memorable stories, including about the accident with the *Windoc*. Other topics discussed include his involvement with the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, the Paterson Foundation, and working under Senator Paterson and others in the Paterson family.

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Time, Speaker, Narrative

NP: The first day of spring as we know it, although yesterday was the official first day of spring, so it is March 21, 2013. This interview is being conducted on Cumberland Avenue in Thunder Bay. Monika McNabb is sitting in on this interview as well. I will have the person who will be the star of today's show introduce himself.

GW: I am Gary Woodbeck, and I presently the Manager of Armstrong the Mover on Cumberland Street and formerly worked for N.M. Paterson for 30 years from 1972 to 2002.

NP: We were talking just before we started recording, saying that you grew up in Thunder Bay.

GW: I was born and raised in Thunder Bay and went to school at Franklin School, Victoria Park School, and Westgate and lived all in those areas during my years of growing up. Both my parents were born in Thunder Bay, and actually my grandfather was also born in Thunder Bay. So, the Woodbecks have been in Thunder Bay well over 100 years.

NP: Were any of your predecessors, Woodbecks—or say on your mother's side as well—were any of them involved in the grain trade?

GW: None of them were involved in the grain trade.

NP: How did they manage to escape that?

GW: My mother's farther worked on the railroad as a cook but died. My mother lost both her parents at a very young age. My father's father worked at Canada Packers for almost 50 years.

NP: Did they have an operation here then, Canada Packers?

GW: Yes, Canada Packers were on Simpson Street right where the underpass is. It used to be Frank's Locker, if you remember that. That building at one time was Canada Packers. Actually, cows were slaughtered there. It was there for 50 or 60 years.

NP: As a child growing up, did you grow up near elevators at all? You mentioned Franklin Street school.

GW: I had no dealings with people that worked in elevators. My father was a carpenter, and my mother was a bookkeeper. I had nothing to do with any type of elevators or shipping or anything growing up.

NP: How did you get involved with Paterson Steamship Lines?

GW: It was pretty simplistic. In 1972 was just the starting of computers. Paterson's is located in Westfort and close to Westgate High School. They had a staff of people that were 50 and over. They were bringing in their first computer to do payroll. They had no concept of what they were getting themselves into. The manager at the time just phoned Westgate and said, "Do you have someone that is good with this new computer thing?" In those days, computers were not what they are now. They were just big fancy adding machines more than anything. They gave them my name and phoned me up, and I started three days later.

NP: Where you still at school or were you graduated?

GW: I was still at school. I had not even graduated.

NP: Did you graduate, or did you just go straight to work?

GW: Yes. All my courses were business courses. So all my teachers sat down and agreed that I would get more business education the next three months of working than I would ever get from a school. Everyone passed me, except English. I had to go write, and my boss gave me the day off to go write English. I graduated but really didn't finish the last four months. I started April 1, 1972.

NP: The elevator was still standing at that time?

GW: The elevator was still standing. It was being operated in those days by Richardson's. We had a lease with them, and I think it was 1973 or 1974 that they actually stopped shipping out of there. It took them a couple of years to knock her down.

NP: This is asking a lot for you to think back to your first few days, few weeks, a couple of months on the job. Were you curious about the shipping and the grain business that went on around you or were you focused on what you were doing?

GW: By 1972 the office—I don't know if you have seen the Paterson office—but it quite a large office and it had one time 30 to 40 people in it. By the time I got there, there was 17 people in it, and we were all just shipping. The grain business had been stopped by then. Richardson was doing the operations out of their terminal, this side of town in Current River. We really had no impact or were not really doing anything with the elevator ourselves. We were strictly shipping.

The first few years I was there I was just doing payroll. I came in there and was running a computer and had 1000 employees and every week just trying to keep up. It went to 1000 employees and 300 jobs but turned everyone over three times. Went through a lot of employees. I really wasn't that involved in the elevators per se. After leaving the paymaster job and getting into traffic, then I was at the elevators all the time, because I would go down there and see the ships. Once you get to see the ships, then you had to know what the elevators were doing.

NP: Let's go to the job of paymaster because I would think certainly from the perspective of the employees it was a pretty important position. Without going into too much detail, describe what a paymaster does and the challenges of it?

GW: The fellows were paid an advance on the 15th. In those days, you didn't have instant communications, so everything was mailed. On the 15th of the month the skipper—we had a set amount—would advance everybody. So, everybody in those days would get maybe \$100 or \$150 or \$200, depending on what job they were doing. Then on the 20th of the month, the timesheet went from the 20th to the 20th so all the dates and the hours are filled out. All that was mailed to Thunder Bay. We would get a time sheet for each individual employee. The captain would put, "He worked eight hours regular time, four hours overtime, and maybe two more hours," then if they worked on the weekends and what shift they were on. You had to go through that whole thing, approve all that, and then put it through a computer. The computer would do how much the guy had coming to him, and all the deductions. The computer would figure all that out.

Lots of times if we issued cheques, you would try to get it back to the skipper by the 30th. If it came in late or something in those days, we used a ship-to-shore radio, or we had office in Montreal, Cleveland. We had agents in the canals, Thorold and St. Catherine's. We could in those days telex them the people's names and the amounts. They would go and hand that to the skipper, and he would write cheques. It was quite a long process. Just the year before I started, they actually were putting cash in envelopes and delivered cash. But we finally got the union convinced that someone walking down the ship with \$10,000 in cash in those days, in the '70s would buy a house. It got a little hairy. So, we got them convinced that they would accept cheques.

NP: The advance was a cheque as well?

GW: Yes, and you would get paid twice a month. Whatever the advance was, you would take that off at the end of the month and the guy would get one more cheque. In those days, we were running 16 ships with 20 to 30 people on each ship. You would have 300-odd positions. But at the end of my first year, I issued 1200 T4s. That means every job was turned over four times. Of course, your mates and engineers, captains, chiefs are pretty steady employees. You take those number out. That is another eight people off the boat, and your turnover rate is four times in eight or nine months.

NP: Were you curious about why that was? What led to that turnover?

GW: It was pretty easy to know what it was. I was never curious about it. [Laughs] Drinking. The guys get on their boat. They come to shore at Thunder Bay. They get paid. They never come back to the boat. You would phone the union hall and say, "We need a couple of deckhands." And before you know it, two deckhands would show up. Then we would get a call the next day. The guy would say, "Oh I left my gear on the *Comeaudoc*." We would take his gear off in the canal, and the union would pick it up, and he would go down to the hall. Two days later he shipped out on another ship. The turnover rate was absolutely tremendous.

NP: Did you know whether that was standard for the industry?

GW: Oh yes. It got better of course as less ships were out there. Jobs got a little tighter. But a guy could miss his ship and the next day he would go to the union hall and get another job. There was no fear of there not being enough work out there.

NP: Who did you report to as paymaster?

GW: His name was Jim Sutherland. He was the vice president before Pat Doherty. John Paterson was still alive in those days. So, he was in the office. He was the vice president of the Marine Division. He was there for almost four years that I was there.

NP: Was he the one then that would decide whether you took somebody back with all turnovers if somebody was constantly not on the ship?

GW: No, he didn't get involved in that.

NP: No?

GW: No.

NP: Was it just the union deciding whether they would send you this person, or did you do any of that?

GW: No, Pat would do that as traffic manager. He had control over that.

NP: Who was doing the inputting of the data that came on all these hand-written sheets?

GW: I would do the payroll and then input it. There were three of us in the department. Each of us would take a different boat each month. Or if a payroll showed up the same day, we would just all do it. But I was doing all the computer inputting. Then after I was also signing the cheques. The accountants put a stop to that because they didn't like me approving it, doing it through the computers, and signing off on it all at the same time.

NP: Felt you could have made your fortune? [Laughs]

GW: At one point I think after a couple of years, I stopped running the computer. I think it was the second year I was there. We got a new fellow to run the computer, and all I did was just run the payroll department. I had the three fellows in the payroll department plus the inputters, so we divvied the work up.

NP: Did you get to know ships then?

GW: Yes, because you always have questions. In those days there wasn't instant communication, but most of the ships were in Thunder Bay every two or three weeks. I would go down to the ships to see the captain and talk to the mates and see how everything was going. I was pretty hands-on in those days. People had not done that before. When I started asking if I could go to the ships, they thought that was great.

There was two distinct groups when I started. Three-quarters of the staff were over 50. There was a few of us young guys that just all started together. I guess I showed some initiative. That is why I was promoted fairly quickly up to assistant traffic manager, then traffic manager, and then the boss. There were other guys who had started before me, but I became the manager before.

NP: The cream rises.

GW: Yes. You want to get involved. You get involved. I got a poster once from someone that said, "The world is run by those who show up."

NP: Yes. They are still giving that advice to young people.

GW: Well, I showed up!

NP: You know the big secret to success is showing up. You showed up a little bit more than most.

GW: Yes.

NP: I don't really know what kind of questions to ask here, but I would like to get your comments about visiting the ships?

GW: You had your good times, and you had your bad times type of thing. I still think my issue, and maybe any of the issues I had in the early days, was because I was so young. I was in my early twenties, and you are going down and trying to tell the skipper that he's not doing something right. He is 50 years old. "Why are you telling me I am doing this wrong?" I never went down and told him how to steer the boat. I went down to tell them that their paperwork was wrong. That's all.

I always enjoyed getting out of the office, actually going down to the ships. Most of the skippers and I became pretty good, long-time friends. It is like any place you go. If you come in at a little higher position, and the fellows in front of you are much older, they are a little tougher on you. But once you start hiring people—and that is what I started doing when I became assistant traffic manager—Pat Doherty and I would hire all the new captains and chiefs. And the higher I got, they knew that, well, this guy hired me, so most likely he can fire me too. Then your respect level gets a little more so.

The same thing happened when I came here. All the old guys that were here, they were not worried about maybe talking back to me. But as soon as I started new guys, they treat you completely different because they know he is the end. There is no one beyond him. So you have to respect that. I guess when I was younger that happened.

Going to the ships, I thought it was great. You would get out of the office for an hour first off, go down and see every part of the ship, go down into the engine room and do all the tours. At the beginning when you are just going for paymaster, you were just asking paymaster stuff. Later on, as assistant traffic manager and traffic manager, you were in charge of everything. You were in charge from the groceries that were coming on board, to the engine that was being replaced. I had control over whether they were buying pens and pencils on the ship along with buying \$1 million engine for it. It's like running a hotel that has got a warehouse attached to it that no one can get off and go home on the weekends. It is 24/7 for about 240 days per year in a row.

I worked for 30 years, and my wife is a schoolteacher, and I never had more than five days off in a row in the summer for 30 years. I was offered all the time off I wanted in January, February, and March. She is a schoolteacher, so she was working. Our jobs never really coincided. But when you get up at a higher position, you take on that responsibility. You know that was it. I got to work every weekend. My wife always wanted a cottage. We couldn't buy a cottage. So, I did the next best thing and moved out into the country a bit and put in a swimming pool and that kind of stuff. Cell phones just saved my life. I could then start golfing with my buddies on Saturday morning, because I could carry the cell phone. For ten years, I had to stay at home on Saturday and Sunday till at least noon, so if the skipper had to find me, he knew where I was—one phone number.

NP: The paymaster position, you mentioned that probably the most annoying thing about it—that is my word not yours—was just getting people to do the paperwork on time and right. Is that pretty much it?

GW: It is human nature to try and avoid conflict as much as possible. You are dealing with three different unions. There was the union for the mates, the union for the engineers, and the union for all the rest of the deckhands and wheelsman and that kind of stuff. And then the captains and chief would work for the company. Whatever someone would put down on their timesheet, lots of time the captain would hold up the time sheet and send it in, and then we would look at it and see discrepancies. Why does this guy have this overtime, but he is working a shift that the other guy had put in, and he is working it, too? Why do you have two guys? So, you go down and question that. “Oh, I don’t want to rock the boat, so I just signed off on it.” It was simple questions like that.

We kept pretty good accounting. So if one ship was showing way more than another, then you went down and you found out why. It was either the mates were padding the hours, or the captain was letting them get away with it. So, you just had to tell them that this was a business. You can’t just give this stuff away. You got to have all the paperwork. It has to be there if you want to get it down properly. That was mostly my questions. That was the first five or six years. It wasn’t super strenuous work that I needed to do. It was just to do the little things to keep it honest.

NP: That is a seven-year period there. Did anything change in the actual methodology of doing payrolls?

GW: Yes, computers kept changing. Just before I started, they were doing them by hand still. They had the books—the taxation books and Canada Pension. Everything was done by hand. They got this—they called it a computer—today you would not even think of it as a computer. It was a Burrough’s L 9000. It was six feet long. You had cards that were two feet by foot and a half, and it had magnetic stripes on the back. You would put them into this little holder, and it had a typewriter and keypad. It would ask your name and address, and you would type that on the top and it would store it on the two magnetic stripes. Every time a payroll would come in, you would have columns that were numbered from one to 12. Number one you would put 40 hours, number two put eight hours. You would put all these through and this rate of pay that was up there saved in the stripe would multiply 1.5 times, single time, and you would come up with a net amount. Every year the tax guys would come in, and the computer guys would come in and program the next tax changes and CPP. It would multiply all that out. You got down to the point you could do one person in maybe—probably at the best—maybe in 50 seconds you could put someone in and enter in their whole months pay and advances and everything and you would get a cheque out. When you had 300 or 400 employees, you need that much time. It would take you two hours to process it—the guys by hand making sure all the numbers were right—and someone to put it through.

NP: And someone to verify it?

GW: Yes. That computer, we all thought, was the greatest thing in the world. Well three years later, they had a computer that was twice as fast, so you had to buy that. Before you know it, the computer doesn't have magnetic, and it took only 10 years. Then the magnetic strip was gone. Then everything was kept on the hard frame.

NP: Did you have to take training as those changes took place, or you just learn on the job?

GW: As far as payroll goes?

NP: As far as the computer updates?

GW: No, you just learned on the fly. When I went there, what I was taking for computers in high school, the computers were glorified adding machines, with 12 lines across and *click, click, click*. You remember the punch cards? You would do a punch card and you'd have 40 cards to add two numbers together. It was a huge step up from that, but from what it is today. Those things we used to call them boat anchors because after four or five years, they were so obsolete. When I went there, the guys that sold the computers, they came and in three days they would tell you this is how you do it. If you make a mistake there are always ways of backing everything out or just scraping, starting over again. The whole system in shipping changed dramatically in 30 years. By the time 2002 came, it was instant communication. Everybody had cell phones. You could almost now sail the ship without looking out the window. Satellite navigation tells you that you are five feet off the dock. In those days, it was a little more hairy.

NP: When you went to meet the captains to check out the boats, would they be coming into Paterson's dock all of them?

GW: No. There was a company called Lake Shippers Clearance Association. When the CWB would say the *Comeaudoc* comes to town carrying a load of grain to Montreal. He could go to four different elevators. He was loading all No. 1 Red Spring Wheat. No elevator would have 25,000 tonnes of it available just in their elevator. You would go pick up 8,000 here, and 10,000 there, and 12,000 tonnes there. That ship would come to town at least, in those days, two days. They got better with less ships. You can come into town and get out in one day now. In those days, it was two days, at the worst maybe three days, going to different elevators. In those days there were line ups. You had 40, 50 ships on the Great Lakes and only bulkers. Then another 20 or 30 self-unloaders. You start adding all that up and all the saltwater ships are coming here to get grain. You kept losing elevators every couple of years. Another one would shut down. You get down to 10 elevators and you have 10 ships in. You are going to be waiting somewhere.

NP: Would you go to the dock--. Let's say one of the Paterson's ships was at Richardson's, then you would just go to there?

GW: Yes, I would drive down there and spend some time onboard. When we were doing payroll, I would talk to the chief engineer about his staff down in the engine room, and the captain about his staff up in the navigation or on deck. They each had their own department, and they each approved their own payroll and sent it in as a group. But the captain didn't really care what the oilers were doing down in the engine room, didn't know what they were doing. In those days, these guys were pretty territorial. They would stay out of each other way. Some of the old ships that we had, they had a house at the front and some chiefs would never go up there all year. "That is not my part of the boat. I am just down here. That is what I do."

NP: Would they have offices?

GW: Yes. The captain and chief would always have attached to their bedroom an office. All the mates in those days—mates and engineers—would have their own separate accommodations. Then some of the other staff—deck hands and oilers and wheelsman—would be shared accommodation. There would be two guys to every one washroom, and some of the really old ships there'd be maybe two guys and two guys and a washroom in between. All four of them had to split. You would put two guys in a room that worked different shifts because you are working 24 hours a day. The guy that had the 4:00 to 8:00 shifts. The next guy would have the 8:00 to 12:00. Your room is to yourself because the other guy is on ship. But all the new ships are built with single rooms, and no one shares anymore.

NP: Were most of the captains then that you dealt with in that period would they have stayed with the same ship? Most of the time they attached themselves to a ship?

GW: You always tried to do that because when you establish someone, this is your boat. They take care of it a lot better. We had what we called spares. We would hire a spare captain. We have seven ships, so whenever the other guy goes on vacation one guy would go and spare in May on one ship and June for another ship. Those were usually the younger guys coming up. They hadn't earned their own ship yet. Some of the older guys, even when new ships were built or we got a new ship, they didn't want to move. "No, this is my baby. I have been here for 20 years. I am not interested in moving up because I know how she handles."

We had three types of ships when we started. When I started, we had canallers that were 350 feet long, and they were ocean capability. On the East Coast, we had mid-size ships that were 600 footers. They were built specifically, in the old days, to get up to Wallaceburg, up to ports that were inland, up rivers. Then you had the full size 730 foot. When we started getting rid of the smaller canallers, asking those guys to go up to 730, they were not crazy about it. But they would move up just because it is either that, or you don't have a job type.

NP: Again, thinking back to those captains when you first started—because I am sure given the length of your career there was a changeover—any favorites come to mind?

GW: We had a captain. His name was Linden Burns. He retired with 50 years of service, and he took early retirement. He retired at 63. He lied of course. When the ship was in port somewhere, he walked up and said, “I want to work on the boat.” They said, “How old are you?” Those days it was 15. He said, “I am 15.” So, they put him in the galley. When I started, he had put in about 35 to 40 years. I can’t remember at the top of my head. He worked himself to being the commodore of the fleet. You always have one captain that you call the commodore. He gets the best ship. He actually thought he was the commodore of the Great Lakes fleets, all of them combined. He pretty much acted like he was. Most captains will always remember Lindy Burns, how he would get to the canal and the Seaway people would say, “Who is in order, and this is who is next?” Lindy would get on the radio and say “No, no that is not the right order. Here is the order that they should be in.” He was very forceful kind of fellow, and he always tried to arrange who was going next. He retired with 50 years of service, a couple of months after he turned 63.

NP: That type of person can be loved or disliked immensely. Could he get away with it and still people--.

GW: He was “old school” definitely. You didn’t screw up very often on his boat because you would not last very long. In today’s standards, he would probably be in court more than he would have been on the boat. In those days, that is what you did. People only listened to people that were yelling. He was pretty well respected through the system. When he retired, there were a lot of people knew that the era of Lindy was over, and things were changing. You would not even try to get away with some of the things he got away with now.

NP: Did you keep track of them at all I am wondering? Now, 63 was relatively young. Did he --

GW: I think he passed away about 85 or something. I think that was in the late 1990s.

NP: He never went back to run a tour boat?

GW: No. A lot of these guys when they have had it, they have had it, and they are done. You spend a lot of time away from home. It is a special job. When I was in payroll, the guys always used to joke that most companies have marital status yes or no. We had yes, no, and other because there were guys in between. They are getting divorced and had girlfriends in every port. It was a mess.

The lifestyle is not conducive to a long marriage. We have had guys that have retired and by the middle of the next summer are phoning saying, “I need to go back to work because my wife just can’t take me every day. It is driving her crazy. You know she

golfs, and I never see her.” In the winter all these people had a life, but in the summer, they didn’t have a life. Then all of a sudden, the sailor is at home and the wife is saying, “I do this, and I do that. I go with my girlfriend, and I go golfing. I go travelling.” He was completely out of the loop. It was quite a change for them to get into not just retiring but get into a life cycle that is normal for most people.

NP: You said that there was a changing of the guard over the period of your career. How would you describe that change in personnel or personnel practices? I imagine you were no longer having your thousand person, three-time turnover? You would have even less people.

GW: By the mid 1980s and late 1980s, turnover was not being an issue anymore. There were shipping companies that went completely out of business. When I started, I think there were 12 Canadian fleets. It got down to about five or six. A couple of them, even though they had their own private fleet, they amalgamated their transportation, their trafficking and their sales so they could utilize both the fleets combined for better utilization. When you carry water, you get no money. Water doesn’t pay. You can only make money when your ship is full of something. You can see if you are unloading in Montreal, and you are picking up iron ore in Point Noire, which is about 36 hours away, you got to fill your ship up with ballast to get down there. You are wasting time and money. It is costing you. You are not making zero dollars. But if you had another ship that was unloading in Baie Comeau, and Point Noire is right across the bay, well it makes sense. So you go across.

If you amalgamate two fleets-- By scale, it is efficiency by scale. A lot of the shipping companies got together, still kept their name. Algoma Central and Upper Lake Shipping, those two companies amalgamated all their traffic and all their sales. They still bill and make their own money, but they just use better utilization.

NP: The competition wasn’t there but efficiency is of scale?

GW: Yes, you could go in on a little less on your rates because you knew you would have less downtime. There were companies—we had to do it—that would unload grain in Montreal, Quebec, or even Baie Comeau and there was no backhaul. So, you would turn around and sail all the way back to Thunder Bay—six days making zero dollars. You are still feeding those guys and you are still using your fuel. That is tons of fuel a day, not gallons. You add all that up and it is pricey. It is an expensive business!! Your cost per day on a ship is huge.

NP: Do you remember in the early time, when you were paymaster and maybe because of what you were doing afterwards at the height, what was the monthly payroll?

GW: It was dramatically different from one scale to another. I'm trying to think off the top of my head. A porter, cook or a second cook might only be making \$1000 a month, and the skipper would be maybe making \$3000 a month. By the time I left, the skippers were making in 2002 probably \$300 a day, so \$9000 a month.

NP: Total payroll, like millions of dollars?

GW: Oh yes, millions of dollars.

NP: A month?

GW: Depending on how many ships you are running, it fluctuated back and forth. Yes, millions of dollars. Your captains, mates, and all those guys were making six figures. Today you would have eight fellows on a ship and were all making over six figures, easily.

NP: The season would be--?

GW: Would be 240 days. It was our going rate. In those days, it was last week of March, and you would try to drag out to Christmas as far as you could get. Now the last few years, I think the Soo is as early as March 15. There is a little bit of ice out here but really nothing. Guys could have sailed. Now they keep the Soo open until January 15. In the old days, December 22 was pushing it. They would shut down the Soo the 22nd or 23rd. You would come to Thunder Bay to get your last load of grain on the 18th or 19th, and that was iffy if it was going to get through the system.

NP: In 1979 according to my jottings here, you moved up to assistant traffic manager. Describe a typical day in the life of a traffic manager?

GW: Every morning about 8:00 the captain would go on ship-to-shore, and he would call coast guard station he was closest to, and he would say something like, "*Comeaudoc*, 21 miles west of Port Weller, 07:00" on that date. Every morning you would come in and you would have whatever number of ships you were running 7 to 10 ships, and you would have their position at 7:00 in the morning.

NP: Was that on a sheet of paper or did you actually have maps?

GW: It would come in on telex. They would just give you a piece of paper, and you would just know where everything was. The map of the Great Lakes gets embedded in your head. You know where Passage Island is out here, where Detour is, where Whitefish Bay is. So those are all call-in points and pretty standard. Every now and then the skipper would try and throw you a curve ball and give you some point you never heard of. He would want to make sure you are thinking in the morning.

From that process over years of experience, you would say from Port Weller to Montreal it is going to take 48 hours. This guy is going to Quebec City. Montreal to Quebec City is another six hours, so 52 hours. I have a load of grain. You would find out where the ship is, and he is going to Quebec City to unload. I would phone Quebec City every morning and every port that the guys were going to. "Okay, we are going to be there 4:00 PM on this Thursday. Can you put a crew on that night?" "Yes, there are no boats available, and there are no boats that are docked. You are the first one. Do you want to dock for four hours? How long is it going to take to unload 24,000?" "Well, we can do it in 12 hours." "Okay, I want to work four hours on Thursday. Start 8:00 Friday morning, and I will be done 4:00 Friday afternoon."

Then you would go, "Where is he going next?" He is going down to Port Noire to pick up a load of iron ore. So another 30 hours so you phone Port Noire. "We are going to be there approximately Sunday morning at 3:00 in the morning. Do you have a crew on standby?" "Yes, you are the next boat in. There is no line." Or, "There is a line up. You have to go to Point Noire. There is another guy who is given the same due time as you." That is when you would go back to the skipper and say, "You have another ship ahead of you. If you don't beat him, you are going to have to sit for 12 hours while he loads." There was jiggling, and there was false hours put to all these guys, "Oh, my ship is going to be there first." There was a lot of gamesmanship went along in the trade.

NP: But there wasn't any racing down the river?

GW: There are speed limits through most of the Great Lakes. Wake, it's called wake, speed wake. You can only sail so quickly because of the erosion. Once you get up outside of Quebec City, the St. Lawrence River is wide open. You can go from here to Sault St. Marie, you can go as fast as you want. Lake boats are not built for speed. They are not like ocean going ships that say they can do 18 and 20 knots. We never put big engines in the ships. It is going to take you five days to get from here from Montreal. If you go full blast across a couple of lakes, you are going to save two hours, and you are going to burn two or three tonnes of fuel. The only time speed would help you is if there are two ships due at a port at the same time. If he is a little quicker or a little quicker on the spot or knew that someone else was there, well he might try to get unloaded that much quicker to get to where he is going.

NP: When you make calls, and let's say you are going to unload into a transfer elevator, your conversation would be with the elevator manager or with your staff?

GW: With the manager.

NP: With the manager. So, you got to know them as well?

GW: Oh yes. I knew all the guys in Montreal, Quebec City, Baie Comeau, Port Chartier, Sorel, and Prescott.

NP: Any differences in dealing with those people or was it all the same?

GW: They were all different. The Americans had a whole different way that they dealt with the ships. You come to Thunder Bay, and you load in 14 hours, 13 hours. You go to Milwaukee, you are there for three days. You go for Duluth, you are there for two days. The costs are astronomical. You have to charge another 30 percent if you are going to Duluth, or Chicago, or Milwaukee. Their elevators are so inefficient. Thunder Bay elevators, the ones that are still operating, they can get stuff out really quick.

NP: That must be to our advantage because, as you said, it is not cheap to have a ship sitting there waiting. To the customer it might make the difference where they load if they have a choice, no?

GW: It is a funny business. Grain was a funny business because the CWB is your bread and butter. Well, it's not just the CWB, it's the Canadian grain. Canadian grain is the standard in the world. The only grain that is at the same standard I believe is in Australia. The Russians produce 10 times the amount of grain that we produce, maybe 20 times. But it never got to the standards of Canadian wheat. I think No. 1 Canadian Red Spring Wheat is the best grade of grain you can get. I don't know as much about the manufacturing, but they blend it down to make bread. You don't even have to use that. You can use No. 3 Red Spring to make all your bread products. It was sub-standard grain out of the States, but CWB sold their grain for more. So, they were able to pay you a little bit more for transportation even despite you were getting a better turnaround. In the States, the costs, the turnaround, was slower and more expensive. Well, it is more expensive because they were paying their guys three days to load the ship that these guys have to pay only one day. But even despite that, it wasn't the same scale. In the States, they paid by the bushel and in Canada they paid by the metric tonne. Americans still can't figure out what a metric tonne is.

NP: Did you actually transport American wheat as well?

GW: Oh, yes.

NP: I didn't realize that.

GW: We transported everything. Not just wheat, but whatever grain products come out of the States. We would do that. We did iron ore, coal, scrap, bauxite--tons of different cargos, lots of different cargos. If you carry wheat down, there is no wheat coming back. It is iron ore that is coming back. We would carry grain from Thunder Bay to the St. Lawrence, Montreal to Baie Comeau. You pick up iron ore from Point Noire, or we used to pick up iron ore from Quebec City which was Brazilian iron ore. It was brought to Quebec City from Brazil, dumped on the dock off huge ocean-going ships, and they put it into the laker, and we would take it up to Bethlehem Steel in Chicago. That was our backhaul. And from Chicago to Thunder Bay was empty. Two days, 48 hours of no cargo. That was our round trip—grain down and iron ore back. That was our complete cycle, and we would do there in 20 days.

NP: You have talked about the ports along the St. Lawrence and the lake shipping areas. You also mentioned having some ships or canallers, was it, in Halifax?

GW: Yes, we had small ships.

NP: Where other than Canada did your ships go to?

GW: Most of the small ships that we had when I started were carrying salt from Pugwash, Nova Scotia to Newfoundland. All the ports around there. It was for the fish trade. We would go into all sorts of weird places in Newfoundland like Conception Bay—small little ports. These were small ships 300 feet long.

Lakers get as far as the Gaspé Peninsula. Baie Comeau is as far as they go with a 730 foot. Construction of a 730-foot laker is not the same as an ocean-going. They are narrower to fit through the locks 80 or 76 feet wide, 80 feet wide now. They are long and they are only built for 26 feet under the water. That is not enough gap to go on the ocean when you have two swells that are 30 feet high. That means the middle of the ship is going to be in air, and it is going to snap. Ocean going ships are travelling with 36 upwards to 50 feet of ship under the water. Lake boats are made to float, to sail high. That is why they only sail to that point.

The smaller ships we had they are like little mini submarines. They would just go under the waves and go over the top. The wave would crest over and completely bury the whole front of the ship like those fishing shows you watch now. That is what these ships were like. They would take on the rough seas and keep floating around and bobbing around.

Carried all sorts of stuff. We had trips from Thunder Bay to Bogota, Columbia, with grain, with hops from Canada Malting. We had cargos of bauxite and gypsum from the East Coast down to Mexico and into Columbia. Then in the mid 1980s we actually registered one of the newer ones offshore and started competing in the Atlantic Ocean, and we went into Italy and Algiers.

It is a tough business. You are competing against guys that are paying staff \$10 a day or \$100 a month. They had crews of Filipinos and other people that \$100 a day, I guess, was okay for them. It is hard to compete against that. One time we took a speciality cargo from Thunder Bay to Vancouver—big engine parts. We went through the Panama and out the other side. They were oversized that they could not go on the rails. They were actually built in Canada. That was interesting. That was an okay trip, but it didn't take long for us to discover that saltwater business was pretty cutthroat because there are so many people in the saltwater business. We are used to lakes where to settle contracts on a handshake because we are going to be dealing with CWB again and again and again for the next 50 years, if they stay in business.

NP: No, they are gone.

GW: They are gone, yes. A guy in Algiers, he would burn you because he doesn't care about you because he has got 50 other guys to pick on. And on top of that, you really discover that saltwater doesn't mix with steel. Saltwater ships are going to get 15 to 20 years. There are lakers out there that are 50 years old and still trudging along without out too much. You still have to maintain them. Freshwater on steel is a lot better than saltwater on steel.

NP: Did you ever go to the Arctic?

GW: Yes, we had a ship that went to the Arctic quite often. Up to Cape Dorset. He would go twice a year and most of it was finished products, stuff like prefab homes. One time we took a fire truck up on deck, 10,000 cases of Coca Cola and things like that. You put all that stuff inside the hold. The ship had derricks and cranes on it, so it could self unload. One time we were going into a place that didn't have a little tugboat at it, so we took the tug boat and a barge on the deck and the cranes would lift all that up, put the stuff on the barge, and the tug boat would push the barge onto the ground. They would come out and they had built a ramp and take everything off with forklifts and you could just get about two trips a year. You would load up in mid July and get up there turn around and get up there once more before it started to freeze over again.

NP: From when you left the St. Lawrence how long would it take?

GW: I got to say it was seven or eight days. It is going to take five days to unload 4,000 pounds of stuff because everything is on pallets.

NP: I got off track here but happy with the information you are giving us, but we actually started this one with the question describe a typical day. I never let you get past calling all the people. Once you touched base with the captains and the destination points--.

GW: Every day you would be talking to your unload ports or your load ports and organizing the shipments. You are talking also to your customers, like in those days you were talking to either Inland Steel or Bethlehem Steel, major steel companies. I would talk to their traffic manager and say, "I am going to have a ship in another week and another ship in two weeks and another ship in three weeks. This is the line up, what I can pick up your iron ore." "Okay that sounds great." Every day was scheduling.

It wasn't too bad because you are scheduling at a fairly slow pace. It is not like the trucking business. Things are happening immediately. When you are in the shipping business every morning you know tomorrow he is only going to be 240 miles farther than he is today because he is only doing 10 miles an hour. There is no huge surprises, like, "Oh jeez, I got a ship tomorrow available to pick up your iron ore." You know when he leaves Thunder Bay that it is going to take him seven to eight days before he picks up the iron ore. It is not high pressure in that sense. The pressure is to make sure you got a load for every day that you can get a load.

NP: In the grain area, because that is where we are focusing, what kind of glitches could occur between the morning, thinking everything is going fine, to before you leave in the afternoon?

GW: The biggest thing in the shipping business is the weather. It happens with loading and unloading. You can tell the fellows at Lake Shippers, that they passed the Soo yesterday at noon. "We are 20 hours away. We are going to be here at 8:00 in the morning. Let's set up all the crews and everything to be ready for an 8:00 start. Okay." "Where are you going to go?" "We are going to put you at Richardson's first." All of a sudden 8:00 the next morning comes. It is not here. Then you have to find out.

In the old days in the '70s and '80s without the communications that you have, there are days we would lose contact with the ship for a couple of days. You were always a little on edge when you couldn't talk to the skipper. But if you came out of the Soo in November, they would stick their nose out and sometimes they would leave the message at the Soo radio, the coast guard, "Okay, I am heading to Thunder Bay." They would get to the far end of Whitefish Bay, and the weather was crazy, so they would scoot around and go back into the shelter of Whitefish. Then they couldn't get radio contact. If they sat there for two days, and the storms were up. You just sit and wait and try to contact them, and they try to contact you and there is just nothing there. There is something in those days, there was some concern every now and then if they went missing for two or three days because you just weren't quite sure what was going on. You would always assume they were at anchor. You try not to assume the worst.

NP: And the Gordon Lightfoot song is going through your mind?

GW: In a week we were not that naive. That was a pretty modern ship. It was newer than the fleet that we had at the time. You had your cowboys in those days. The guys who would stick their nose out and see three other guys anchored, and they would still go for

it. They would get here and bang the hell out of it, and they would go down the next morning to the ship. The crew might not be very happy about it. The skipper would tell you, “Well, I got here.” Some of the guys downstairs would say “Yeah he got here all right, but I had to change my shorts a couple of times. I am not too pleased that he stuck his nose out in it.” [Laughs] In reality terms, why you didn’t really need to. Time is money, but he never got any huge bonus points because he went out in something like that.

NP: Was there a bonus system?

GW: No.

NP: That is good. Otherwise, it might have been encouraged.

GW: No, you got paid for a day’s work, and that is what you got paid for. You tried to be most efficient as you can without putting people in danger is not the smartest thing to do.

NP: You mentioned the Lake Shippers Clearance Association another group that has disappeared.

GW: Yes.

NP: If they had not existed what--.

GW: There are two grains of thought in that because some people will always say “I wish they did not exist because I would not have then gone to four elevators” because Lake Shippers was an association of the association of all the elevators combined. Lake Shippers had an unwritten law. Well, maybe it wasn’t even unwritten. Everybody was to get their fair share on a weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. If you had 10 percent of the capacity in Thunder Bay, you should get 10 percent of the shipping that goes out. So, would it ever happen that you needed 6,000 tons of No. 2 Red Spring, and this guy had it, but he is at his 10 percent already for the month? They would send you to a slow house. Every time a shipping company got sent to McCabe’s, P&H, “Oh brother, why are you sending me to that? It is half the speed! Instead of getting out tonight, I am going to be here all day tomorrow.” “It is an elevator. They have the grain. You have to go there.”

The other train of thought if they weren’t here, you would get here and your whole load should be at one elevator. But what if that company had double or triple booked? So, you get here, and you are sitting on the bay waiting for the other two ships ahead of you going to that same elevator. So, whoever did the best sales job might be moving the most, or more than their fair share, but if they

are moving more than their fair share, they are also busier. Now if they are busier, is that good for you or bad for you? Thunder Bay has never shown its potential, because even at the best of times, we only had two shifts on at elevators. No one ever tried it. Well, there was never a need to have three shifts. You go to an iron ore dock, and you get there at 2:00 AM, as fast as you can open your hatches ore is pouring into your ship. They are a 24-hour-a-day operation. There is no waiting.

NP: Overcapacity here?

GW: That is the differences in the businesses. That is completely the difference in how things were run. Now if Thunder Bay had ever been pushed, they could have done it. Imagine if every elevator had three shifts on a day. There are not enough ships in the Great Lakes that could come up. The throughput would be tremendous.

NP: I would imagine if there was a delay, for whatever reason, that that would send Lake Shippers into a flurry of activity to reschedule everything?

GW: Yes, because in June and July when it is super busy—even for them September and October was probably their busiest month—the crop year always ended at the end of July. There was always a lull there, a couple of weeks in July and a couple of weeks in August. At the CWB, they had what they knew they could ship out, and what they wanted to ship out, and what they wanted to keep for Canada consumption. So until the numbers came out and until they started figuring out that farmers were hiding numbers, [laughs] they always had this, “Okay we have to keep X number and X amount in our back pocket.” A big change of course, and you probably heard about the Russians, when they left that is what ended a huge portion of the Thunder Bay business.

Lake Shippers would have to reschedule everything, but the same amount. If we were delayed, then most likely the other guys who were coming would also be delayed. It would back everything up, and the elevator were not scared to charge you because they pulled their guys out, and you were not there. They would say, “That’s not my fault. I still have to pay my guys.” They would use their guys to do something else but still charge you. [Laughs]

NP: Was there much difference between the work of the assistant traffic manager and the traffic manager?

GW: We had more ships in those days, and we were running that small fleet of smaller ships. We actually had a Montreal office that handled those too. We had more ships. I was in training because they didn’t have an assistant. I just went and started working with Pat. To say a traffic manager, that was probably the smallest part of the job that I did. Doing the traffic every morning once we got down to seven ships, would take an hour a day. I was also the head salesman.

NP: Tell us about that job?

GW: You would be going to Chicago and Cleveland and anywhere that you wanted to meet with these steel companies and book cargoes. I was booking cargoes from companies out of England. I was booking with the biggest shipping company in Canada, Fed Nav, who is a saltwater company. We worked very closely with them transshipping their ocean freight into the Great Lakes. On top of sales, I was in charge of all the staffing on the ships. I had a shore captain, a shore engineer. They wanted to buy something, you had the final approval as traffic manager and then director of everything, from soup to nuts—everything that was on the ship, everything that happened, booking insurance. You were learning, as assistant traffic manager and traffic manager, every aspect. Traffic was not the job. That was the title. But the job was that you are going to be the manager one day, and you had better know every aspect of it.

NP: You mentioned the CWB, was there any need to make sales call there, or that was pretty standard? And non-board grains, who did you have to compete with there?

GW: We had an office inside our office in Winnipeg. Inside of our grain office, we had one fellow that worked for us. He was the day-to-day contact with the CWB. Between him and agent I had in Cleveland, they would book all the US grains. He was the grain guy, and he would book.

NP: What was his name?

GW: Curt Bennett. He would deal with CWB every day, so he was head of sales, and he would coordinate what was up next as far as the grain. He would book the US guys also, but with myself and Pat. He took sort of care of the grain side of it, of booking, because we needed someone in Winnipeg to be hands on and see them every day.

NP: Other companies, would you ship for Richardson and Viterra?

GW: Before the CWB, they weren't doing that. They weren't shipping on their own. Anybody that moved wheat had to move it through the CWB. Now, we did move other commodities such as rapeseed. Anything that wasn't considered wheat we would move through other--. Louis Dreyfus was a big one that we carried through. But most of that even though they had branches in Canada and Louis Dreyfus is French, isn't it? Continental Grain, that is out of New Jersey I believe or New York. They were an American company. But they also had offices in Winnipeg.

NP: Curt would be doing all of that?

GW: Yes, yes. He booked it, but we approved. We were in daily contact. It was like he was in our own office. I talked to him more than I sometimes talked to people in my own building. You constantly were saying, “Okay, we can do this.” Dreyfus wants something out of Milwaukee let’s say. “Okay, how are we going to fit the dates and all that kind of stuff?” He could be considered somewhat of a traffic manager himself, too. We just called him grain sales, and that is what he did. He dealt more directly with CWB. Of course, I knew all the CWB guys because every year, at least once a year if not twice a year, we would get together with CWB as a group.

NP: All the elevator companies or all the shipping companies?

GW: Well, we used to have these little parties in Toronto and Montreal. All the shipping companies, ship chandlers, and grain companies, and ore companies, we have a little sit-down in Montreal with 1,400 people.

NP: A little sit-down? [Laughs]

GW: The Toronto Marine Club was the same. We would take over the Royal York Hotel for one weekend. We would have a banquet with 1,200, 1,300 people at it. It was everybody on the Great Lakes, all the major shipping companies and all the guys that sold to the shipping companies, like guys that sold radars and engine parts. Tug companies would show up, and then of course all of our customers—the grain companies, the ore companies. Then all the port authorities would be there and there would be all these hospitality rooms. It was a big, big piss off. [Laughs]

NP: What was that term you used?

GW: It would be a big happy party. Everybody would be happy! So, of course you would bring your customer the night before the big party you would have a dinner party for 10 or 20 of you. You would do that a couple of times a year. Summer golfing was a big thing. We would go to Cleveland and go to Chicago and say, “Do you guys want to go golfing?” Yes.

NP: Who were some of the people you dealt with the CWB? We have interviewed quite a number of them.

GW: The old days and names?

NP: Would your career have crossed over with Dennis Portman?

GW: Yes. Dennis was, but later.

NP: He is a young guy.

GW: He is a young buck compared to some of the guys that we dealt with. Dennis was a good guy. Dennis was an up-and-comer. I remember meeting Dennis with his first trip to Montreal.

NP: Frank Rowan? I think he was more on the sales side.

GW: I don't remember Frank.

NP: I don't know who Dennis replaced?

GW: All those names, it has been 10 years now since I have been gone.

NP: How would you describe the relationship between Thunder Bay and the western grain trade?

GW: Well, we were the western grain trade and still are. Paterson Global is pretty big in the grain trade out west. So, it allowed us access to--. We were not only a customer of the CWB by moving their grain. They were customers of ours by us selling the grain to them. Our elevators would buy the grain from the farmer, sell it to the CWB, and virtually—we never tracked it—but I am sure we carried a lot of grain that Paterson sold to the CWB, and that they sold it overseas. It came to Richardson elevator or Paterson elevator over in Thunder Bay, and we would put it on a Paterson ship and take it to the Seaway. I am sure there was a lot of crossing of that.

I always thought the CWB was a benefit. I kind of always thought that they probably got the best price for the grain for the farmer because they held the big hammer. They were not competing against themselves, which is good. But was the farmer upset that he couldn't go to free market, or was he upset as we all know when government runs something are they top heavy? The CWB was huge. They had a lot of employees. I don't know if you have seen their building, but downtown it was multi storey 10-stories high, 100 people on each floor. Then all of a sudden, they are not there, and the grain still seems to be moving. Has the price gone down substantially? I don't know. I don't see the numbers anymore. When we sold, we saw them selling US grain and everything, and we saw what the market was, and the prices these guys fought over. Our weight rates were so low because they were selling their grain for a lot less than CWB was. I am still up in the air of them trying to prove to me that not having the CWB is better than having CWB.

NP: Yes. I lived in Winnipeg for 30 years, actually did some work in the CWB office, and have interviewed a number of people through this whole changeover. They say five years from now--. One year is not going to tell the story, but five years might.

GW: When I started, there were 12 or 14 Canadian shipping companies. When I left there were five. You know what? We beat each other up. We just kept undercutting each other. It got more expensive to haul stuff, and there were guys out there cutting the prices. All you had to do was sit back and wait for them to go under.

NP: And hope you weren't the one that did.

GW: Yes. Paterson did not go out of business because they weren't making money. It is a profitable company. They decided to get out of the shipping business.

NP: For some of the reasons you mentioned, the competition was--.

GW: Yes, we were competing. We were the final five. So they were doing okay. They decided to concentrate on the grain business, and they sold their assets.

NP: We will come to that because you were there for that absolute disastrous--.

GW: The bridge.

NP: That was the last. We have interviewed all three of the Patersons here.

GW: It would be interesting to find out their story of why they are out of business. [Laughs]

NP: Yes, it is interesting. Unfortunately, Andrew Paterson—and he might let you listen to it—but he has put a 10-year hold on his. The others, Don and Robert, theirs is open to the public. So you are quite welcome to listen to it.

GW: I am not going to bad mouth anyone. I had 30 of my best years there!

NP: From what I recall, from all three of them, three incidents—the perfect storm. Just from what you are saying and what they have said, all that I can say is that is very unfortunate.

GW: Mmhmm. There was a legacy there!

NP: We ask general questions about the changes that you have seen over time. But before I go there but since we started about your connections with the grain trade in the west, the farmers, the fact that Paterson had their smaller elevators there and passed the grain through to here. Did you ever have to deal with the railways at all in your positions?

GW: No dealings, not at Paterson's. We started talking at the beginning, I get involved with stuff. I have been involved with the Chamber of Commerce for 30 years. I have sat on transportation committees. Lakehead Traffic Club I have been on. Transportation Week I was president of. I sat on a transportation committee with the Chamber for 20 years. In the early days, in the 1970's, they actually had people in Thunder Bay, the railroad managers that could actually make a decision and say something about. But that ended in the 1980s when all those managers were gotten rid of, and you could not get anything of the railroad without talking to somebody in Winnipeg or something. Outside of Paterson's, I had lots of dealing with other people in all the modes of transportation and was quite active as president of the Chamber in 1995.

NP: Were you involved at all when the railways were getting rid of lines and tracks and doing studies of the grain transportation through Thunder Bay?

GW: Through the Chamber we did some lobbying for the railroads and shipping companies and airports and airlines. We would make resolutions and send them to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. We went to their annual meeting if we could to convince them then they took the ball and went and said, "We need to do this about the railroads, and stuff like this." Have you interviewed Paul Kennedy?

NP: Not yet, no.

GW: Paul was very active in that kind of stuff and very active in a lot of politicking. Once you talk to Paul, he's got a huge background of those types of things we did.

NP: More like the policy and planning issues?

GW: At one time, he was working for the harbour Port Authority before he became manager of that. He's got a great background in that. I think he was on the school board. He was a little bit into politics, and he probably remembers, because when he worked for the Port Authority, the big pain in our sides for years and years and years and years has always been Churchill.

NP: Say a bit about that?

GW: Churchill has always been subsidized to the hilt. Free rail line, free boxcars, free ice breaking services—all subsidized by the Canadian Government to move as much as grain as this city could move in a long weekend. I am out of the business, but it still boggles my mind what can get done when politicians are hell-bent to create something. It is one elevator. My god, give it up! Give all those people who work there whatever you want a year. Close the place down and let the people that want to do the business at a reasonable price do it. It is bizarre. The thinking behind that whole place is just beyond belief. The amount of money that was spent up there. I think someone once worked it out that all the grain in Thunder Bay could have been carried for free for what was subsidized for that 300,000-400,000 tonnes of grain. I guess I am not smart enough to answer the question of why. I just can say my displeasure to it. [Laughs]

NP: I have not heard too many varying opinions on that one. Did you have any contact at all with the Canadian Grain Commission and the ship inspectors?

GW: Yes, I actually knew some inspectors. I actually golfed with them. It is just one more level of government. There is an inspection of the grain when it is taken in at the elevator out west. Then I believe there is an inspection when it is put on the rail car. It gets to Thunder Bay and is inspected before it is put into the bin. If there is cleaning or anything else. Then it is inspected as it goes into the ship, and the ship delivers it to Montreal. It is inspected when it gets off the ship. We haven't done anything with it! It is the same grain. It was graded it went into the ship! Why would you have to grade it again when it is being unloaded? Then I imagine it is inspected once more before it goes on the ocean. That I don't have a problem with that. That is the final carrier that is delivering the product to wherever—England or Europe. They should know what is on that ship.

But my god, do you think it needs to be inspected five times before it gets to that final point? I know it has to be inspected when they take it in because that is how you are going to get paid. "As the farmer, you brought us No. 1 Red Spring, and we are going to pay you for No 1." Bring it to Thunder Bay and put it in with the rest of No 1 Red Spring and do your drying. They are going to dry it and clean it and everything in Thunder Bay again.

NP: That has changed.

GW: Yes.

NP: Yes, that has changed, just this year.

GW: So they cut out?

NP: Inward inspection.

GW: Inward.

NP: Unless the company wants to have it done.

GW: It will still be inspected when it goes into the ship because the elevator will clean it and dry it, and that is their chance to bump it up, because that happens.

NP: Within tolerances.

GW: But some good stuff on top of some bad stuff you just loaded. The ship will stir it up by the time it gets there! [Laughing] Okay, we are not going to go there. [Laughs] Little tricks of the trade.

NP: What about the bug inspectors? We have interviewed Victor Bel of Canadian Food Inspection Services.

GW: Food Inspection.

NP: You would have most contact with him then in the shipping area?

GW: Yes. Lake boats were pretty clean. He would have a lot more problems with ocean-going ships. With grain boats another trick of the trade--. What happens is in the frames, underneath the hatch covers there are I-beams, and that is where the grain gets caught in, and that is where it gets a little gunky. Well, if you are lucky enough to have a backhaul, which we were most of the time, and of course it is by weight, so once you get to 26 feet of weight and that is 25,000 tonnes your ships goes [inaudible]. Well 25,000 tonnes of wheat is right up to the top of the ship. Twenty-five thousand tonnes of iron ore is bumps on the bottom.

We would load our iron ore and get in there with the guys with the big fire hoses and stand on the bumps that were maybe 20-foot high and the holds 40-foot high. So now all of a sudden, he is a lot closer to the I-beams, and they'd put the fire hose out there, and they wash all the bad stuff, clean all the frames. It drops on the iron ore. The iron ore people take care with a couple tonnes of

grains on top of their iron ore. They put in a blast furnace anyhow. It is just going to melt. It was no big deal. We didn't get too many issues.

NP: Did you every have an issue?

GW: Yes, there were a few times they'd say you were not clean.

NP: But not bugs, just gunk?

GW: Yes, you would get bugs. You would hire a guy called Canada Pest Control. He would come down there and fumigate. It's kind of a yucky job. You've got to close all the hatch covers. He gets down there and sprays everything, and you'd let it sit for 24 hours and then you get down there and wash it all out. It would kill everything.

I am not going to say not even once a year we got into that. It was far in between and a lot of time, the skipper would inspect. When they were unloading the grain, he would go under there, and he may come up to the cap and say, "You have a lot of stuff building up there, and we think we saw some bugs."

Another trick of the trade would be when you are coming up with iron ore, there is a spray company, a bug company, in St. Catherine's, so we would put him on at Lock 8, and he would open the booby hatches, not the main hatch cover, and just fog it, five or six holds or whatever holes we had. By the time you got up to Burns Harbour or Chicago, if there was anything alive up there, it would have been dead by then.

Every now and then, in the spring you always did that in the spring the odd time. We have one ingenious guy that invented--. They're fire hoses, so inch and a half, you got some pretty good power under there. So, he got some real long copper pipe and put a rope around the end of it and put a fire hose nozzle on it, and doubled or tripled the pressure, and he would stand on one side of the hatch cover and the other guy would hold the ropes. From standing up in a safe area, he could clean. We started putting it on all the ships. The odd time you might have to put scaffolding up in the spring. We would try and do that. The first time in the spring get that boat completely cleaned out, and you used to last the whole year without having to do a big clean-out again.

NP: During your times were they storing grains on the ships over winter as well?

GW: Yes. Sometimes it was planned and sometimes it wasn't. [Laughs] If you left here on the 15th or 16th of December, you thought, "Okay, I'm going to get to Montreal." If you had a load that was loaded that late, we would say, "What if we don't get to

Montreal, are you okay?" They would say "Okay." You get to the canal and maybe lost two days because of ice, and you get through the canal, and they would say the lower St. Lawrence is closed. You would run into Hamilton, and you would just put here away and deliver it in the spring.

Then there were times when it was planned. One place was Cardinal. The Canada Starch Company was in Cardinal. So, we would load maybe one of our mid-sized ships, the 600-footer, full or corn out of Toledo in late December. We would put that at their dock and their elevator would be absolutely jam packed full by the end of December and you would put that ship in there. The elevator didn't have enough capacity, and all of a sudden, the end of February and the beginning of March, they would be running out of corn to make corn syrup and stuff like that. We would call the crew in and come in and unload the ship in 10 days. They would be set and that their ship that would get them through the winter. We actually acted as part of their elevator.

NP: Just to finish off your movement up the ladder here, director of traffic and marine operations, was it essentially the same job but just a different title?

GW: Pat Doherty retired. He retired as vice-president and general manager. When I took over his job, they said okay--. Robert was going to be vice-president instead of owner. I was traffic, so they had to think up something because I was still going to do traffic, but we were getting less and less ships. But it had to be more than traffic manager because I was in charge of everything now. All the responsibility of purchasing, staffing, all the office staff, all the caps and chiefs, booking insurance, being customer and signing grain contracts. I was doing everything, and I was the last guy before a Paterson.

NP: What did you like best about that job?

GW: That I was the boss! [Laughing] That was the best about it. There was still one guy ahead of me. No, the nice part about it is you're not--. Everybody in the office was my friend. Being a purchasing agent is one thing, but that is all you are going to do. I got to do everything. I got to see everything. Nothing was bought, the ship didn't go anywhere, and not a deal was done without me having input into it. That was great. I felt that I was a Paterson, to be honest with you. I had as much passion and maybe sometimes more passion for the shipping industry than they did. Two of them were younger than me—Don and Alexander were both junior, younger than me. I actually gave Robert his 25-year watch because there was no one else to give him his 25-year watch. I had been there for a long time and had created a lot of friendships. But the good part is doing everything.

NP: The variety and never boring, I would not think, never bored.

GW: Yes. I was sitting on so many boards for them. Lake Carriers was a board out of Montreal that negotiated with the three contracts. There was over 2000 employees, so I was involved in the negotiations of labour contracts for all of the Canadian fleets. We did that together, so it wasn't divide and conquer. It was we are one group. I was on a board in Bermuda. It was nice. It was all workers compensation. I was in charge of all the workers compensation, and it was an insurance fund. I got to go there a couple of times a year for 15 years, so that was neat! You are here in Montreal one week doing labour negotiations. A couple of weeks later you are in Toronto booking insurance for the whole fleet, and then a couple of weeks later you are in Chicago going out with the boys golfing and doing another couple of years of business with them.

You got to meet the major players in all the other companies. We were not the huge player in the Great Lakes, but we were a steady player that everybody knew the name. What we had going for us was when I went on a sales call, I could take someone with me that said his name is on the boat! There's not too many other companies--. The bigger companies had sales guys who didn't even know who the president of the company was, didn't know who the president was. I could go and say, "This is a Paterson. The 'P' on the stack, that is him. That is the guy." That makes the sales job a little bit easier because you have got the guy that owns the company, and these guys are saying, "Well, the guy that owns the company is taking interest. Maybe this might be a company that I would like to work with, because he is involved with the day-to-day." Robert was there and he was involved in the day-to-day. He started only two months before I started. We kind of grew up in the business together.

NP: What about relationships between the various shipping companies? How would you describe that?

GW: The shipping companies?

NP: Yes.

GW: Oh, good relationship. We--. [Laughs] Okay, we cooperated but not to the point of--.

NP: Colluding.

GW: As I said before, dealing overseas and dealing in the Great Lakes was completely different. I had a contract with Bethlehem Steel for 10 years. Bethlehem Steel has been on the Great Lakes for 60 years. Somebody else had it for 10 years, so it would have been one of those other guys, and then after I lost it, one of the other guys took it. When I lost the Bethlehem contract in the late '90s, I got Inland Steel's contract. That was taken from the guys that took my Bethlehem contract away from me. There are only so many companies that you can deal with. There was only so much tonnage of ships out there available. So, you never burnt the

bridge with a company that you are with because it is only going to be a matter of a few years and you are going to be dealing with them again.

The only time you really lost a contract was it got down to price. Someone would come in there and really undercut it or something. Because you would gain relationships with these guys, who were like me, they were lifers. The guys I dealt with at Bethlehem Steel had been there for 30 years. We deal with them for 10 years. We got along, went out for supper together, golfed together and shared stuff together. So you became friends. You are going to stay in business until a numbers guy comes to town and thinks he can get it for 10 cents cheaper. When the accountants started taking over the country, that is when things started to go downhill. I am not an accountant. You can say that. [Laughs]

NP: I think I have heard that twice in the last couple of weeks. [Laughs] Interesting comment!

GW: Yes. Business isn't just numbers. You know, if that is what you are in for, well, buy a McDonald's.

NP: And even then, if you are only interested in that, McDonald's is not going to be too successful either. What major changes occurred short of the company selling off its shipping side, what major changes occurred over your career?

GW: The telecommunications is the biggest thing and computers. In the '70s, there were times when we lost contact. Now there is instant communications. In 2002 when I left, they were installing these plotting machines and these global-positioning machines that would pick up 13 satellites, that when the guy was docking, he would be looking at his TV screen and saying, "Oh we are four feet off the bow." In the old days you had a guy standing at the bow yelling, "Four feet." I remember the last year I was there that we had a skipper training a new skipper, and this guy is looking at the machine and the skipper is yelling at him, "Look out the window that will tell you how far off the bow you are. You know what, don't trust the computer." So, the computer was huge. Instant communication was a huge thing.

But instant communications is also a detriment to business because nowadays no one will make a decision. They will always phone the boss. In the old days when they could get me and they had to fire somebody on the ship, they would just make the decision and fire him. In 2000s and ones and twos, your phone rings at 2:00 AM, "I am having trouble with this guy. He came back to ship, and he is drunk." "Well fire him. You don't need to phone me and ask me what to do. You do it." I am in the same business now. No one wants to make a decision. They want you to make the final decision. That is a lot of pressure on the uppers, and the guys that are paid and on the job don't want to make decisions anymore. You take the good with the bad.

NP: The changes in industrial relations, anything occur there?

GW: Yes. It is instant communications. It's instant gratifications again. Companies will jump in a minute if their stock goes down. They become so reactive that they will throw decades' relationships out the window for 10 cents or something. There are accountants that will say, "Well, you have to." That might be good business, but it is not long-term vision. I think a lot of people now have a very short-term vision on business. They want to get through this year, and that is what their goal is to get through this year, make as much as they can.

NP: Does it matter whether they are privately or publicly owned? You often hear that comment if there is a board, if there's stockholders and they are expecting another increase in profits, but if it is family owned is that necessarily the case?

GW: Yes, because the family are listening to their accountants, too. And the family, how can I put this? People have changed, I think. I was just reading an article where the ultra-rich are giving away a pretty good chunk of their money. But it is the in-betweeners, the ones that are making \$2 million to \$10 million a year, are not giving away too much because they say they are not going to start giving their money away until they are into the hundreds of millions. It is the middle class that are giving away a much larger portion of their take-home proportionately, and the billionaires are giving away a substantial portion. But the one-and two- and three-millionaires give away very little.

NP: Any difference labour relations? Did that stay pretty steady?

GW: Labour relations actually got better as time goes on. There were a lot of jobs out there, and they would come and go as they pleased because they could know they could get another job. Dealing with the Seafarers International Union was very tough. They were run by a fellow named Roman Gralewicz, who took over from a fellow named Hal Banks.

Hal Banks was brought into Canada from New York. He was a good friend of Jimmy Hoffa. He was off the waterfront, a Longshoreman's Association. He was begged to come to Canada—if you ever read the book—by the government of the day because they were worried that communism was getting control of the unions. He led with a steel fist. Roman Gralewicz was in the same brand. He was a tough nut. He had no problem dressing you down—the company's agents—in front of their union people. He took great pleasure in it, as a matter of fact, to embarrass you.

He was president for life. Every three years he held an election, and one of his flunkies that would run against him. Then the guy would disappear. I don't mean disappear, that he was never around again. He would not win. Roman always won by whatever percentage you pick 98 or 97 percent every time he ran.

There were a lot of difficulties. There was always the threat of strike, always in the summer at the most inopportune time. We had to bend quite often to allow it to settle contracts. In those days there was some good money, so you shared the wealth. As the years went on things got a little bit more stable. He got a little older. I think he had grandchildren. I think that softened him up to be honest with you.

Then all of a sudden, in the '90s, there were not as many issues. There were not tough issues. Everybody got better at HR. The three strikes of discipline, the three steps of discipline—verbal warning, written warnings, and suspensions—that all started. Everybody started to know where they stood. That kind of slowed down. There were less ships, so the guys wanted their jobs more. So there started to be less opportunities for fly-by-nighters to come on and work for one payday and then go on a bender. But that has changed through the whole society. It's become like that. Jobs are tough now. People appreciate them and try to hold on to them. I think more than just our industry.

NP: Drinking and safety, I'll put them in the same sentence. They don't necessarily have to be there. Did that change and did the attitudes about that change?

GW: The ships were 100 percent dry, have always been, but of course there is lax happens. That is probably why you went through so many sailors in the '70s because there was no drinking aboard, and they would come to Thunder Bay and it was the 15th and the skipper would hand him his advance \$150, and you go down to the Addy and you could drink for three days with that amount of money, and that is what they would do.

Then they come out and go across the street. The Seafarers International Union was on Simpson Street, where Northern Windows is. They would just walk into there and say, "I am a deck hand." They would say "There are four of you ahead of you. I think three are going out today so you can put your name on the board. Go sit in the corner and as soon as the ship comes in, you are on the next ship." That was how things were done. Then when guys started to put their names on the board saying, "We haven't had a call for a deckhand for two weeks and you are not working." They had to stop forgetting to go back to ship. That doesn't mean they forgot to go to shore to have a few pops, but they probably still did but at least they came back and went to bed and slept it off.

Safety was all regulated by the Feds because it was a federal-regulated company. So you had all the Canadian standards you had to stand up with. Canadian Steamship Inspection would come and inspect the ship every spring, and along with that inspection was fire drills. You had to perform a fire drill with all hands, within the time frame, or you didn't pass. On top of that all the lifeboats, flares, life jackets, everything was inspected at that time of the CSI inspection. That was all done.

I ran compensation for 20 years. It just got tighter and tighter, and safety became more and more important. But there was more stuff that was invented. I remember Perscott airpicks coming aboard ship. The fire fighters' uniforms. They didn't have those in the '70s, so if there was a fire in the engine room, you ran out of the engine room. That is what you did. You start teaching guys how to be fire fighters. Then I think in the late '80s and early '90s, we got heart defibrillators on all the boats. A lot of the guys—I am going to say the vast majority—had CPR training, because you needed to have one guy on every shift that had to have CPR training. Out of 20 guys on the boat, probably 15 had gone through some type of health and safety training. There are monthly meetings we had on the shifts in the '90s.

NP: It is interesting that you say that. I was working through the time where the health and safety committees started up. In many instances, they were just disparaged, that they felt what a waste of time, so it is interesting to hear you say that you did see a difference.

GW: On a ship it is a little different. If you are working in a warehouse or plant or something, your first thought is, "The plant is on fire. I am going to run out the closest exit, right?" On a ship, you are in the middle of a lake. You've got nowhere to go. And if someone is having a heart attack, you had better be able to help him out, because if you don't, he is going to die in front of you. There is nobody to phone. That is it. They knew that. It was mandatory for the captain and chief, the three mates and the three engineers, to all have CPR and Life Saver. That was part of their ongoing training. You have eight guys right there, and they are all standing different shifts. There is always somebody on the ship that had it. On top of that, we were training deckhands, cooking staff and everybody about it. They realized that they were in an isolated area, and you are not going to get help.

NP: Stories and incidents—situations that stick in your mind both positive and negative?

GW: Without naming names? [Laughing] A funny story about Lindy Burns, we are talking about, the captain. He pulled out of Sault St. Marie once heading to Thunder Bay November in a huge storm, and he goes right by Whitefish Bay. There is about four or five ships all anchored in there. They can see he is on the *Comeau*, which was our flagship at that time. He goes by and they all start calling, "Lindy, where are you going? It is crazy out there. Don't go." He would not answer his radio, just kept going and got out of sight. A couple of them started talking, "That crazy Lindy. He shouldn't be going out in that." Oh, okay, and they are all talking back and forth. About an hour later a couple of them said "You know, I am going to go, too. There is no way Burns is going to show me up."

Two ships pulled up their hooks, took off, sailed, and came in the next morning. The ships were just covered in ice and everything, almost a mutiny on board the ships. They come into port and phone Lake Shippers and say, "Well we are here, but we were not

going to let Lindy get the best of us.” And they say, “Lindy? He went to anchor right outside of Whitefish.” [Laughs] He just pulls into the bay behind them and dropped the hook and let them go.

One more good story is, one of our other shipping companies phone me up one day in July or in August and said, “Can you help us out? A couple of ladies had won. We had given away a prize of sailing as passengers, at a fundraiser. These two people, it’s a mother and daughter. They are on one of our ships, and we just got to Thunder Bay and we don’t have a cargo. So we are going to have to lay this ship up. We are going to fly them home. But I phoned Lake Shippers and they said that you had--.” At that time the *Paterson* was our new ship. They said, “You have nice accommodations. Do you mind bringing them back to St. Catherine’s for us? Two days. They said they would be happy with that.” “Sure, no problem. What is your ship? Where is it at?”

I figured I would go pick up these two ladies. It was a mother and daughter, and the daughter was 50. So you know how old the mother was, barely got her off the boat. So I take her to our ship, which is a whole process—a couple of hours because she had a cane and had to go up the ladder, well, the stairs. I got her on the ship and the skipper comes and, “What the hell are you doing to me? Good god, like she is 80 years old.” I said, “Yes, she is 83 or something.” He says “Okay.”

This was Friday. So Saturday at 8:00 my phone rings, “Gary?” “Yes?” “You know that lady you put on the boat last night?” I said, “Yes.” “She died.” I said, “You know what? Don, it is not funny. Don’t even go there.” “No, she did, honestly. She passed away in her sleep last night.” I said, “Oh my god!” He said, “I don’t really know what to do.” “Where are you?” “I am still about eight or ten hours away from Sault St. Marie.” I said, “I think you are going to have to put her in the fridge.” Our chief cook was a Jamaican and pretty superstitious. They put him on her. We had stretchers. So she put her on a stretcher and wrapped her all up nice and neat and got her taken down to the galley. It that was just before lunch and our cook Sam Newton said, “What are you going to do with her?” “We are putting her in your walk-in fridge.” He wasn’t too happy.

So the captain just said, “Okay, we will lay her right here on the floor, and you decide what you want to do with her because that is where I have been told to put her.” She ended up in the fridge for a day until we got into the Soo. Then about a week later, I get the nicest letter from her daughter saying that the staff was so respectful. It was what her mother always wanted to do. It was the best days of her life. She would not have gone anywhere else in the world. In the end it turned out to be comical, and sad, and happy all at the same time. They were thrilled, but of course I never let my competitor that arranged this trip forget it. To this day when I see him, I say, “Don’t ever phone me again to take care of one of your customers. I took care of her all right.” [Laughs]

NP: That is a great story!

GW: That is one of the better ones.

NP: Did you keep the letter, or is it in Paterson's collection?

GW: Probably somewhere.

NP: Oh, that is a lovely story!

GW: Yes.

NP: Yes, you are right it has got all the parts. We are at two hours. I have a couple of more questions left, if you have the stamina. You mentioned the *Paterson*, the ship *Paterson*, was launched while you were there. What is it like to have a new ship?

GW: They built it in '85. Well, it was kind of neat for me because at the time I was assistant behind Pat. I was doing traffic from day to day, but Pat was a homebody. He didn't like to travel that much, so I got to go to Collingwood. I had a shore engineer and a shore captain that picked the engines and the generators and all the electronically stuff that I was involved. But I was down when they laid the keel, when they had the frames up. I had to go down and actually pick out the colours for the interior, what kind of roost they wanted, how they wanted the beds set up, what kind of walls. It was like an interior design job. It was like a hotel. It slept 24 and had two staterooms and all this equipment. So, I was in charge of buying all the dishes and the plates, picking out the cutlery right down to the fridges and the colour of the walls and the ceilings. It was kind of neat.

The launching was huge. We were able to bring our spouses. It was a side launch, where it goes into the slip, and the water all piles of. It is something to be seen. Actually, we bought a fleet just after that. When did we buy that fleet? We bought a fleet. Hull Corporation was going out of business. We bought those in the late '80s I believe it was, and we bought three ships, three ships. We re-christened them under their new names and got to break the champagne. Robert's wife broke one, and Robert's mother got to christen one. Don hadn't started working yet, and Pat Doherty wasn't married, so my wife got to christen one. It was neat for her, that she actually got to christen a ship. They gave her a nice silver plaque with all the inscription on it. We still have it to this day. That was neat that she got something to do with it, too.

NP: What was the name of her ship?

GW: The *Quedoc*, after Quebec. You know the doc and what that stands for and all that stuff? There were two *Patersons*. Everything else was a doc.

NP: And the *Senator*?

GW: And the *Senator of Canada*, correct.

NP: Yes.

GW: That was the only the second *Quedoc*. So there are two *Quedocs*.

NP: We have a picture, and did you see our display last summer? It is going to be up at the museum this summer so you may want to have a look at it because have a central feature and many of the photographs that were used were actually from collections from the Paterson collection. I just love that photograph, the side launch of the *Paterson* and the wave coming up. Did your feet get wet?

GW: No, I was standing on the podium, so I was okay. [Laughs]

NP: But there was quite a displacement of water?

GW: Yes. When you saw the water going up, there is a little building there. At one time one launch went so bad that the ship didn't float in like this. It went like this. And all a sudden, splash like this. The wave was so high it wiped out all the building. It just knocked the building right off its foundation.

NP: Nobody there to sweep off in a mini tsunami.

GW: Yes. That was pretty neat to watch that kind of stuff. Actually, my house looks like a museum. I have got a binnacle, a compass, a telegraph. When we scrapped one ship, I took a lot of stuff, and it is in my house. I have got a lot of ship memorabilia. I have probably got more than the Patersons.

NP: We will tell you a little bit out our project once we are finished here and we are coming quite close to the end because we might impose upon you at some point to lend us something for a display.

GW: I have a life ring that still has Paterson written on it.

NP: Were you around for the *Windoc*?

GW: Yes, I was sort of around. I was taking one of my five-day vacations.

NP: Let's introduce this then. That this was the disaster of all disasters for a ship in 2001. Tell us your part of that story?

GW: I was driving to Edmonton, where my daughter was co-oping at a university there. I was in North Battleford and turned on my cell phone and there were 14 messages to call work. I called work, and Don explained to me what had happened and said he was left in the office. Everybody else had jumped on a plane and headed for St. Catherine's. I didn't believe him. I didn't think so crazy could have happened. I never dreamt of the scale.

NP: What did he tell you had happened?

GW: He told us—I'll clean it up—that some guy had lowered the bridge on taking off the wheelhouse of the *Windoc*. I could not figure out how that could have done. I figured steel against the bridge would have knocked the bridge over. So I just said, "My quickest route is still to go to Edmonton. I will catch the first flight back. Do what I can do." As soon as I got to Edmonton the 6:00 news was on, and I saw it on television. Then it comprehended to me what the hell had happened. By the 6:00, news it just didn't show the bridge taking out the wheelhouse. It showed the ship in the canal about a quarter mile down the stream and the crazy fire fighters pouring water into a floating boat. I said, "They just wrecked that ship. It is done. You don't pour water onto a ship that is sitting there."

NP: What is the danger in that?

GW: You are going to sink it. You're going to sink it. You are going to drown everything in water, and the sucker is going to tip over and fall on you then. If they had not stopped—a marine guy finally got there and told them to stop—they would have flipped that boat over, with 25,000 tonnes of grain. That Seaway would have been shut down for a month, as they cut that thing up into little pieces and unloaded. It would have been disaster for the whole system. Someone finally told them, "You have put enough bloody water into this thing. Now let's get in and douse it with foam, so that we can float it down the river and get it the hell out of here." They put something like six feet and the aft end was on the bottom. It was just going to start to list over and tip over.

So, I just called Don back, and he said, "All the guys are down there, and everything is under control. I am just concerned about--." He didn't know what to do about the cargo that was on it, what to do with our customers, and arrange for the next day. So I just got on the phone.

NP: Take us through that because you are the one that is closest to what had to happen just immediately?

GW: By that time, it was 6:00 Edmonton time, so it was nighttime. The CWB had known almost immediately that they were not getting their grain. So they knew that was over, so they would start dealing with what they had to deal with. My process the first thing the next morning, was starting to phone customers. We were picking up a load of iron ore in five days, so I had to assure him that this ship is probably done. We won't be there in five days, but I knew where all the other ships were. Canceled that cargo, but we are going to do this. Virtually I had to sit down and figure out right then in August if we could meet our commitment to the end of the year.

I just spent the next two hours, "Okay, this ship can do this many trips without replacing that ship, or we had a ship tied up that we were not operating at the time. We could bring that up." We had one other ship tied up that had been tied up for two years that would cost quite a bit to get up and at 'em again. So, I had to figure, "Okay, can I scrape through and get the commitments done to the end of the year without adding anything, without maybe giving something away?"

Of course, I was on the phone with Curt in Winnipeg saying, "Okay, now before I even start to worry about insurance and all that stuff, let's deal with what is going to happen in the next two weeks." And that's what we dealt with instantly was, okay, we could carry this. That guy was scheduled in 20 days to carry another CWB cargo and we will have to cancel that, but we had not overbooked for the fall yet. We had not booked into November and December yet. Just a simple phone call to the CWB saying, "Okay, we can carry 300,000 tons by the end of December. Are you cool with that? That is what we are scheduled for right now." There was really no issue for them. They would figure out, "I'll just get Algoma or Canada Steamship Lines to carry extra," because they probably had ships laid up because it was August.

I talked to the ore guys and convinced them that we will make your commitment for the year. It was a conversation. "Are you going to be one or two short? If you are, I would rather know in September than December." There were opportunities for them to go out and carry cargo. We pretty much established by the next day that we were okay without that ship for the immediate future.

NP: What about dealings with the crew?

GW: All the guys were there. Robert went. The shore engineer and the shore captain were all in Thunder Bay.

NP: What are the shore engineer and the shore captain?

GW: He was a captain of the ship, but we took him off the ship and he worked in the office. Any issues that came up with navigation, or let's say a radar breaks, he would come to me and say "This radar is broken. I want to buy this one." I would say

“Well get me two or three prices.” “This is the model I want.” Then they would deal with the captains and the mates and do scheduling and all that kind of stuff. Then the shore engineer was the same guy. He was the former chief engineer on the ship. He would know all the ships. He would know what kind of engines were on--. Every ship had different engines and generators, whatever. If there was a ship go on drydock, those two guys would go down to the drydock and spend two weeks crawling through it and reporting what needs to be done.

We were in Canadian waters, so that was no issue. The ship was aground, so it was a matter that they put a ladder out in front of the ship, and the crew just walked off. They put them up in a hotel and the next day flew them all home.

NP: Were they then put out on other ships or was the end of--?

GW: Their mates and their engineers, I think we started using them on other ships and the captain. But the rest of the crew, no. That was it. They were done. They were hourly crew, and they had separate packages that we were all paid off of. There were some good ones that we wanted to keep. We would pick them. But they were done.

I stayed in Edmonton for four hours. Then my wife and I got back in car and drove home. We were back in town by the next night—drove right through. I believe it was the Thursday. We got back Saturday morning. Then the following Monday, that is when we started. The insurance companies all have to know. We had all sorts of insurance such as interruption insurance and that kind of stuff. It took a month to really sit down and figure out what the problems were going to be. It was a good month before we decided that it was not fixable. It took them three days to get it re-floated. They towed it in, and it had to go through the locks, and you are pulling it. It was the maximum size ship.

You have to get to the lock. You’ve got to unhook the tugboat and go around and push it in, and then get another tug boat to come up the locks to meet it when you open it to pull it out. And you had to winch it out. It should take you 10 hours to go through the Seaway. It probably took us three days. Because every time we got through a lock, we let it clear out until there was an opening, and finally got it into Hamilton, and docked it there.

I went down there with the guys a couple of times and searched through it to see what really can be salvaged. It was finally decided that the engines and everything, there was nothing. Everything was just completely burnt up. Pretty much just cut off the back half and put a new end on it.

Started talking to the Seaway. We knew it was going to be a long, drawn out—and to be honest with you—I am not privy to what happened because it happened years after I had gone. Maybe that is why AI wants to wait 10 years before anybody hears because I

don't know what happened. I know that I did all the estimating of how much money, what kind of business we lost, the earning potential of that ship every year. It was all historical records that we had. We had the ship for 10 years. We knew what we were going to do with it. Then the big decision of how do we stay in business without that ship?

So, there were all these game plans. There was the ship we had tied up, the *Quedoc*. It carried 25,000 pounds. It was not efficient engine-wise. It was going to burn more fuel. But do we pull it out and replace the *Windoc* with the *Quedoc*? I was pretty sure that we could continue pretty much in business within a year at the same level that we were competing at that time. But our fuel was going to be a lot more expensive. The *Quedoc* had three engines compared to the *Windoc*'s one engine. Four engines, older model diesel engine that would burn a lot more fuel. Those were the things you weigh up. To be fair, the last couple of years the grain trade and ore trade were both in down spins. And actually 2002 was another bad year, but they had gotten through 2003 and 2004 to 2007. I got back involved. I had been on the Port Authority's Board of Directors, so I saw what was happening. I have kept friends with the other shipping companies. There was three or four pretty good years after that next year. Things would have been pretty good.

NP: Very bad circumstances.

GW: Yes.

NP: When you think back on your career, what are you most proud of?

GW: My kids! [Laughs]

NP: That is saying something given the hours you have to work.

GW: From the Patersons were a very family-orientated company at the beginning. They allowed me to do a lot of stuff in business and outside the business, and my kids got to appreciate what hard work would get for you. I have been involved in the Chamber of Commerce for 30 years. Dry throat. [Coughs]

NP: We are almost finished. We push you right to the limits. [Laughs]

GW: Both my kids grew up to be pretty smart, energetic, and not afraid to take on challenges. So, Patersons allowed me to do that. I don't think when I was in high school or junior high, I don't think too many of my teachers had much faith in me. I never went to university. I never got a CA, but I seem to be lucky with common sense. I think that has got me a long way. I can figure stuff out. I

can look at a financial statement and come up with the same stuff that a CA would come up with. You don't need to be that. I was lucky they took a chance on me. They trained me in-house. They let me do what I needed to do to get to where I was. I still bump into teachers that look at me and shake their heads as being the president of the Chamber of Commerce. "Oh my god, I would have never thought that for a minute." That probably doesn't give you a very good answer.

If you are thinking what an answer for business, I am proud of every year that I was the Director of Operations there. We made money! They taught me a lot, and when I came over here to a company that is sort of the same, but it is completely different. It's a trucking company. I have been able to make money at this place, too, every year that I am here. My bosses like me here. When I told them I was retiring, they were not too thrilled with that, but it is time. I put 40 years in, and it was time to go. That is something to be proud of. They made money, and I produced what they wanted every year, and they were pretty good back to me in all those years that I was there. I don't really have any complaints other than I wish they had not closed up, because I would have still been there today. I would have been a 50-year guy! Well 40-year.

NP: I am sure you are not alone in that sentiment, that they wished they were still here today.

GW: I don't know how they left it with you, but the staff was a little bitter that they didn't exactly do it the best way they could have. They played a little hard nose at the end, but they were playing it businesswise, or whatever you want to call that. There is some animosity from the staff still years later. Some of them are still my best friends.

NP: Having to go through something similar, what would you have liked to have seen done differently? I mean other than not doing it at all which I guess is still up for grabs. It is something you would rather not say?

GW: Yes.

NP: That is fair enough.

GW: They did everything businesslike. I spent more time with Robert virtually than I spent with my wife. For 30 years, we were every day together. You should have been treated more than a business number at that time. But they may disagree with that. We will leave it at that. We are friendly with each other.

NP: It is not the same.

GW: It is not the same. But I might have read more into it than they did. Who knows.

NP: Yes. Our project, we are trying to find a way to establish a centre here to recognize the grain trade, including obviously the shipping piece of it. If we are successful in doing that, what do you think from what you know of the Paterson operation, what do you think would be things that are very important for us to make sure we don't forget?

GW: Well, they have some pretty neat models. I don't know if they got rid of those.

NP: No, they are still in the TBT Engineering Building.

GW: Yes. There is one big one that is where all the ships were built right after the war. Those are all little canallers and *Lachinedoc*, *Laurendoc*, *Prindoc*, *Ontadoc*. There are about six that were built by Swan Hunter in the UK and all self-unloaders. They have got a nice little model of the *Senator of Canada*. They have a really neat model of the *Paterson*. Winnipeg has one of those, too.

They have tons of stuff in the basement, unless they took it out. There was a safe in the basement that I used to keep. I was more worried about the history than they were. There are letters of recognition and all this stuff. When I first started working, they were a family that the grandfather impressed in their son John that, when I started working there, it was funny because I went right from high school. So the manager comes over and says, "Did you graduate?" "Yes." "Are you going to go to Westgate graduation?" "Yes." "Do you want us to go up on stage for us and hand out the bursary? We give money to all the high schools, but no one ever goes." I said, "What do you mean no one goes?" "No one is interested, all these old guys no one is interested." That company every year out of their operating line would give away thousands of dollars and never want a picture and didn't ask.

When I got involved in the Chamber, people would write in and say, "Gary, the cancer clinic is looking for \$10,000." I would go in down the hall and say, "They are asking for \$10,000." "Oh, okay." So they would write a cheque and put it in the mail. It is only later that they started, like the United Way say, "We are really short. Can you come in December?" And we would always say "Yes we will top up whatever you needed." "No we want you to come and give us this cheque and have someone shake your hand and put it in the paper that you guys are doing this." I was doing a lot of that. Then Don came along and then he said, "I will run the Foundation." Before that, the Foundation was that we would just write cheques when someone asked. We will check and make sure that it sticks out, but they were giving money wherever we were. The Senator was in Ottawa, so money went to Ottawa. Winnipeg had an office there, so we sent money to all the people in Winnipeg whenever they wanted it—the opera or the symphony.

It was neat that they just gave the money from the Foundation and really never asked to be seen. That changed a little later on. But it changed because I think the organizations wanted to acknowledge and maybe push the other companies a bit by saying, "Look at

what Patersons did, so maybe somebody else will jump up and give a bit, too.” That is the kind of people that they were when I first started.

NP: When did John die?

GW: I am going to say the late 1970s.

NP: You were working with him then for awhile?

GW: Yes.

NP: Any comments about working with him?

GW: He was great!

NP: Yes.

GW: He was a neat guy.

NP: That must have been a real blow?

GW: Yes. He passed away before the Senator, before his father passed away. I am going to say a week after he turned 100 or something like that. I was in St. Catherine’s when he passed away. They phoned me and told me that. I had two physical meetings with him and quite a few telexes. He had a telex machine in his house in Ottawa and Winnipeg, and Thunder Bay, Cleveland, Montreal, and Ottawa were all connected with it. We had two telex machines. One was a dial-up, where you dialed up other people. The other one was instantaneous. If I would ask somebody in Montreal something about a payroll issue, Cleveland, Winnipeg and Ottawa would get it. In ‘75, I think we were going through some labour, and it was getting close to a strike. So I am typing Montreal, “Any news on negotiations?” Because the SIU was in Montreal. So at that time, we were using the guys in Montreal to do the negotiations, and it was faster and cheaper than us flying back and forth. I get this telex, “Gary, there is a bar on Simpson Street. Go down there, and you hit the guys over the head and take them down to the boat. They will work for half the price of these union bastards.” So, I took that telex up to John, and I said, “This is your father. How should I answer this?” “Oh, don’t worry. I will take care of it. He gets a little wound up sometimes.” [Laughs] Those are the things that you saw.

One time he came in, I think it was in 1973. He was only early eighties, walked in and introduced himself. It was the first time, and I had just started working. He was going to make a presentation at Bombardier for something because he was involved in everything in town here. Five years later, he walked in the office, pretty old, pretty frail. He walked from desk to desk and said hello to everybody, and walked right up to me and said, "Hi Gary, how are you doing?" This time he was 90. I thought how did he--? John must have prepped him on where everybody sat. He tried to go around and name everybody by their name. Of course, he had seen my name on the telex a hundred times, so it probably was imbedded in his head a bit. I think when he turned 90, that is when John made the decision to take the telex machine out of his home because he was starting to get a little, "No, don't send the ship there. Send it here. This is a better place to send it." [Laughs]

NP: If there anything you would like to say that we have not asked you given your opportunity to say and have two seconds to say?

GW: No, my throat is dry. I have talked for two hours! [Laughs]

NP: Two hours and forty minutes. So you have done yeoman's duties for us. Thank you so much. It has been a great interview. Would you not agree Monika? I forgot to say that Monika MacNabb is sitting on this interview. Thank you very much.

End of interview.