Memories of Working At Baker Manufacturing
February 2, 2012
Organized and Moderated by John Ehle
Transcribed by Ruth Ann Montgomery
At Creekside Place

Participants: Gary "Zeke" Deininger, Ruth Gollmar, Jack McElroy, Phyllis Hull, Geri Knapp, Dave Olsen, Juna Nimz, Terry Jorgenson, Neil Lien, Rex Blum, Judy Bratzke, Donald "Pete" Olsen, Dennis Atkinson, and Gene Fahrney.

John Ehle: Welcome. A couple of people I would like to introduce that are not former or present Baker employees. Sandy Decker, our Mayor, and her husband, John Decker. We have the Morrison girls, Ruby Morrison Davis, and Joy, with their aunt, Ruth Gollmar, who you all know. Janis Ringhand was here, but she had to go to a meeting, but she sends her greetings, and Heidi Carven our school superintendent. Welcome to you folks and Gina Duwe from the Janesville Gazette.

John Ehle: What I would like to do, as a kind of a warm up, is to start with Ruth, if we could, and have her tell us, and you'll all have an opportunity to do this, so you model on Ruth. This is Linda Laursen and Linda is going to move our microphone around today so we can get a recording of what everybody said. Ruth, if you would start out by saying a little bit about what you did at Bakers. Maybe even talk about who it was that hired you and maybe what your original job was. I think that would be a nice start and you guys can either build on that or abbreviate it. I'll leave it up to you. It's a good way to get warmed up and get people into the context of Baker and Baker history. So, thanks for coming.

Ruth Gollmar: I graduated from high school in 1940 and I was given a temporary job in the summer of 1940. I was to help Maude Tomlin, the head bookkeeper. I had never seen a Burroughs bookkeeping machine. I went down on Friday. She was going on two weeks vacation. I thought I probably wouldn't last the vacation. But, anyhow, Helen Bly was in charge of the switchboard and she knew a little bit about the machine. So, between the two of us, we did get stuff posted one day. Then we got a credit balance stuck in the machine and we couldn't do anymore. Well, Maude Tomlin also ran all of the factory checks. So they had Ed Schoop who sold them the Burroughs machine come up and do the payroll for the factory. So he got the credit balance out of the machine and we left it alone after that. So, Maude got back from her vacation and I was there about four more weeks. She felt bad that I was only temporary. I thought she probably was lucky. Then I worked another week for Helen Bly on the switchboard and then I went to Janesville Vocational School and was there almost a full term. Then I worked at Parker Pen from May until November and got a real nice case of the mumps. So I never did go back to Parker Pen. I worked at the bank for two weeks and I got sick. So I hadn't been there very long. I was terribly dizzy one morning. I couldn't even hardly walk across the room. Mr. Eager came down to see how I was getting along. I was about six shades of green and he said, "Boy, you are sick," and I said, "Yes, I am." So, he asked me if I really wanted to come back to the bank and I said, "No, I thought I better not try." They hadn't lost any money on me so l thought I better to quit while I was ahead.. I worked for Capital Printing Company and while I was there, Bud Karn was office manager here in Evansville and he asked my dad if I would be interested in a job in the office. So, I was tired of commuting, so I took the job. I was a receptionist. The switch board was in the office. Louise Moe took care of that. Louise was a very dedicated employee. She had worked for the company since 1918. My job was to open and distribute the mail, check the factory time cards. I had to have those back out there by 9:30. I usually had three or four salesmen waiting to see Jag Powles. Trying to find him was like trying to find to a dog in a flea factory. Sometimes he would leave the office and not let anybody know. There was no intercom, so I was on the phone. One morning when I was distributing the mail, I was in Gordon's office and Bud Karn was in there. Gordon said, "I'll have her." Well, I thought I didn't know what that was going to mean. He said, "Well finish the mail and then

come back." As it turned out, Ruth Roberts was Gordon and Cleland's secretary and she was leaving to take a job at Ben Green's Farmer's Exchange. So, Cleland was not at the office at that time. He was away and had surgery. He never did come back. So I started working for Gordon but I didn't get the bookkeeping job that she had. They put me on the files instead. And so, the first thing Gordon said, "If you don't know how to spell it, I don't know how to spell it, so you better go and look it up." Of course he was on an engineering report so that was a strange language for me. But we got along ok. He really needed an award, because I worked for him for 17 years and then I decided I had better quit. I did go and help Geri at annual meeting time for several years. So that kind of took care of that. I was the third generation of the Morrison's who worked for the company. My grandfather started on the shipping department in 1913. My dad started in the same department in 1914. My uncle, Howard Morrison, was working in the test room of the gas engine department. Then, later in the mid-1930s, Cleland Baker started an apprenticeship course. My brother was one of the kids that started that course. They worked it through the State of Wisconsin. Walter Simon came down and helped them get organized. Strangely enough, he had married a lady from Evansville, Ethel Van Wart. If any of you are old enough, you probably knew her mother, Marcia Van Wart, was always active around Evansville. Well, let's see, I guess I've dumped everything on you that I know. I'll let somebody else come up for air.

John Ehle: Take a deep breath and we'll let Geri continue and you can do another contribution later on.

Geri Knapp: My name is Geri Knapp. I started working at Baker on October 13, 1958. I was originally hired to be the secretary of the sales department. But when Bob Powell saw how young I was and newly-wed and already had one baby. He said, "I want nothing to do with her. She'll last six months if we're lucky." So, Jack McElroy got stuck with me. I did the accounts payable and the general filing, just for a couple of months. Then I moved out to the reception area and I became pregnant again, so I was all set to leave. Because in those days you didn't get a maternity leave, you quit. Dan Finnane was coming back from the service. He had done his six-month stint. He walked out to the reception desk one day and said, "How would you like to be my secretary?" I said, "Dan, I'm pregnant." He said, "Well, you are not going to be pregnant forever are you?" So he allowed me to continue working and 51 years later, I finally retired. I ended up training four presidents. I retrained Mr. Baker because he never made me cry like he did you, Ruth. I loved every minute of the 51 years.

Jack McElroy: Are you done?

Geri Knapp: I'm done.

Jack McElroy: My name is Jack McElroy. She mentioned me to you. I started in 1953. I'll tell you what happened. I was in business college in Madison and a guy by the name of John Myrold, whom a lot of you remember, came up there to interview people for a job own there. I thought, well, I'll take the interview. I lived in Oregon, just up the street, ten miles or whatever. So, I had an interview with John Myrold and we got to talking about things. Come to find out, back in those days, I had been out of high school a little bit. I was playing softball and one of the members of the softball team, his name was Bob Newton, from Oregon, and John Myrold knew

Bob Newton. I can't remember why they knew one another, but I think that might have had something to with John Myrold hiring me for this particular job. That's how I got started. That's been a long time ago. I made myself notes because I sometimes don't remember things too well, as I asked Neil a little while ago over here. When I started, I ran into, I just got to say, a bunch of nice people, not only in Evansville, but a few years later, when I started traveling around the branches, they were all nice people. My problem is, a lot of those nice people, I can't remember their names anymore. However, I got some notes here and I'm going to read them to you. At that time the branches were Appleton, Cedar Rapids, Enid, Fargo, Fort Dodge, Hutchinson, Madison, Minneapolis, Omaha, and Winnipeg. I got a bunch of notes here, but they are not necessarily things. I didn't write them down in the order in which they happened, but I'll just go on with my notes.

One day, I think it was Peter Sears, who was then president, brought into my office a man by the name of Les Aspin. Do you know him? He's dead isn't me? He was then Secretary of Defense, I do believe. He came into my office with, I think it was Peter Sears and Peter introduced him to me. He must have mention to Les that I had been there like 40 years or whatever it was. Les' comment was, "Wow, I'll bet you've seen a lot of dust swept under the rug." I wanted to comment, but I didn't dare. So, I left well enough alone.

One night, when I started to travel, I was going to Hutchinson, Kansas. I took a train trip out of Chicago. Don't ask me why, but I did it, instead of an airplane. However, I had, what do you call it, a berth to sleep in at night. We had this all planned that I probably would sleep all night on this train and when I got to Hutchinson, I'd check into the hotel and I'd be ready to go to the office. Well, I didn't sleep all night on that train. So when I got to Hutchinson, I went to the hotel and went to bed. I never did go to the office until about noon or thereafter.

One time I was going to go down to Enid , Oklahoma. Ed Shipman was the manager down there. I got down there. First of all, my wife, her name is Dorothy. She was pregnant and I got down there and noon time came and I says to Ed. "I've got to buy my wife a maternity outfit. Where do I go?" Oh, he says, "I know exactly where to go. My neighbor runs a dress shop. She'll help you out." So he takes me to this dress shop and he introduces me to his neighbor, who ran it. I said, "I wanted to buy a maternity outfit for a pregnant woman." She says, "I can help you out, but first I have to ask you a question. Is she married or single?" I don't know what the difference is, but that was my first experience down in Enid, Oklahoma.

Some of you girls will probably remember the names. When I first came to work there were two girls on the payroll. Their names were Beth Gunlach and Betty McCaslin. This Betty McCaslin she was a pretty young lady. They were both nice and pretty. Betty McCaslin, I think, was a few years older than I was. The thing I remember about her was that her hair was perfectly groomed every day. There was not a hair out of place. So after awhile instead of being Betty McCaslin, to me, I changed it to Beauty McCaslin. That's what I called her thereafter. After a while, we got to talking her and I. She said, "You look familiar." Come to find out, back in those days, the Greyhound bus traveled to Evansville and stopped on the way to Madison. You could get on the bus and go to Madison. One day I went to Madison on the bus, on the way home, the bus was full, but there was a young lady sitting there. There was an empty chair, seat, there so, I sat down beside her and it turned out to be Betty McCaslin, which I found out later. She remembered that trip. She was in Madison coming home on the same bus. She remembered visiting with me. Isn't that strange? Pretty soon, two or three or four, or five years later, I went to work down there. I was probably on the bus because I didn't have any car or any

money to buy one. So I had to take a bus if I wanted to go to Madison. That's where I ran into her.

I had a professor at Madison Business College, his name was Bob Slightham. Baker's hired him about the same time they hired me, but they would never tell me. I used to go in there in the afternoon, from college and work two or three or four hours, whatever it was. Apparently he did too, but they would never tell me he was there. I never did figure that out. That's kind of strange. Stan Christensen, remember him, people?

Dave Olsen: Is he the one who owned the foundry down in Illinois?

Jack McElroy: Yes, at this time he was a foundry salesman in Evansville. Then later he left and bought Stateline Foundry. He was a fisherman and he was from Fennimore Wisconsin. He liked to fish trout. I never did. One weekend he wanted to go trout fishing in Fennimore and he says, "Would come along with me. We have to stay overnight." I said, "I suppose I can." I shouldn't say this, I went. Apparently the trout season opened about four or five in the morning. I can't remember for sure. So him and I spent the evening in a bar. When the trout season opened in the morning we went. He caught trout, one after the other. He gave me some equipment. I know nothing about trout fishing but he tried to explain it to me. We went, and he caught trout after trout but I didn't catch anything. "What's the problem Stan? Why can't I catch anything." He says, "You have to know more than the trout." That's my old buddy, Stan, who has since died.

I remember Erick Johnson, who used to live here in Evansville, but then he transferred to be the manager at Minneapolis. Him and his wife were going to Hawaii for a vacation. Where did he go? to the Los Angeles airport I think it was. They were in the Los Angeles airport and she died, in the airport. Heart attack I guess. They never did get to Hawaii. That always sticks in my mine because Erick is one guy I do remember. We also called him Kruchev, the Russian leader, you know.

One time I was at Fargo North Dakota and I was returning home and the manager, John Duffy, was the manager. I checked out of the motel. He takes me to the airport and then he leaves me. He's got business to do and so I get on the plane and the pilot takes us out to where we are going to zoom down the old runway and take off. He gets that plane going a 100 miles an hour down the runway. All of a sudden, the tail goes back and forth and so the pilot quickly stopped the plane. I don't know how he did it, but I guess we were about at the end of the runway. Anyway, there was something wrong and he turned around and took us back to the terminal. We had to unload and we never got out of there until the next day on Northwest. A lot of people at that time called it Northworst. They sent in a new plane from their hub in Minneapolis and loaded us all up and got us out of there. Anyway, that was a scary moment for me when the tail started going this way and that way across the runway, as we were sailing for takeoff. That wasn't very pretty. That's what happened. Should I continue with my little speeches here?

Winnepeg, the first manager, I can't think of his name. Doug Horner was the second, wasn't he? I can't remember the first one. I was up there once. He liked to golf apparently. I was kind of interested in golf back in those days also. It was during the noon hour. There was an open field across from the office. Him and I'd go across the street into this open park, so to speak, and hit golf balls back and forth during the noon hour.

He was replaced by Doug Horner, I do believe. I think that's the order they came. Doug was such a fine gentleman, I always thought. He must have smoked and so did I. Every time he came to a meeting in Evansville, he would always bring me a package of Canadian cigarettes, because he said, "They're much better than yours." He was a nice old gentleman, too.

Do you remember the gal in the Grand Ol' Oprey, with the hat with the price tag on it, Minnie Pearl. I was in Nashville and she was on there. She told the story about leaving the Grand Ol' Opery one Saturday night after the show was over and she must have lived close by and she was walking to her home. All of a sudden a guy jumped out the bushes and stuck a gun in her back and said, "Give me your money." She told him she didn't have any. He didn't believe that. So he frisked her. After about 10 minutes, he said, "Lady. Your right. You don't have any money. "I told you that, but if you do that again, I'll write you a check."

Do you remember the auditors we once had? Incidentally, I see in the paper Audrey Kleinsmith died. We had a guy by the name of Steve Finley. He came out of Touche, Ross and Company out of Milwaukee. Him and I became great friends as well as his crew that did the auditing for us. One time there at the end of the year, his crew was here and Steve wasn't. So his crew and I went to Halverson's tavern, supper club over on 51 near Stoughton, you know where it's at. We had dinner and a couple of ice teas and something like that. We paid the bill. We decided we were going to make a fake dinner bill out and send it to Finely who wasn't there. He was back in Milwaukee. So, we got the bartender to make out a bill for, I forgot, three or four hundred bucks or whatever it was back in those days. It was quite high then, that three or four hundred, and we sent it to him. A day or two later, he must have got it and he called up and he let them guys know that he was not paying that bill. So, that didn't work.

I was mentioning to Neil just a little while ago about the accident that happened in the foundry, a death that occurred right over here. The maintenance guy got into the machine and was doing some maintenance work and he forgot to turn the power off to this machine. Somebody came back along and was going to use it and turned the on and off switch. He hit the on switch and the guy was in it and he was killed. That wasn't very pleasant, but I thought, I'd bring it up anyway. I'm pretty near done.

Oh Phyllis. Anyway, Phyllis had a desk right outside of my office and one day I was sitting in my office and she started laughing and she never stopped. Finally I said, what are you laughing at. Is there something wrong with me or what's the deal? She just kept right on laughing. She just handed me this paper and it happened to be an injury report, for insurance purposes, an injury report. Well this was a report of a truck warehouse in Enid Okla. He was making a delivery for the branch in Enid Oklahoma. He had to go to a bathroom and stopped at a filling station. This was what the injury report said and he zipped up his zipper and oh boy. It got caught in the zipper. It had to be surgically removed. Ouch. That was what she was laughing at and she couldn't stop.

Jack McElroy: Geri Knapp. I remember Geri when she started. I forgot the year you mentioned. I was in the barbershop. Her husband was a barber at the time. He worked in Bill Meredith's shop with Bill. I went to Bill's barbershop back in those days my neighbor was a relative of Bill's and I asked "where do I get a haircut." "Oh, you go up here to Bill's shop" and Gerri's husband worked there one time. You [Geri] were working in Madison. I asked him. We needed an accounts payable clerk down there and I wondered if his wife would be interested instead of driving back and forth to Madison and to make a long story short, he must have talked

to her and she came down for an interview. That was the start of your 51 years and I stake a lot of credit for that.

One time I was in Minneapolis. I worked for Brownie Dan Finnane. We were on a trip to Minneapolis, and we were going to Winnepeg. In Minneapolis we went out for dinner that night to a supper club and I don't know if I sneezed or what and my nose started bleeding and we couldn't get it stopped. Finally one of the restaurant waiters came and took me in the men's room with some towels and we couldn't get it stopped. The gal at the office in Minneapolis. She was a foreigner and very hard to understand. we must have contacted her or something. She apparently got us a cab and they were taking me to some hospital where there were mostly some foreigners and I couldn't understand them. I couldn't understand them. There I was with a nose bleed. Brownie left me he went on to Canada. I had to stay over a day or two at that hospital. It was very uncomfortable the way they handled this nose bleed and they went up the nostril and came out the throat part. They were pulling this string. They finally got it stopped and I told them, I'm getting out of here I can't stand it. I couldn't understand them anyway. They didn't want me to leave. I said, "I'm calling my wife and she is going to contact my doctor in Evansville." I guess my doctor said, "If it has stopped bleeding come home and see me." It probably wouldn't hurt to get out and come and see me. I would have stayed a little longer but I couldn't understand them.

I have one more comment. Do you remember the guy that was the sports writer for the Wisconsin State Journal, many years ago, who was Roundy Coughlin. I was in Omaha, Nebraska and I was in a hotel one night. I went to the coffee shop in the morning for breakfast. I think Brownie was with me too. We were sitting in the coffee shop and I happened to look a few tables over and there sat Roundy Coughlin, from the Wisconsin State Journal in Madison. He was a very crude speaker. His English wasn't very good, but he was comical. I remember him coming to Evansville Golf course, when we opened it and playing golf. I started visiting with him. I told him who I was and where I was from and so on and so forth. We visited for a while. He was on his way to Tucson, Arizona. He was covering, at that time, the Chicago Cubs spring training in Tucson. I'm not sure they are still in Tucson, they might have gone somewhere else. He said, "Do you have a business card?" I said, "Ya." I gave him my business card. Well, a few days later, I was back home, reading his column, which I did every day. He mentioned in his column, "I ran into Jack McElroy from Evansville in Tucson, Arizona. We had a nice visit." Well, he was wrong, it was Omaha, Nebraska. But the story was that my mother lived, at that time, in Tucson, Arizona. So I cut the article out of the State Journal and sent it to her. I thought I'd just test her and see what she would say. It didn't take her long to call me on the phone and asked me why I didn't come to see her, as long as I was in Tucson, Arizona. It took me a while to explain to her that Roundy was wrong. I met him in Omaha Nebraska. All in all, there might have been some other things that I forgot. Mine was 42 years. Just think, her's [Geri's] was 51. Mine was a fast 42 years. I remember a lot of these things. There's probably things that I forgot. So, I'm glad you took the time to listen to me. Thank you very much. I'm done.

Neil Lien: My name is Neil Lien. I'd like to take you back to 1936 when my father got his dealership from the Northwest Wind Energy Company. That was in Minneapolis. Baker Manufacturing owned 50% of that company and in 1938 they bought the company and it became the Minneapolis branch. We sold windmills and one of my jobs as an 11 year old was to come home from school and assemble windmill wheels, and put the spokes in and the tail bone and the

stub tower. We always had to put a lock washer on the bolts. We had a salesman out there, by the name of Mr. Higgins who came. Quite frequently Dad would be out working and we'd have to entertain him until Dad got home. That's how I learned about Baker Manufacturing. We had a good time together.

During the war, Mr. Higgins took a job in the war industry and he was under a minimum salary, plus commission. After the war he wanted his salary. Mr. Townsend said, "No." He said, "I'll sue." Mr. Townsend paid him off and fired him. We lost a good loyal salesman at that point. He would take and put a pair of bib overall over his grey striped suit and climb the windmills and check them out to make sure that they were installed correctly. He never found anything wrong with my father's windmills, but there were a lot of them that would leave the lock washers off and they would fall off. He was a good friend. I looked for him when I came, but he wasn't here.

I'd like to tell you something about the hydrofoil experiences we've had. I was asked to go out to the underwater demolition team (UDT) in San Diego to train a UDT person to run the High Tail. I spent a full week doing it. I came home and thought, we'll go camping and went up to Devil's lake. There happened to be a fence post there in front of our camp trailer. A ranger came over and wanted to know who I was. He said, "There's a telephone call for you on that post. I'll go put it out there if you will answer it." And I said, "Yes." The fellow said, this is commander so and so. We would like to you to come back because the man that you trained we had to reassign. UDT people are assigned all over at a moment's notice for various duties. So I said, I would go if you clear it with Mr. Baker and he did. I remember my little daughters loading the camping trailer. They were happy. They weren't sad or anything because they knew what was going to happen.

Well, anyway, I ended up the next day flying out to San Diego. Anyway they said they were going to put a UDT uniform on you. We want to make sure this boat works properly. I said OK. We were standing in front of this commander's desk, I remember, in the amphibious base. He was giving us instructions as to what was going to happen. And he was sitting at his desk. He had to go around in front of desk to take care of a situation over here. He walked right in front of me. "Mr. Lien, you'll have to excuse me. I forgot who the hell you were." Well, that was out of respect for Mr. Baker and the Baker Hydrofoil program.

Well anyway, we went out and there were three of us in this open cockpit High Tail. We went out by North Island, just south of the Naval Electronics Laboratory and I remember there was a seal on its back eating kelp. We went out to sea and we went down south to about a mile to a 1/2 mile north of the islands that Mexico owns and we were out in three to four foot waves doing circles. I thought on the way out, I said, "Look there's a 2 x 6 hunk of wood out there. Miss it." And the coxswain said, "I can't see it." I told him where it was. "To your left." He hit it straight on and we split a piece off. It was a 2 x 6, maybe 15 feet long. That whole thing went through the front struts, went through the propeller shaft housing and through the rear struts and rear and we went through fine. Everything cleared ok.

We got out there and I thought I was supposed to tell the second fellow how to run the multipliers. I thought, if you can't understand me, I'm going to run those to make sure they go correctly. Which I did. Which was against the rules, but I didn't give a damn. Anyway, we were doing circles in 3 to 4 foot waves and they looked like they were twice as big, with an occasional 6-footer coming along.

Pretty soon, here comes four Marine helicopters out. They were all shined real nice. They really shined, I can remember that, and onboard was President Kennedy. Now President Kennedy really saw to it that they had the best amphibious base facility that you could possibly have, because of his Navy experience.

We went back and put the boat away and I took my uniform off. I wasn't sworn in or anything but I had one day of UDT time and I went home. Another experience I remember, I was working for the Naval Electronics Laboratory, which is in San Diego. Up north at Seattle in Lake Mercer, I think it is, we stayed at the Sand Point Naval Base where we had the boat. We were measuring the noise from hydrofoils, which had never been done before; where we had to go full speed, half speed, and low speed and at high clearance, low clearance, and propeller up and propeller down and all kinds of things. This was right outside the Renton plant for Boeing. They had their personnel out there and they were designing the PCH [hydrofoil vessels.] They put a lot of the things that the High Tail had in it, into the PCH design.

They had never measured the noise from hydrofoils before. So we had our hydrofoils down 50 feet, setting in 50 feet of muck, so it would absorb the sound. So they got a good image. They were send the data back to us, which they never did. You realize at the end of

World War II, they could identify a ship coming out of the English Channel at Norfolk, Virginia. So, it was kind of an important mission.

Anyway, when I was out there, I got a call from Mr. Baker to come to Little Creek, Virginia, which is right near Norfolk. I said, "OK." I got on the plane and I spent the evening with my family and left the next morning and flew to Norfolk.

There we had the landing craft and they wanted help to test it because I had been involved in the design of it. In the design of it, I had to do a lot of checking of the drawing. If you checked the drawing you were responsible for the item that was being made. As we were mounting the rear well mount for the support of the hydrofoil on the back of the landing craft hull. Darrel Hagen was on the inside. Max Palmer was on the outside and I was with him. I had cross checked their work because I was responsible and they had done the positioning of drilling the holes real well, I thought. I approved it. Along comes Mr. Baker and of course, he was at times very difficult to work for, as you know. He always had a better idea. Darrel was inside starting his drill. Mr. Baker said, "That hole has to be right there," and he pointed at that spot. Pretty soon the drill came through and took the end of his finger off. Well, he had a big bandage over it so he wasn't took accurate after that at pointing. I've got a lot of stories.

Dave Olsen: Neil, why don't you just touch a little bit on the Instrument Division. Just a little bit so they understand. Well, tell them what the product was, you're not going to get them to understand it.

Neil Lien: Instrument Division. I had worked for, I think it was, 14 years when the hydrofoil program went down. I worked another 4 years to help Mr. Baker to bring the product line up to date and we had it pretty well squared away, I thought. I thought, I can step out of this place.

So I got a job at the physical science lab which is a service facility to the graduate school at the University. I was assigned to Dr. [Donald] Kerst who had a demeanor similar to Mr. Baker. So, I could get along with him real well. He was building a plasma octopole which is a containment device for plasma. Plasma is your fourth state of matter which is an ionized gas, versus solids, liquids, and gas, and we got that going.

I had a draftsman from India, Choksi, that would come out and help me work on it. When he went back to India, he forgot me. After 40 years he looked me up on the internet and e-mailed me. We got to going back and forth. He finally came over to this country for the company that he was working for in India. He decided that he would come to Wisconsin and visit again. So he looked me up.

This is a book on the proceedings of the symposium for engineering problems and fusion research and the first paper in it is by myself and Igor Sviatoslavsky. Which the secretaries at the lab could never pronounce, so they always called him Igor. Anyway this is a picture that Choksi drew up for me and it has an actuator on it, which would be, if I can find a picture of it. You look at it and you will see that there are four bars exactly the same geometry as the straight line motion in a ZA jack.

We had to, in a less of a blink of an eye, in time less than the blink of an eye pull this probe out that supported the hoops that went around. Dr. Kerst came to me afterwards and he said, "Neil, we never expected that thing to work and you made it work." That comes from the ZA jack. We pulled that out in less than a blink of an eye, held it out for less than the blink of an eye, and put it back into position, absorbed the energy of free fall, and pushed it back in. Well,

that's a little bit of the Baker engineering, right there. It was given the recognition of being the first paper to be presented out of a week's volume of papers.

I stayed there seven years and during that time we had designed and developed monochromators for the synchrotron radiation beam lines. This was an electronic beam that goes around and emits light from 0 angstoms to near infrared. The lowest wave length that had ever been studied in physics was 1,040 angstroms. Synchrotron radiation can go down to very close to 0 angstroms. They didn't have instrumentation for it so we developed these monochromators and I think I was involved in about seven of them.

I was then assigned to Dr. Brown, who worked for the Hansen Lab at Stanford, Synchrotron Radiation Center out there. I developed all the drawings over the telephone with him and by writing. We developed an instrument called the Grasshopper, which was owned by the Xerox Research Center. Xerox Research Center assigned the rights to that to Dr. Brown and myself.

So, while working at the lab, Mr. Baker would call me up. "Why did we do this design?" You know how he was. "Would you come down tonight and we'll talk it over?" I said, "Sure." So I'd be there by 5 o'clock and we'd go through it. Then he'd say, "Would you come down and work this problem out tonight or this weekend." I said, "Sure" I did this for quite some time.

Finally it got to the point where his health was going downhill and they asked me to take a year's leave of absence. So I did. That's how the instrument division started. We had the rights to the Grasshopper and Dr. Brown would come up from the University of Illinois. He'd fly up in his plane and I'd pay for his trip by train or bus and we worked. I think we developed something like 13 or 14 Grasshoppers, of various kinds and some grating crystal monochromators. He would go back and he'd say, "I've got to get back I've got 600 students to lecture to tomorrow." He finally died last November 18. He was a year older than I am and I lost a good friend.

The instrument division wasn't understood by the management too well. Frank understood it, because he had the technical ability, but Peter Sears didn't. One of the last projects we developed was the grating test evaluation facility for the Goddard Space flight Center. It was a big vacuum tank which Dr. [Alois] Schlack did the stress analysis and strain analysis on it. John Stolz was there with us. His father had a 40-foot sail boat. So he decided to go back home and that left me in charge of the whole project.

I went down to Greenbelt, Maryland to the Goddard Space Flight Center and we took out the side of a building and put in this humongous vacuum chamber. I can remember one of the things that paid for my whole trip, was the fact that we had this granite block which was 6 ft wide and some 20 feet long and it weighed quite a bit. We had a crane. We'd moved the assembly into the building but we had to put steel plates under it, jack it up and put it on rollers so we could get it back in position. This was after hours and the foreman of the crane assembly that put the vacuum chamber in was going to jack on it and he put the jack near the edge. Well, this was granite and this was a lot of weight to lift. Well, he could have cracked that granite off. That would have junked the whole. I hollered at him. I said, "No, push the jack in." He did. He didn't understand it. He cussed at me a little bit. That's all right. I'm accustomed to that. Anyway, we got the thing into position and it works real well.

Dave Olsen: For the laymen here, this vacuum chamber, basically, the use of it was to perform tests of what it would be like to do something in a near net, complete vacuum, like in outer space

and I believe some these tests were done at Greenbelt, Maryland, which is a NASA facility to try and understand what was going to happen. Because I think they sent some of those tests up.

Neil Lien: This was to test out his monochromators. We had about 5 monochromators that we had to put in on a flat plate. I think we had 56 places we could mount them so we could get various configurations. They were to test the gratings. A grating is a little piece of glass and it has from 300 to 3,600 lines per millimeter, which is about 40/1000. Those gratings are now out all over space, particularly the Hubble telescope. That was one of the objects.

Ruth Gollmar: Neil, can I ask you something? The board of directors was going to hold a meeting in Madison and the hydrofoil boats, the large one, was going to be there. We were at Tenney Park before we were going to take that. So the 23-foot row boat was brought over to Tenney Park and there were some people standing there and one lady said, "Oh, at last, the City of Madison has got a weed cutter."

Neil Lien: That was one of the things we called it, was a weed cutter. Because little boys would come up. "What is this?" They'd take their finger on the trailing edge which was knife sharp and they'd get a cut on their thumb. So we called it a weed cutter. That's how we explained it to little boys.

That was an interesting experience. I want to tell you on the hydrofoils a little. We had this hydrofoil film which I have given several lectures on to various service clubs, like the Lions, Rotary, and the Gyro club. So I knew how to explain the film very well. I was asked to show this film to a group of officers into an organization which I've forgotten. It was classified and that's why I have forgotten it. It had a high classification because they didn't want people to know that the Navy was working on this on this type of organization.

The officers went into the back room where we were going to show this film. I was going to explain it and answer questions. There was another room in between the front office and this little room in the back and it was filled with officers. Well, I walked into this room and they called attention, "Hut" and everybody stood just frozen. I'm an old private first class from the Army Air Force. I thought, "What is this?" I was still a PFC, a civilian, you know what I mean. Anyway that was the respect for Mr. Baker and the Baker Manufacturing Company. I went in and explained this film and answered their questions and everything came out fine. But the fact that they gave me the attention, military-wise, showed a great deal of respect for Baker Manufacturing and Mr. Baker.

Dave Olsen: I saw one of those films. You showed me in your office. It was just on a little boat. It must have been in Madison, on the shore. It took off and it started to go up and then it hit something. It hit some rocks and it stopped. The film kind of stopped. Then it goes backwards and it was like it started again and it went back to its original place. Then it started up again and it went out around the rocks. They found the rocks the first time.

Neil Lien: I wasn't on that trip. That was Max Palmer and Ken Ellis. Max Palmer was the one in the movie. That was brought back and that was a demonstration for the Navy, by the way, and that's what got us the Navy contract for High Pockets.

Dave Olsen: Wasn't there a race on one of the lakes in Madison?

Neil Lien: Yes and that race was between one person in a conventional boat and four people in the hydrofoil.

Dave Olsen: Completely different horsepower?

Neil Lien: No, identical boats, same horsepower and it showed the advantage of the hydrofoils with speed, with load. That was actual footage and it showed the conventional boat, with one person, went out fast and the one with four people in was slow to get up but it passed the boat.

Ok, what else do you want to know? High Pockets was the first successful hydrofoil in the United States Navy. So we achieved a lot of firsts in this field. Mr. Baker had a lot of respect for his work, as well as Baker Manufacturing and the men who worked to build them. What else do you want to know?

Dave Olsen: We'll think of more. We'll just keep going. We'll think of more.

Neil Lien: Did I show you this? This is the Life magazine and back here a ways is the picture of President Eisenhower. That's Rock Hudson on the front. You notice that President Eisenhower is sort of smiling, looking over at us. That's Phil Roberts. He is the other person in the boat. We got that in Life Magazine.

One of the first papers, technical papers, written on the pitless well units, was by a Mr. Erickson and myself. He was with the Lansing Water Well Department in Lansing, Michigan. He wrote, I think it's the first paper, on the pitless well units. This unit here, remember you [Pete Olsen] drew up a special cap for that.

That's history of the company. Much of the history I wrote in this book on the Monitor Hydrofoil Sailboat Design and Review. This has taken off in France and England, quite a bit. I've sold many copies over there, to the Isle of Man, even. Well this book explains some of the people who worked for Baker. One of them was Don Cadman. His ancestors came over on the Mayflower. One was Dr. Bob Cannon [Dr. Robert Cannon, Jr.] who was Chief Scientist of the Air Force at one time.

Ray Custer, I didn't know if you knew who he was. I didn't know, but his grandfather, if you sit in McDonald's in Oregon and you look out and you see a little shed. If you look, to the right of it, you will see the grave stone of James Custer. That was Ray's grandfather who was a very close relative, I think, of the father of General George Custer. So that's in the family. I don't know if you knew that or not. I worked with him for many years and I didn't know it either.

The hydrofoil sailboat had been a lot of work, engineering-wise. It had been designed. Ruth Heinzen wrote a very nice engineering report on it. One of the things that I first worked on was the sail assembly, which is this fold in the back with the rigid sails. I had designed a tow-boat that was to be marketed. Bob Cannon was there and Mr. Baker was there. They said, "We've never really tried a hydrofoil sailboat, a sail on a hydrofoil. We don't know if it works." So we designed the16-foot hull we put a wide cross tube on it and some v-foils. This became the first successful hydrofoil sail boat, very stabilized, in the world. It went 23 miles an hour in a 15 mile an hour in wind, which was above the world's record of 19 in a gale for an e-boat, which I owned one at one time.

When we designed the Monitor, Max Palmer had done the lines for the haul and I did the tail. And you can see it became quite a complicated drawing, a lot of dimensions and so forth. It weighed 165 pounds and was 26-feet long, which means, it was very light. We had to make it light, because we had to lift it out of water with hydrofoils. We went 35 miles an hour with that boat in a 15 mile per hour wind which put it way above the world's record. One of the things that happened on the first sail, Mr. Baker stopped the boat in the middle of Lake Mendota. He said, "Neil, what did you put into that boat that makes it works so well?" He was kind of mad. He didn't know about it. That was his love and first pride. I said, "Nothing Mr. Baker, I only did what you told me to do." That was an interesting comment, I thought, on his part and he was happy.

John Ehle: I talked to both Mary Baker and Ann Baker over the weekend. I got their contact information from Harry Roderick. Mary answered her cell phone and she said, "I apologize for the background noise, I'm standing on a mountain."

She was skiing, but she consented to send some information about herself and I'd just like to read this from Mary: "I graduated from University of Wisconsin with a degree in Engineering Mechanics in 1966 and went to Caltech in Pasadena CA for a M.S. and Ph.D. in Applied Mechanics. My thesis was on the fluid mechanics of blood but ever since then I have worked in structural dynamics in fields in which my father was well known. I worked for several companies in close succession until I joined Structural Dynamic Research Corp for 23 years until 2000 when the aerospace group that I ran spun off to form our current company ATA Engineering, a small engineering company for which I am the President and Technical Director. ATA is broadly employee owned with all profits going to the employees who are the only stockholders--J.S. Baker would approve.

I have been married since 1974 to Wayne Pfeiffer, a researcher at University of California (UCSD) and we have a daughter, Betsy who is 28 and son Gordon who is 26. Betsy is currently working at a company making racing hydrofoil kite boats at a very small company in San Francisco. Gordon, who has a master's in aerospace engineering, is working on industrial robots for making printed circuit boards for i-phones and i-pads. Mary Baker"

John Ehle: I'm sure we all understand all of that. While I'm at it, I might as well read Ann's information, too. I have to tell you that it was a delight to talk to these two women who are so humble, but so accomplished. This is from Ann Burgess: "I graduated from UW-Madison in 1964 with a BS in Chemistry and then earned a PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Harvard University. My husband Richard Burgess and I met in this program. While we were pursuing two years of postdoctoral research in Geneva Switzerland, Dick was offered a faculty position in McArdle Cancer Research Laboratory at UW-Madison and we have been living in Madison since 1971. Dick served on the Board of Directors of the Baker Manufacturing Company from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s. Most of my career has been spent teaching laboratory courses and serving as the Director of UW-Madison's Biology Core Curriculum (Biocore), a 4 semester honors program for undergraduates. I am now retired and work as a volunteer with both the UW-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve and the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery science outreach program.

Dick and I have two children. Our daughter Kristin Burgess McBride (married to Jim McBride) earned a PhD in physics from MIT and currently works as a paramedic in San Francisco. She also teaches in and helps administer an EMT school. Our son Andreas Baker

Burgess (married to Sadia Shepard) is a cinematographer and photographer based in New York City; he works all over the world. Best Regards, Ann

John Ehle: I thought that was a timely introduction to that information, because of the hydrofoil.

Neil Lien: I want to add that Betsy Pfeiffer, she's the daughter of Mary.

Rex Blum: She was Gordon's granddaughter.

Neil Lien: She came up and we spent about a full afternoon. I fed her full of Baker hydrofoils. She is working on the wind velocity close to surface that is quite low. The higher you go, it goes way up. So what they are doing is taking a kite on the long towline and they are putting it way up, several hundred feet up in the air. They are pulling their hydrofoil boat with that. Betsy's is working as a graphic's manager

Rex Blum: The company that she works for in California there, she was assigned to this hydrofoil thing. You and I and Betsy got together a couple of months ago. I mentioned to her. "You are talking to the right guy in this world about hydrofoils." It's just ironic that Gordon Baker's granddaughter was assigned to the hydrofoil.

John Ehle: Neil, take a deep breath and we'll come back. We've got plenty of time and let's go on to Pete and then we'll go around the table again. Thank you so much.

Donald "Pete" Olsen: People know me more by Pete, I guess. I had to go all the way back to my birth date. I was born on 29th of October in 1929, which might ring a bell with a lot of people. That's when everything went to pot. My dad was working there at the time. I got to be a little bit older. He was laid up, I guess. He was pouring molten iron out in the foundry and the glasses that they wore for protection just had a little peep hole in the center of them, because of heat and glare from the molten iron. Somehow or another he must have tripped or something and poured molten iron down his high top boot. That took care of the sock, burned that off. That was one of the things that I encountered. I got out of school and thought I would take a run at Bakers. I got hired. I got to spend one nice winter in the warehouse wiring up windmill towers with a couple of guys by the name of Roy Noggles and Chris Gilbertson. That's an education in itself, I guess. Anyway I got by with that and then I went out into the core making room and got doing that. Then for some reason or other somebody put a broom in my hand and I thought, "I'm not going to do this." So the whistle blew at 9:30 and Pete Olsen walked out the back door, not to come back. Then I went and spent four years in the service. I came back out and I thought, I've got to try Baker's again. Because, that's been a part of my life, you know, all this time, grandfathers and uncles and whatever working there. So I tried and I got hired again, believe it or not. I spent some time in the factory learning the whys and what for's. Until I went over there and Phil Roberts wanted me to come over in the engineering for awhile. So I went over and started there.

Neil Lien: They are cousins.

Donald "Pete" Olsen: Yes, cousins, bless his heart. Eventually he left up there. He went out to Denver. So I guess, this guy sitting to my right [Neil Lien] probably took over most of his duties about that time. By his direction, I was going to take some pictures of some projects, It was a deep well pump, was what it was. It was a nice sunny day so Bob Albright and myself, we went up on this roof. It was windy and we had to get out of the wind. Everything was going fine. This was on top of the old wash room between the tool room and the lab. Anyway, they've got a sky light there. I'd just guess at this point, maybe it's 18 inches-2 feet wide by two or three feet long and separated by a metal bar with another one on the other side. I was going to pick up this gear box. It must have weighed somewhere around, I guess, about 25 or 30 pounds. It was heavy. This pane had chicken wire pressed into it. It was all rusted and it turned it dark. I was going to take a couple of steps. I turned and took a step or two and down I went. I went through that old thing, you know. I tore my leg up a little bit and my arm a little bit. What I did luck out of was, down in the bottom in the washroom, they had about a one-inch thick by two, one by two steel bar, formed in a U-shape so they could stack pipe in it. I went feet first, but I fell rear first after that and I just missed that by about two or three inches, as I recall. That might have changed the whole story of my life. Anyway that happened.

There's another case here, I decided that when a gentleman by the name of Max Palmer left, there would a couple of things that it seemed like I had to take over. I thought I had to take over. So after a while, I thought, "I'm worth a few bucks more." I rehearsed this really well, you know, what I was going to say to Gordon Baker. So I get in there. I had an appointment to see him after hours. I thought I had it all down pat. He was great at turning things around from the offense to the defense. I laid out a couple of things, "I've been taking on some duties that maybe I need to be rewarded for." He just said two words, "Like what?" All of a sudden my train of thought was shot, you know. I went on and mumbled around and I said, "Well, Gordon, I've got an appointment. I guess I've got to leave." So that took care of that. As a whole I don't have too much more to say, but as a whole, you make out a world of friends. This Baker Manufacturing, it was probably one of the best things that happened to me. In that Depression, they were good enough of to the employees, to give my Dad and probably most of the other ones, two or three days a week work, just so they could earn some money. They could have just as well shut the doors, and you joined the soup line, you know. They didn't do it. That always stuck with me. It was a great company to work for. You know, people were wonderful, made good friends. Other than that I'm going to cut it off, that's all I've got to say.

Neil Lien: I just want to add that Kennard Roberts had silicosis.

Pete Olsen: Oh, yes

Neil Lien: Mr. Baker wanted him to sue the company because these grains of sand were small and they settled in the sacs of your lungs. He wanted him to sue him, and Kennard said, "No, Mr. Baker, you've treated us very well. I will not sue." And he didn't. And he was your uncle?

Pete Olsen: Oh, yes. My dad also had this silicosis. When he was bench molding, why, you had the mold here and every time you go half a mold, you'd have to take and shake powder, powder, the mold itself, talcum powder. After awhile you'd just breathe that in. So he ended up with silicosis himself.

Neil Lien: That sand, you had to take out 2 to 20 microns out of the air. Anything below or above 2 and 20 went in and came out. But between two and twenty it stayed in and caused silicosis.

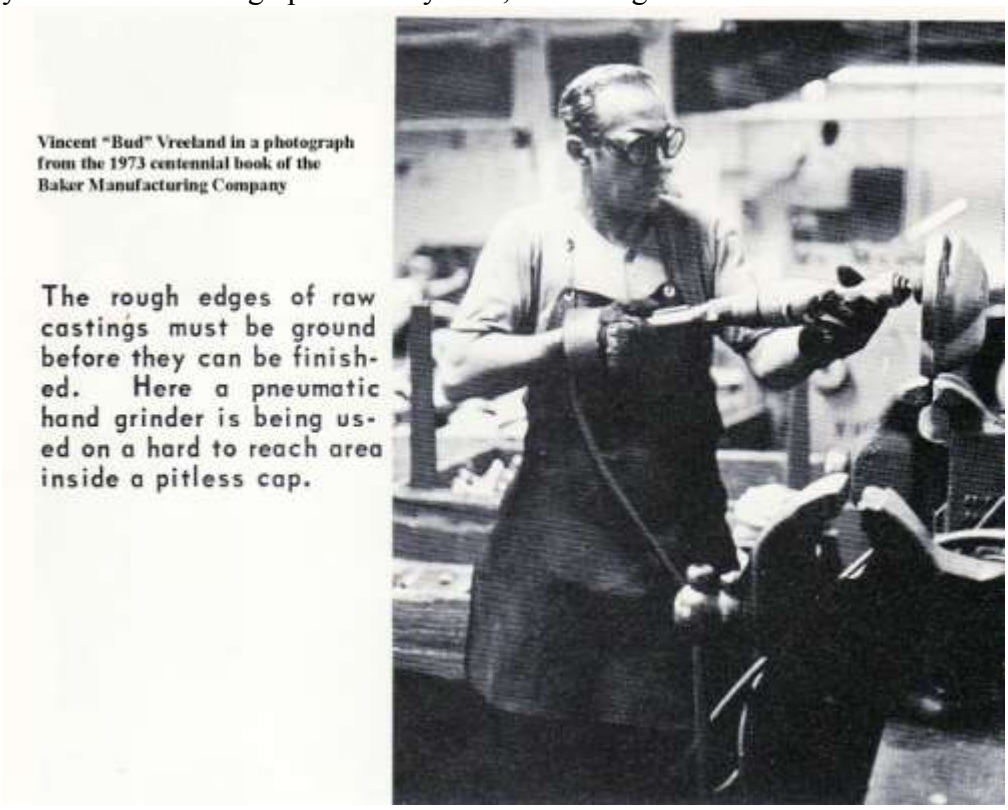
Pete Olsen: But anyway, through that whole process, the company was very gracious. Unions were never a problem. There were always rumbles about having a union, but it never went any further. A shop committee, a group of employees, would get together with management and they all worked very well together, for grievances and benefits. It worked out just fine. It was a great place to work.

Neil Lien: I agree.

Dennis Atkinson: Well, I'll keep this short, because this is going to be just an introductory. I've got a lot of product information we can talk about later. My name is Dennis Atkinson. I began my career here December 9, 1969, after a few years in the dairy industry.

I think most of us were raised on a farm. I kind of got tired of milking cows all the time, watching my buddies go out and play ball at night and go on weekends. I couldn't join them. So, I'd had enough of the dairy industry. So, I just thought, that's just enough of it. I headed over here to Evansville and drove down Church Street. Boy, there's an employment sign right there. So, I thought, "What the heck, I'm going to stop there," and it ended up being Baker Manufacturing. I had no idea where I was going to begin with.

But a man by the name of Al Hipke, I think we all remember him. He's the man that hired me. As every guy and most of the guys I know, your first starting point at Baker was in the grinding room. So that's where I went, was in the grinding room. Being a farmer, you know, you're used to being up in the haymow, it's no big deal.



Vincent "Bud" Vreeland in a photograph from the 1973 centennial book of the Baker Manufacturing Company

The rough edges of raw castings must be ground before they can be finished. Here a pneumatic hand grinder is being used on a hard to reach area inside a pitless cap.

After a few weeks there, I knew right away that I didn't want to spend my life here. So, I started going to computer programming school. It was a big thing at that time in 1970. Baker was looking at bringing on a main frame computer. They had their data processing people already in place. So I went to computer programming school at night, working in the grinding room and foundry.

Back then, the operation of the foundry, Dave can expand on this a little more, when it gets to him. It was a little bit different. The molders molded during the day, until about 1 o'clock. The grinders would do the grinding of the castings. Then we all moved into the foundry and poured iron. That was kind of an interesting experience for me at that time.

The starting wage, by the way, at that time was $1.75. So you can put that in perspective, $1.75 an hour.

So, I did get a chance to move into the machine shop. Actually I was only in the foundry and grinding room for 3 months, fortunately. Bill Erbs was the foreman there. We all remember Bill Erbs, a wonderful guy to work for. I enjoyed my time in the machine shop, as well. It was a great experience watching the products come through. I gained a lot of product knowledge from that.

So I had an opportunity to come into the office. They knew that I had a computer programming class that I had finished. It was an opportunity to go somewhere. Anyway, they offered me a job in what was called, at that time, the inventory control and order processing. You all know who the man was that run that, a man by the name of Al Brooks. A loyal worker right next to him was Florence Sarow. Boy, they were a true joy to work with. I learned a lot. I learned one thing about precision, just being there every day. It was important to be there every day. Being a farmer, anybody that was raised on a farm, you knew that anyway.

You had to excellent penmanship and you had to have good math skills because at that time everything was done by hand. All inventory control, all order processing, order entries, whatever it was, all had to be done by hand. You look at it today and it's a snap, snap, snap thing with the computer. That was an incredible change in the 42 years that I've been with Baker and I'm still gainfully employed. I'm still catching up to Jack here. I don't know if I'll pass you though.

Jack McElroy: You will. You'll probably pass her. [Geri Knapp]

Dennis Atkinson: No, I promise you. I will not do that. I just wanted to mention some of the bosses, the sales managers, at that time, they were called. The first sales manager that I worked for was Bob Paynter, everybody should remember him; followed by Paul Baltzer, was the assistant. They were great guys to work for and going back to what Jack said too; the 42 years that I've spent at Baker, it's not about the job. It's about the people. I mean, you talk to people that go to work. They like their job, but they can't stand the people. To me, if I didn't like the job and I liked the people, in my perspective, that's worth more, if you can get along with the people that you work with. That's just my opinion.

Anyway, Paul Baltzer was the assistant manager. From there we went to Mark Nardini. A lot of us remember him. He was the general manager at that time. Then, Jim Valentine came in and followed by Dick Brown, who was kind of an assistant there; then Gary Beckman; followed by Bryan Shramm. These are the guys that I reported to. Right now, quite honestly, I don't know who I report to. I can say that honestly too.

That's briefly my history. I've got one quick story to tell, then we'll talk about product stuff as we get farther into this. When I first moved into the office, I was pretty naïve there and I had a desk right inside the first hallway that you come into Baker's. I had the desk facing the window. I was just sitting there one day and all of a sudden there was a lot of commotion and I looked up and here was this big tall guy came in and there was one of secretaries of Baker Manufacturing that he grabbed her and gave her, (it was Christmas time by the way) and took her in his arms and gave her a big smack. You know, like they do in the movies, right there in the doorway. I looked up. The lady shall remain nameless. You know, that surprised the dickens out of me. I looked up and, by golly, somebody had put mistletoe in the doorway. It had to be a setup job because she was just happened to come around the corner. Here this big tall guy grabbed her. I looked up, like, "my goodness." She came up red faced as ever and ran down the hallway into the bathroom, laughing and giggling, you know. It was all in good fun. By golly, I was going to run right out there and stand underneath that, but that mistletoe was gone. So that was one of the funny stories there. We'll move it on from there.

Neil Lien: You mentioned computers. I just want to add in the history of the company. Our monochromators would go down to very low wave lengths of light. The industry did not know the absorption of light into materials below a thousand forty angstroms, which our monochromators went down far below. Learning the properties of materials below a thousand forty angstroms, is what brought these computers that you carry in your pocket which are much bigger than that 256 milibytes that we started out with at Bakers. So that's a contribution that the company has made.

Gene Fahrney: I've been with Baker since 1973. I also, when I started down there, I interviewed with Al Hipke. At that time the head of maintenance was Orlin Holm and I interviewed with him. This goes back to the 70s and I just came out of high school. The hair styles were a little different back then. Mr. [Dave] Olsen can attest to that. We both had a good head of hair back then. What really makes me mad is he's still got his. I don't know how that works, but I remember interview with Orlin. He was a straight shooter. He said, "I'd like to bring you on. You are not very big, but you are wiry. I'll think you'll be ok down there. I'll offer you the job. I don't really want to tell you what to do, but it is dangerous down here. You might want to consider getting a haircut." I knew what that meant. So I got a haircut. Fortunately, he didn't get too upset with me when I worked there, and I let it grow back out again.

I started in maintenance. I started in July 1973. I started out a glorious career at Baker, a glamorous job. 1973 was the 100th anniversary of Baker's, that October. So I was very fortunate to be part of that. When I started there, of course, they were getting prepared for it. The model that I worked with, for most of my first three months down there was, if you can't move it paint it. So I got to be very good at painting down there, cleaning up, painting and getting ready for the open house.

It was quite a special way to start the career. It was a very nice celebration. I remember Neil had his hydrofoils out in the parking lot. It was very, very nice. It was very well received. And my family came down and thought it was a big deal.

I've been in maintenance. I was in maintenance for many years. I had the fortunate opportunity to work with Neil, quite a bit. Neil talks a little bit here today about Mr. Baker being real tough. I thought much the same of Neil. We had some experiences together.

I can remember out in the foundry maintenance one night. On the furnace panels there is a piece of equipment called a tripler, which is a frequency multiplier. It multiplies the cycles of electricity. This was about midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning. I had been there about 18-20 hours. We had to take it out and this thing weighs about 4,000 pounds. We were getting tired. We got some chain hoists and stuff that we were pulling out. Neil comes in. Somebody must have notified him. He comes walking in and he looks at it and he grabs out a piece of paper and he starting to explain to me coefficient and friction and what we've got to do to get this out. Quite frankly, I was pretty young then and not too patient. So, I think I told Neil, "We'll get it out one way or another, here." So we did.

I also remember another experience with Neil. Neil was tough. He was serious about his job. Right across the creek here, in this building, I don't know what year it was, we built a room called the CMM room, coordinate measuring machine room. We had to knock out the floor and pour some concrete. We poured the concrete on the floor.

Neil came out the next day and there were footprints in the concrete. Some smart guy from the foundry, or somebody the night before, must have went out and stepped in there. I will never forget this. Neil was upset. He was serious. He was intent on calling the police and we were going to footprint everybody. "You're joking, right Neil?" "No." So, we managed to get him calmed down. But that was good stuff there. He was serious about his job.

Also had a little bit of experience with the Grasshopper that Neil worked on. At that time, that division was stationed up on the 3rd floor in the stockroom. You had to build a lot of circuit boards and stuff. Myself and one other maintenance guy, we did a lot of wiring and soldering upstairs for him.

At that time we worked in the foundry in the maintenance department. Anybody that's been in the foundry, it's not the cleanest environment, so we came out of there. You go upstairs and there's Neil with his little booties, and cap and all this stuff. You had to clean up to go in there. "You have got to be kidding me, this is a factory." No. So we had to put the booties on to work with Neil. It was quite an experience. It was actually pretty interesting, what he told us about it, because it was top secret. He would not share a whole lot of information with us.

Neil Lien: You wouldn't have understood it.

Gene Farhney: Probably not. Early in my career, I remember one time I went to my boss. I thought I deserved a raise. He said, "OK, we'll consider it." One of the things I had to do was I had to go talk to Neil. Neil was going to interview me to see what kind of experience I had. I was in maintenance. We fixed machines and we fixed buildings and that kind of stuff. He starts grilling me at little. The next thing, we're talking about waxing floors and what kind of wax to use and washing windows. I thought, "I give up." This was way out of my league, talking about waxing floors here.

I don't have a lot, as far as being in maintenance, a lot of product things to talk about. But I can tell you this. It has been just a great place for me to work. Denny talked about the people, but in my instance, it's the opportunities I've had. Baker is a very optimistic company, very positive. You get pushed in a lot of roles that you probably don't feel comfortable doing. But they have confidence in you and you succeed in them. You are able to do a lot of things. In my role, it's a small company, but the opportunities I have and the things I can do, can't be matched any place else. I'm very fortunate and very appreciative of that.

I do remember Mr. Baker just a little bit. He was there just a couple of years when I was there. When I worked in maintenance, a lot of times in the summer time, we had equipment right outside maintenance. We worked on machines right outside of maintenance. Mr. Baker made a point of, every morning, (you could set your clock on it) he made his rounds around the factory. He was always very friendly, always talked. No matter if you were the lowest guy on the totem pole, he would come up and say, "Hi, how are you doing?"

I will never forget one day, he came out. I was outside of maintenance working on something. He said to me, "Say young man can you help me?" "Absolutely," you're the boss, whatever, you know. And he asked me, "Can you tell me how to get to the tool room." I had no idea he was getting sick. So, I said, "Absolutely, you go down that way." He said, "Thank you very much" and he went on to the tool room. That was probably the last time I ever saw Mr. Baker after that.

Again, it's been a ride. I don't think I would have changed anything. I had a lot of great times. There's a lot of stories, a lot of fun times that I can't share with you, because my boss is here today. There's a statute of limitations, I could still get in trouble. I'll leave it at that and I do appreciate it.

Dave Olsen: I will say, though, that all that you heard from Gene is that he was a maintenance guy. You didn't hear any more than that. Gene has had a more distinguished career than just in maintenance. I can't tell you the exact years and times or who he reported to all the way through that process. He worked for Rex for awhile and as I say, the roles have changed even in the last 10 years. Gene today is the plant superintendent. The 100 and x-number of people that work in that factory, all report up through Gene. He is very valuable and well respected person at Baker and very dedicated to what we are doing today.

Geri Knapp. In addition to that, there is not one thing about these buildings, be it the windows, the electrical system that is going through them, that Gene doesn't have expert knowledge about.

To be continued.