

**SHOE WORKERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE**

Roger Farnum

(Interviewer: Andrea L'Hommedieu)

SWOH #019

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Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview for the Shoe Workers Oral History Project at the Museum L-A. The date is January 23, 2009, and I'm at the home of Roger Farnum in Lewiston-Auburn, Maine. This is Andrea L. Hommedieu. Roger, could you start just by giving me your full name.

Roger Farnum: Roger Farnum.

AL: And where were you born?

RF: February 13, 1933.

AL: And was that in Lewiston or -?

RF: Yes, it was in Lewiston.

AL: And what were your parents' names?

RF: Wesley and Evelyn Farnum.

AL: And were they from Lewiston too?

RF: We were from Turner originally, they lived in Turner.

AL: And what did they do for work when you were growing up?

RF: My father worked at the Blue Tree, and then he worked for R.I. Mitchell.

AL: And what's that?

RF: It was an automotive supply store that sold all over the state.

AL: Okay.

RF: And he was the head shipper.

AL: Wow.

RF: And my mother worked for years at the (*name*) in Turner, hooking rugs, and hooked rugs.

AL: That must of been interesting too.

RF: It was, it was very interesting.

AL: I'm sure they had a lot patterns that she had to learn?

RF: No, not really. She was a repairer. They hooked them, they call it hand hook but they actually hooked it with a machine, with a hand-held machine, which they'd go around the desk and they had the pattern right there and they knew what colors, you know, flowers and what to fill in and everything. But once in a while they'd make a little skip and they'd inspect them and if they saw a little place where it wasn't filled in, they'd do it by hand.

AL: I see. And so how many brothers and sisters did you have?

RF: I had two brothers, one three years older and one nine years younger. The older one passed away last summer. A side thing, my mother and father were married at the Lewiston Armory with five thousand people present.

AL: And now, why was that?

RF: Well the people, the merchants in Lewiston-Auburn used to put this show on once a year and they'd give them all kind of furniture and things, and my father at the time was working at Central Maine Power Company in Gulf Island Dam and somebody heard him say that he was getting married that fall so they wanted them – they were looking for someone to get married at the Armory. So he said okay, we'll do it.

AL: Oh, wow.

RF: There were five thousand people present at their wedding.

AL: That's a lot of people.

RF: Yeah, yeah.

AL: Neat.

RF: Quite unique.

AL: Now which schools did you go to?

RF: I went to school in Turner and graduated from Levine Institute which is now Levine Area High School in 1952. And my wife graduated there in 1950. And she worked for twenty, twenty-one years at Bates College. She was a mimeographer down there.

AL: Yeah. And so you did most of your growing up, your childhood in Turner?

RF: Yeah.

AL: And it's still pretty rural, but how was it different when you were growing up? Was it even more further out from town than it feels today?

RF: Well yes, because the roads weren't as good and it took longer to get from Turner to Auburn then it does now. And there wasn't much for kids to do around there then, you know, we got into a little trouble now and then.

AL: Did you have neighbors that you were friendly with?

RF: Yeah, we did have neighbors. We lived right in town, on the outskirts. So we did have neighbors up both sides and up the street and down the street and across the street.

AL: So when did you first get introduced to the shoe industry?

RF: Well, I got married in December because I thought I was going to be inducted into the service, that was during the Korean War. And so we got married in a hurry and I did get my induction, but then they wouldn't take me because of my bad feet so I didn't go. But we moved in, when we got married we moved into Bates College, in the housing units down there for the veteran's, which they had moved houses over, barracks over from the Lewiston-Auburn airport to Bates College and they stood there for several years, and they moved it over for the veteran's when they got out of WWII to go to Bates and they could stay there, because a lot of them were married so they stayed there.

AL: What was that like, living in those barracks?

RF: It wasn't bad. They were nice apartments, and very inexpensive, ten dollars a week. Everything furnished, you couldn't beat it.

AL: Especially as young married people.

RF: Yeah. And then I drilled wells that summer, and then when it got cold I didn't want to drill wells anymore so I come down to Lewiston-Auburn looking for a job, and the first place I worked was over on Ninth Avenue and it was a place called Fitch

Brothers Lace Company, and they made lace for the shoe industry. They were actually a division of United Shoe. And then work got slack there so we got laid off and I ended up over at Cushman Shoe, Charles Cushman Company in Auburn, right across from what used to be Max Variety, which is now a Thai restaurant I believe, while Union Street bypass goes through there now.

AL: Right.

RF: And after that, well I went there and I explained to the guy that I was going to be inducted but, well you need a job before you go, you can't starve to death so I'll hire you, I don't care how long you're here. So as it ended up, I quit the job to go in the service and then when I got down to Portland I was already to be sworn in and they decided I couldn't go anyway. So I come back, and I went back in there and I worked there six years.

AL: What did you do? What were your jobs there?

RF: A lot of different odd jobs, you know, putting up lace and putting up the work, putting the lace and uppers on cases on racks to be laced. And we worked there during the summer time during our vacation. We always worked for *(name)* Services which maintained the building and washed windows and repaired floors and things like that, that, something had to be done and they couldn't do it while the factory was running because there was too much activity so they did it during the July vacation. So it was several years we didn't have a vacation, we worked our summer vacation, and things were tough. So I spend six years there, and then I went out on the road and tried to sell but it was a very competitive business. It was latex cement, and the problem with latex cement is, it was a dozen people selling it and if you call up and said well, I can't beat the price, oh well, we'll beat the price, and all they do is add water to it and make it so we'd beat the price but the cement wouldn't work.

AL: Right.

RF: They got too much water in it and it wouldn't stick. So it was a tough business. Then I went into Air Tred and worked there for a few months, and then I left there and went to work for Compo, the same company that Bert worked for.

AL: Oh, okay.

RF: And I worked there six or seven years, and then I went out and worked for three years for United Shoe and then I went to work for Bigsby.

AL: And at United Shoe, what did you do?

RF: That was a machinery company. It was the biggest machinery company in the world and we repaired machinery. They'd sell machinery and lease it and we would go

in and repair it, and there we were just agents that repaired machinery.

AL: Right. And then you joined Compo?

RF: No, it was Compo first.

AL: Compo.

RF: Then I went from Compo to United Shoe.

AL: Yes, and then to Bigsby?

RF: Then I went to (*unintelligible*) on (*unintelligible*) Avenue when I started, and then they closed that unit down and merged everything into Massachusetts and I transferred down there. Although I didn't go down there, I stayed right here and worked out of my house.

AL: I see.

RF: So I covered the whole state of Maine. And when I started, there was sixty-five factories in the state of Maine and now there's three. Four actually, and three of them are one company. You have three factories and then (*unintelligible*) and business.

AL: And at Bigsby you were on the sales side of things, right?

RF: I was a salesman.

AL: But can you talk about what your job was and how, you know, how it is that you fed the shoe industry?

RF: Well, we were, at Bigsby we were strictly salesmen. We had some people that repaired machines but they didn't sell that many machines. They sold a product that worked in one of our United machines, which was a print on box sole machine. And we sold cement for that and we offered free service on that machine if they'd buy our product. So we had a lot of business on that, but we had one guy, that's all he did was work on those machines so we didn't have to service them. Most of the business in their line was several, oh, fifty or sixty different types of boxed soles. Some were what they call styrene, which were liquid activated. You run them through a machine and they'd get wet and soft and pliable and you put them in the shoe and then when they dried out they'd harden right up. And much later on in years they got into plastics and most of the box soles were coming into the plastic side of it. Different nylon and different kinds of plastic.

AL: Right.

RF: Which were heat activated, so it was interesting.

AL: So you spent a lot of time seeking out suppliers and then selling to the shoe shops?

RF: We sold box soles, (*unintelligible*) cement counters and things like that. And I covered the whole state of Maine. In fact, I had a couple factories in New Hampshire, but as they got less and less, factories started closing, you know, it got smaller and smaller, and now it's, there's no salesman. Nobody left and nobody to sell to.

AL: And how were the different shoe companies to deal with? Were there some that were -?

RF: Some were very nice and others weren't. Most of them were real nice. Some of them were not, but for the most part they were good.

AL: And during your time in working at the shoe companies, did you ever go on strike? Do you remember any strikes that happened?

RF: We didn't. There was a strike in Lewiston-Auburn years ago but I think it was back in the thirties or forties.

AL: Yeah, thirty-seven that was.

RF: Yeah, and that was pretty rough. But no, I never went on, we never went on strike. My company, Bigsby, their factory workers were on, they were in the union and they had a strike once or twice down there, but it didn't really affect us because the salesman all chipped in and went down and did the work. And they knew the work was going to be shipped out whether they struck or not so they finally came back to work. They didn't stay on strike very long because they knew they couldn't win. But I never belonged to a union, most factories weren't unionized.

AL: No.

RF: When I was in the business. They learned their lesson I guess back in the thirties, so.

AL: Now you handed me a small, I call it an implement that I'm going to take to the museum. Can you describe it a little bit for our people who might listen to this tape?

RF: It's a Walk-Over Shoe. Well, it's a tool that was used to lace up high button shoes, and I got it from one of my aunt's estate. And I expect she probably used it to button her high button shoes because she was that old, she was in her nineties when

she died so she probably used it when she was growing up. And there was a Walk-Over Shoe in either Lewiston or Auburn, I'm not sure where, but there was a Walk-Over Shoe in Lewiston or Auburn and that's where it came from.

AL: All right, thank you. And you also showed me a couple of pins.

RF: That pin is the Two Ten associate. And it's a little map of the United States, and Two Ten Lincoln Street in Boston is where everybody in Maine, or a lot of other places, had to have offices. Everybody sold shoes from those offices and so they formed an organization called the Two Ten Association. So that's where the Two Ten came from, Two Ten Lincoln Street. The other one is something that came from Atlantic City. When we go down there, we used to go once a year, it used to be in Cincinnati years ago and then they changed it to Atlantic City, and we'd go down there once a year, set up a booth and display our products and shoes made with our products and take orders and people would come in and talk to you about different things. And everybody gave out something as a little gift and that was PCI, which is Plymouth Cottage Industries, which is no longer in existence, I don't think.

AL: So, can you talk to me about how you saw the industry changing as you went along?

RF: Well, downhill, and the reason it went downhill, because the politicians, I guess they thought that they didn't need that industry. But that industry put an awful lot of food on a lot of people's tables, that paid – some of the people didn't make that much money but some of them made a lot of money, and the allied industry, most of them that were selling to the shoe factories, made big money. And their politicians decided, both Democrats and Republicans, they're both at fault, they just didn't want it. No, we don't need that, and let them make them overseas.

The one that started that was Phil Knight who owned Nike and he decided that, he had a factory down in Saco which I use to sell to, and he decided that he would make them over in Taiwan, so he went over and set up a factory over there. And they got the same price for their shoes as they did when they made them here, but he made three times as much money on a pair of shoes as he did when they were made here because they were working for fifty cents a day over there. And people here couldn't compete with the labor costs. And then people started failing and everybody said, see how good he was doing, so they decided, hey, let's go do it. Now you pick up a thousand shoes and nine hundred ninety-nine of them will be made in China. And the quality is not there like it was when they were made here. Too bad.

AL: Yeah, I think that they said Lewiston-Auburn was one of the -

RF: At one time Lewiston-Auburn, Auburn especially, was the shoe capital of the world.

AL: Yeah, I've seen old pictures from the West Auburn Historical Society of some of the shoe buildings all over there, like on Hotel or West Auburn Road, in that area, from early, early, days.

RF: Oh yeah. When I worked for Cushman, in that one building there was Shapiro Brothers, had two factories actually, they made a high-grade shoe on one floor and a lower grade shoe on another floor, and they were all women's high heels mostly. And there was also, Gould and Schuman was on the side closer to Lewiston, on the railroad tracks, and they made counter and they finally moved out on Minot Avenue, and was Cushman in there, and there was a Laten Heel Company on the Union Street side of the building on the bottom floor. So there was several factories in there all connected to the shoe industry there, doing different things. And they finally went out by the wayside.

AL: Are there things I haven't asked you about that you feel are important to add, or maybe stories or -?

RF: Oh, I can tell you a lot of stories but you probably don't want to hear most of them.

AL: Well, part of our oral history is getting a few of those stories that sort of give us a feeling for what it was like, and so we try to collect those as well as the facts about what you did and where you worked.

RF: Well, you asked me about how people were and I said most of them were nice but some of them were pretty (*unintelligible*). One instance I had, I guess I can mention names, they're probably dead now anyway, Bel Moc Shoe, down here on the canal, right back where Falcon Shoe is now, the guy that owned it was Izzy Viner and his brother was the purchasing agent. And one thing that was funny with his brother, you'd go in and you'd wait for hours in the hallway there, waiting for him, to see him, so we finally wised up and we'd go in every Friday, because we knew that was his day to go to the bank, so if we went in late Friday afternoon he'd see us pretty quick because he had to go to the bank. But when he'd go in, he was, the way he would write his orders, he'd take this carbon paper, so he'd put the carbon paper in like that and he'd write over here, the date, and then he'd write the name of the Bigsby (*unintelligible*) here and he'd pick it up, he'd look at it and he'd hold it up to the light to make sure he was getting all the carbon, and by the time he got through with that piece of paper, that piece of carbon, it was used. Believe me, it was used.

And his brother owned it, and his brother, another story, we were having problems, we'd change manufacturers, boxed soles were mostly made by another company and he wanted to go on his own so he went out on his own. So we started making ourselves, and we had a few problems and it was tough going there for a few months and I had a bigger counter next to (*unintelligible*), sold him all the boxed soles which is about three

hundred thousand dollars in six months, three months. I mean that was big money. And I had problems up there, and then I got a call one day to go down to Herman Shoe in Scarborough because they were using styrene's boxed soles and he thought that, my boss thought they might be having trouble. And I said, I was there Tuesday and I didn't see any problem. Well, I think you should go anyway and check it out. And I said, well I'm in Dexter, you know, that's a hundred miles away. So, well I think you should go, and I went, okay.

So when I got done what I could do at Dexter, I got in the car and I drove ninety miles an hour to Scarborough and I walked in there, and by the time I got there he'd called me, there was another call in Lewiston that Izzy Viner wanted to see me because he was having boxed sole trouble and I said, I just got here. I haven't done anything here yet. When I get done, if I have time, I'll go back to Lewiston. So I finished up there and I hurried back to Lewiston. Well, when I walked in I said, is Izzy here, I said, I want to see Izzy. Well, he's not here right now. Well he called and said that he had a boxed sole problem and I'm here to find out what the problem is. And she said that he's gone out for a while but he'll be back later. And I said, is Ray here, because he was the superintendent. And she said, yeah, Ray's here. So Ray come down and said, what's the problem? I said that Izzy called and said that he had a boxed sole problem and I said, do you know anything about it? And he said no, of course, I wouldn't know anything about it anyway, I'm only the superintendent, he said, I'd be the last to know if he's got a problem, knowing Izzy. And that's the way Izzy was.

So all of us go up and talk to Bob upstairs in the lace room. So we went up on the next floor and I walked over and I looked at the, they had these machines, these steamers, they were silver aluminum and they had holes for the steam to come up through and they put the vamp of the shoe on the steamer and the hole and steam would come out and soften up the boxed soles. And they had to be steamed, otherwise they'd break. So I looked at it and it was all nice and shiny, so when Bob came over I said, you had a problem didn't you? And he said yeah, but I don't have it anymore. And I said no, and the reason you don't have it is because you cleaned the steamers. He said yeah, they were plugged up. I said, that's why you were breaking boxed soles, because you didn't steam them right. He said, I know, we found that out, he said, I found out what he was doing so I cleaned the steamers and got the holes opened up so we got steam on them now, he said, we don't have any problems. You solved it for me, I didn't have to come. Well about then, Izzy walked in, he came over, and he was raving mad. He said, I've got thousands of pairs of boxed soles down there and you guys are going to eat them. I said, I don't think so Izzy. Well, I'm going to call Leonard. I said, well go ahead, I'll dial the number for you if you want to call him. I don't care, I said, I had it. No problem. There is too, they're breaking boxed soles.

Okay, so I went over and dialed the number and gave it to, here, talk to Leonard. So he started raving at Leonard and Leonard said, let me talk to Roger, so he handed me back the phone, and while I was talking to Leonard he said, well what's the problem?

And I said, they don't have a problem now, I said, they did have a problem because the steamers were plugged. And I said, now that the foreman has found out that the steamers were plugged and he unplugged them so that got some steam, they don't have a problem. And he said, well we're not taking those boxed soles back. I said, that's exactly what I told him, there's no problem with the boxed soles. The problem was with their steamer. So he said okay, so I hung the phone up. And Izzy put his arm on my shoulder and said, you're a nice man, he said, I'm glad you came. He says, anything, anytime I can do anything for you, let me know. He said, you solve my problem. I said well, you know, that's what I'm here for. And from then on he was the nicest guy to me every time I'd go in there. He'd speak, aaw, he says, there's that nice man there now, he's my friend, he gets me out of problems.

AL: Well, good.

RF: That was one of the instances. But that's usually the way it was. If they had a problem it was, ninety-nine percent of the time it was something they were doing.

AL: In their process?

RF: That they weren't doing right.

AL: Yes, yeah.

RF: And most boxed soles had to be steamed in order, otherwise they would break. They were made out of cloth and they were either impregnated with latex or styrene, which had to be activated with solvents and different things like that, or heat. We had a lot of boxed soles that had to be steamed, and then when you steamed them, if you didn't steam them, also boxed soles with the cloth on it, unless it was non-woven, had to cut on the bias. In other words, if the bias ran this way, you had to cut the box to go this way. That way it would stretch both ways once you steamed it. But if you didn't steam it, it didn't make any difference whether it was cut on a bias or not. And once and a while the cutter would make mistakes. When they cut them at our factory, he cut across a sheet of material. When he got to the other end he could turn the dial a little bit and cut it straight to get another cut out of, which was, they were cutting that like twelve thick with big high (*unintelligible*) so he could get another six pair out of it if he cut it that way. So he'd cheat a little bit and cut it. When he did, we had problems with those boxed soles, they would break. And they get into non-woven material and non-woven fabrics, that didn't make any difference which way you cut it. You didn't have to cut it on the bias. So that was a little different.

But we had all kinds of different boxed soles. We had some with thermal compound in it which had to have steam on it. The styrene, once it's set up, had to be steamed if you put them in, which wasn't recommended. It was recommended that you put them in today and you pull them today. But a lot of people didn't. They'd leave shoes on the

floor overnight and when they come back the next day they took an awful lot of steam to break that styrene down once they were hardened. And they wouldn't steam them enough and they'd break. But it wasn't our fault, it was their fault because they didn't clean the floor the night before. Which they got away from that after a while because I don't think that styrene even exists now. The government got on them, for one thing, and they didn't want people to even know they never had a problem that nobody ever got cancer from it. But there was possibility that you could, which was, the possibility was slim to none. But you know, the government got in on it and the safety act and all that so they kind of cut down on making styrene boxed soles and we got into more plastics, and with the heat activated thermal cement on it and thermal coated plastics, and we even got into (*unintelligible*) they were working on, and I guess they finally got it developed was a water soluble base plastic which would activate, when you put in it water it would activate it. And I said, what if the shoe gets wet afterwards, is it going to activate? They said no, it will only activate once. Once it's hardened, it will never activate again. So that's what they were working on when I retired.

AL: And what year was that?

RF: I retired, oh God, well I started in '69 and I worked there twenty-five, twenty-six years so -

AL: So, into the nineties.

RF: Yeah, yeah in the nineties.

AL: Yeah.

RF: I've been retired now twelve years, I guess, twelve or thirteen years. It was a good job. No complaints. They furnished you with a car, credit card, as long as you didn't abuse it. They didn't mind, as long as you brought in the bacon. And I had some big accounts, some real big accounts. They never could sell Victor Shoe until I come along. And I started selling Dexter Shoe and it just sky rocketed. That was a big business.

AL: Did Dexter Shoe have, is it in western Maine?

RF: That was in Dexter.

AL: In Dexter, yes?

RF: Yeah. Harold Alfon, who just passed away, he was quite a philanthropist, he left a lot of money to colleges and hospitals and he started the Arno Moc shoe at one time and he sold Arno Shoe, which was about seven factories. And he sold all the Shoe Corporation of America, and then he moved up to Dexter and he built Dexter Shoe. Put it in an old woolen factory up there. And then he started expanding, and when they

finally closed, he had sold it to Warren Buffet, the big financier who owns it now, and he closed it down and started making them overseas like everybody else. And I don't know, he changed the name. I thought when he bought it, he bought it so that he'd have the Dexter Shoe name, but he even changed that from Dexter Shoe to Super Shoe.

AL: So when I see Super Shoe, that is actually Dexter?

RF: Was Dexter Shoe at one time.

AL: Now, do have any idea how you got that Dexter account?

RF: Yeah, hard work.

AL: Does that mean like researching everything?

RF: Well yeah, when I first started going there I used to make out a report, and my boss over here in Auburn said one time, what do you go to Dexter Shoe for? And I said, well it's right on my way, it's not that far away and I'm in Bangor anyway, so I shoot over to Dexter. He said, you'll never get that account. I said, well if you don't call on them you never will. And he said, you'll never get the account, he said, Walter, the guy who was ahead of me, who was killed in an automobile accident actually before I, that's why I got the job, he said he called on him for years and he could never get that account, he said, you just can't get it. I said, well all I can do is try, Leonard. So one day I come in the office and Edith the office girl said, do you know about Pearl? I said yeah, and she said, he called and he wants you, next time you come to Dexter, he wants to talk to you.

Okay, so I went in, and the next two or three after that, I think it was a Monday and I went up there on a Wednesday, and I talked to Bob and he said, we're having trouble with boxed soles and we want to try some of yours. Okay, fine. So I gave him some and they worked out and he said, if this works I'll give you more and more of the patterns and we'll go from there. So eventually we ended up with everything, one hundred percent. They use to buy it, they did most of their own cutting and skiving. We use to cut and skive over here but a lot of people, not a lot of them, but some of them would do their own cutting and skiving because they thought it was cheaper. So they were buying yard stock, they'd buy it by the skid, five, six, eight skids at a time, which was big money.

AL: Yeah.

RF: Love to see them come in. As a matter of fact, Ben Bigsby, who was the last one of the Bigsby people in Newburyport now, used to talk to me, he said, every time I get on a computer and I see it go up like this, I know an order came in from Dexter. It was big money. They got down so that there was only, you know, the factories are getting

less and less, the guy that worked, one of them that worked down there who ended up as a sales manager, they asked if he wanted to, when he was going to retire, and he said, when I'm sixty-five, and that was about three years away. So they said, well okay, and they didn't tell him but they called me in and said, we're going to have to let you go because there is only enough work for one guy, and Eddie doesn't want to retire so we're going to have to let you go. And I said okay, no problem.

And what happened, Eddie didn't know it. When he found about it he was pretty upset, because he said, I would have retired and given it you. Which I don't know if I'd taken it or not because it means me covering everywhere. You know, there was only one salesman, one salesman, he's going everywhere, all over the country. So I don't think I probably would have taken that anyway. But anyway, I said, it's too late now Eddie, I said, I already made other plans. So what I did, and I told Ben at the time that he come down, they were nice about it, and he said, we'll let you keep the car for six months, keep your credit card for six months, and we'll pay you half salary for six months. So I said, okay, but I said, what I'm going to do Ben, I'm going to take some of your business away from you. And he said why, and I said, I'm going to get the Sebago account. Wow, gee, we don't want you to do that. And I said Ben, I'm not old enough to retire and I got to make a living. So, and I already knew that I could get it, because when they closed this factory over here and he had to get him out of Massachusetts, he wanted me to quit then and go into my own business and do it. And I told Bernie, I said no, I don't want it, I don't want to do that because it would be taking away from them. And I said, they're my bread and butter now, so. So I didn't do it.

I knew I could do it, when I found out I was getting laid off, so I went down and saw Bernie and I said, you still want me to do your boxed sole side? And he said yeah, I'd love to. In the meantime, he was getting them out of Massachusetts. He didn't have any problem, they always shipped on time and everything, but he said, I'd rather get them local. I said okay, I'm going to set up my business cutting skive and I'll do your box soles for you. So I did and I ended up making as much or more money working on my own than I did working for Bigsby. And I was working one or two days a week. And I used to do them right downstairs in my basement.

AL: Right here in your basement?

RF: Right here, right downstairs.

AL: That must have been -

RF: I had a (*unintelligible*) down in the same building that Falcon Shoe was in, the Continental on the bottom floor used to do sock linings and he would do cutting for different people. So I said, I asked him, I went in to see him, I said, you want to do some cutting for me? He said sure, love to. So I had him do the cutting. And I got a skiving machine from Falcon and took it down to him and he skived for a while, but it

was kind of iffy, and I looked at what I was doing and what I was making and how much time I had on my hands so I said, heck I can do it home myself, I don't need him to skive, so I'm just going to let you cut them and I'll do the skive myself. Oh gee, I don't do that. And I said, well if you don't want to cut them, then I'll get someone else to cut them but I'm going to do the skiving on my own. And which, it worked out good because I made, you know, I didn't have to pay him for skiving either, I made it myself. And I was doing it far enough ahead of time so I never had an order that I couldn't ship. And when I finally retired I had fifty thousand pair of box soles sitting on my breezeway. And every time I'd go in there on Tuesday, Bernie would give me an order for ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five thousand pair of boxed soles, and I look at the order and he said, going to have a problem? And I said, nope they're all done, sitting on my breezeway. So then I'd take out of that stock of mine, my inventory, and I'd just replace it the next week, so there was always forty-five, fifty thousand pair of box soles out there. I never had a problem delivering, so it worked out good.

And I mean I would have still done it, I wouldn't have retired when I did. But I could see the writing on the wall and I knew that something was going to happen down there, because there were a lot of changes there. John Marshall owned it, he passed away and Danny Wellehan took it over, and Danny wasn't getting any younger and I said, someday he's going to sell this, which he did eventually, he sold it (*unintelligible*) worldwide. And all they wanted it for was for the name, Sebago Moc, and they moved everything overseas after they bought it. Now they're no longer there. But I ended up, Bernie said, don't worry about the box soles you got on your breezeway, I'll buy every one of them. And he said, if you got any stock left over, we're going to cut and skive now, I'll buy the stock. So I ended up selling him about 300 sheets of stock and about forty thousand pair of box soles there in my breezeway. So it worked out good. And I said yeah, I'm free now, I can do what I want, so I retired.

AL: Thank you very much.

End of Interview
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