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Roy A. Hicks

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ORAL HISTORY OF APPALACHIA
 400 Hal Greer Boulevard
 Huntington, West Virginia 25755-2667
 304/696-6799

SUBJECT: Owens Glass History

ORAL HISTORY NUMBER: _____

MORROW ACCESSION NUMBER: #529

ORAL HISTORY

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DATE: 6/17/94

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OWENS GLASS HISTORY PROJECT

ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: ROY A. HICKS

CONDUCTED BY: CHRISTIE KASPRZAK

DATE OF INTERVIEW: JUNE 17, 1994

Christie: Okay, today's date is June 17th, 1994, and I'm interviewing Mr. Roy uh, Roy Hicks, is that your full name?

Roy: My full...(your full name)...Roy A. Hicks.

Christie: When were you born?

Roy: January the 15th, 19 and 14.

Christie: Were you born here in Huntington?

Roy: I was born in uh, Putnam County. (Putnam) According to my birth certificate. Now...they got 'em mixed up. What happened, is they uh, liable to be wrong. But that's near as I can get to it. I went and got a birth certificate out there at Winfield. (mmm-hmm) And it says I was born in Putnam County. [laughs]

Christie: When did you move to Huntington?

Roy: How's that?

Christie: When did you move to Huntington?

Roy: [pause] (do you remember about how old you were?) About 35 years ago, 40.

Christie: When did you start at the Owens plant?

Roy: We lived in Milton for eight years. And moved out of Milton to Hurricane, lived up there all them years. [inaudible] When did I start at Owens? [pause] I went to work at Owens in 19...[pause] (about '43 or '44?) yeah, (is that about right?) somewhere along, yes.

Christie: Which job did you start as? When you first started?

Roy: I was a sweeper? (a sweeper?) On the hot end. A sweeper on the hot end. (What is...?) Sweeping up hot glass. (oh, okay) They call 'em sweepers. That's where you first start. And you run a machine part-time, while you're a sweeper until you get enough hours, and you become an operator.

Christie: When you retired you were an operator?

Roy: Yeah.

Christie: What year did you retire?

Roy: [pause] Let's see...(1976? is that right?)...you say '76? Yeah, 1976.

Christie: So uh, do you remember why you decided to work at the plant in the first place?

Roy: Well uh, it was paying more money at the time, than anywhere else. I was uh...was with C & O, left C & O, went to Kerr Glass and got some experience and went down and didn't have no trouble. Got in the same day I went in to go to work. (the day you applied?) They hired me the same day I applied. So uh, and I had some stepbrothers and stepbrother-in-laws and so forth working there before I went in.

Christie: When did you get married? Were you married before you started working at the plant?

Roy: You say married? (mmm-hmm) No. [pause] I uh, went in there and got me a job, see. So they had a [inaudible]...room, and she was the secretary up there. So I had to go in and take [inaudible]...pretty often. So there she was up there. (so you met your wife at the plant) Yeah. (oh, I didn't know she had worked there) Yeah, so there she was. So I run into her and that's it. Forty-eight years and still going strong. (that's wonderful) Forty-nine years. (forty-nine years) Yeah.

Christie: So, did you have other friends at the plant, people that you worked with?

Roy: [long pause] [inaudible]

Christie: That's all right. You were friends, your family worked there? You had a number of people in your family...

Roy: No, just my stepbrothers worked there. (I see) And they had brothers. My brother-in-law, yeah, my brother-in-law. I had a sister that worked there and a sister-in-law that worked there, a stepsister, yeah. And I had my brother-in-law worked there and he had three brothers, I think, or two that worked there...all that. So, I didn't have no trouble gettin' in.

Christie: Did you have other friends that you made at the plant?

Roy: We did have a few things...I don't know what happened to 'em. We made Avon bottles...(oh)...on the machine I was on. We made the horses and the gold cadillacs and stuff like that. And she quit, raised children, and she quit and started selling Avon. (really?) So I made the bottles and she'd sell 'em. [laughing]

Christie: How many children do you have?

Roy: Two now. We had three. Then we had a bad loss, one of my...he just began to have permission to fly the president...he was in the Air Force (wow), and he hadn't been in there too awful long when he was, went up high grade like a wildcat, on the right of that

sill (oh, you have a photo of him). So he uh, a spot got on his lungs. And then they took the lung out and it moved over into this lung. There wasn't no use to take that one out. And then I have two other boys. One of 'em is a high school teacher in Shady Springs. And the other one is a, he works at the veterans hospital. He's some kind of a ward doctor, director. [long pause] Anyway, he works for the hospital.

Christie: So uh, how did you like your work at the plant? Did you enjoy working there?

Roy: Yeah. I enjoyed it up until the last two years, or year or something. They got to speeding up everything up there. (did they?) Yeah. And then they say if we're getting one out of ten, why, we make money. Something's wrong.

Christie: Is that why you decided to retire?

Roy: No. No, I was gettin' messed up in the breathing section. They have a lot of asbestos up there in that factory, and other stuff, and I thought it about time to get out. (yeah) Get away from all that breathing smoke. But I've done good. Yeah, I loved work up there. Good place to work. [inaudible] Payday'd come and your check was right htere and you didn't have to wait none.

Christie: That doesn't sound like a very healthy environment, though.

Roy: No. But I don't bet it was much worse as some other place that you would get in. Could have been a lot worse.

Christie: Uh...

Roy: But I didn't mind it.

Christie: When did, you said the changes started happening right before you left, right before you retired, things started changing. Do you know why?

Roy: I was gettin' old, for one thing. [laughs]

Christie: They, I guess they brought in new automation. The machines, to make things go faster.

Roy: Oh, they begin to, they began to speed up the machines (yeah). Then they couldn't get 'em straightened out, so you just had to work on 'em 'til they got to running again.

Christie: So that was the early '70's? (yeah, I believe it was) Uh...

Roy: But we had a good bunch of men to work with and work for,

so...it's better than working out in the cold in the winter time. And the summer time it was hot. Along about June it'd get real hot. July it would cool down again; I don't know why. More wind blowing in July. And boy, it'd get rough in there around June. Wind come, come right down on you.

Christie: Were there other activities uh, not the work, but activities...sports, or uh, banquets, stuff like that, that you participated in? (no) No? (mmmh?)

[someone speaking in background]

Christie: You were on the Welfare Committee?

Roy: I was chairman of the Welfare Department. (what did you do? what did the Welfare Committee do?) Well, just one thing... like the Cammack Center, they would buy them up some little things to put their clothes in, you know, instead of laying them on the floor or on a wooden box or paper box. Buy them up, some of them uh, bought everybody glasses. Just stuff like that.

Christie: So, did you raise money and they went out and bought...?

Roy: Yeah. Yeah, I'd go around the factory and collect (ohhh)

Christie: Well, that's nice. So, everyone in the factory donated money towards the charity. (yeah) [pause] Do you still uh, socialize with any of the people you used to work with? Do you still visit with any of them?

Roy: [pause] Church, yeah. What was the question?

Christie: I was wondering if you still saw your friends from the plant? And I guess you see them at church? (yeah) People you knew from the plant?

Roy: Some of them, yeah. The supervisor came down there one time. The plant manager was Ben Adams. Anyway, he came down there one time at church. And what happened, he, everybody was down there, I'd say 6 or 8 people there that worked at the factory, they were shaking his hands. [laughs] And he said, "Boy, I'd like to have some of that old red-headed, gray hair back up there again, that used to be there." That's what he said. They was kidding him about it, you know.

Christie: So you didn't have any problems with management? You got along with the management, when you worked there?

Roy: Yeah. Yeah, I don't remember any trouble I ever had with 'em.

Christie: What about the union? Did you participate in the union?

Roy: That was better than ever. Without the union there wasn't no use in working...if you don't have a union.

Christie: Well, what did they do? What kinds of things did the union do for you?

Roy: Well, say for instance, this guy's a foreman and you come out to work, he would say, "My brother's in town today, he's gonna work a week or two, so you come back in two weeks," something like that. But you couldn't do that with the union in there. You had to work everybody that had seniority in the factory.

Christie: Did that kind of thing happen before the union came?

Roy: Oh, everything happened before the union came in. I wasn't there before it came, but...(oh, you weren't?)...I've heard stories. And uh, if the boss comes out there and starts riding you too much, you know, why, it wouldn't be long you'd turn him over to the shop steward, see. That shop steward would take it up to the office. They'd have a big meeting on it. So they couldn't come down there and hound you. (yeah, yeah) If...you got in a fight outside somewhere, then come in there and take it out on the person inside the factory, interfere with the work and everything else...you couldn't do that. If you get in a fight, they'd fire you. (mmmh) That was pretty good. Some guys would just find things to get in trouble over. [laughing] (Not you I hope) Yeah. So I never had no trouble. I let everybody know where I stood. I went to church, and all that stuff. They knew that. See, that gave me a pretty good line.

Christie: Did you ever participate in a strike? (yeah) Yeah?

Roy: We...(go on strike with the union?) Yeah. I think they were out on two that I was in. So, we'd drive 'em off the picket line. (oh, you did?) Yeah. So they did have...a little bit of scimmages once in a while. Some of the women went over and sat down on the railroad track, keep the trains backed up. [laughter]

Christie: When was that?

Roy: That was way back there, about 10 years ago. And did the same thing up at Kerr Glass, sat out on the tracks.

Christie: Keep the trains from going, unh? (yeah) To keep the trains from going? (yeah) What was the dispute over? (what?) What were the, what was the dispute over? Do you remember? (wages) Wages.

Roy: No, we...it was time for change, a new contract, it was over the new contract.

Christie: So it wasn't just for the women? It was for everyone.

The women were just the ones sitting on the railroad track.

Roy: [mumbling] Right. (okay)

Christie: Yeah. Well, that's all right. Uh, did you have any women that worked in your department?

Roy: No. Not in the operating department.

Christie: None of the years you worked there, there was ever...?

Roy: I worked 31, you mean me? (mmm-hmm) I worked 31 and a half years. (and there was never a woman in your department?) No. Some of the women helped in the upkeep and machine repair and so forth. They started to hire them in there when I left. But that was too much for a woman.

Christie: They started hiring them in your department? (No, they had to lift stuff) Oh, they never did. (In the whole factory) Okay.

Roy: In what they call a uh, machine repair and, uh, something else, packing, well, they worked all the women in the packing department, where they put the ware, see, we'd mix the ware and run it through the lehr and they put it in boxes. But that's the only place women worked much, except in the offices.

Christie: Did they complain about not being able to work there? Or did...

Roy: I think they did. [inaudible]...it was 180 degrees. [inaudible] They wouldn't have liked that. (mmmh) [laughter]

Christie: What about uh...did you have any people of different races that worked in your department?

Roy: Yeah, in the forming department they had about 4 or 5 Yeah, that's about it, 4 or 5, that worked there that I knew of. Could have been some on the other shifts.

Christie: No one that worked right with you? They didn't work with you? (yeah) Oh, they did.

Roy: Yeah, machine operators. They was sweepers, floor sweepers at first, keep the glass off the floor, so people don't walk in it and put down sawdust. They'd do that, then they'd watch the machine while you went to eat your dinner, so...[pause]... So that's about all they did. Seemed like to me they vanished out about as fast as they come in, for some reason or another, I don't know. (unh) I asked one of 'em how they liked the job, they'd been there 2 or 3 weeks, he said, "I wouldn't want to make it a career." [laughter]

Christie: Sounds like the hot end was a really difficult job. (yeah) So your health problems today, are they a lot because of the work there?

Roy: Yeah, they're pretty good now. I just went to the doctor yesterday. He give us both a good health...(well, good) Oh, I've got a few things wrong here and there, you know. I've got that asbestos in my lungs, and on my hands. It's about that deep on top of them lehrs up there. And it blows right toward the machine where you work. I worked for the railroad; they have a bad case of that stuff. (mmmh) The trains, smoke going up, it's that asbestos. This guy over here got \$47,000 from, on that account. He worked for the railroad. He was a sweeper, I mean, he was a janitor. I don't know where he got his asbestos.

Christie: You've never, you've never pursued any money for that? (yeah) Or have you.

Roy: I haven't, no. I ain't gotten around to mine, they just started on it. They sent me a notice here about a month ago, reports, for check-ups, see. So they give me a checkup and said I had asbestosis, or something like that. You see, when you're young, it gets in your chest. And if you work in a place where they have that stuff. Then you get about 80, 50, maybe 70, it starts working, see, picks up speed. So I'm 80, they checked it. They said, yeah, they found it. But I'm still going.

Christie: So the plant will have to pay you money because of the health problems, compensation.

Roy: Yeah, compensation, that's what they pay.

Christie: That must be a common problem for people who worked in your job, then. (yeah)

Roy: What it is, just a common problem, I think everybody has it. [pause] This fellow there he worked at American Car & Foundry, and the fellow up yonder, he works at C & O. Who else is drawing that around here?

[someone speaking in background]

Roy: Yeah, two doors from here, he's drawing it now. But he had a stroke some few days back. He's just now gettin' back to walking again, can hardly get around. [inaudible]

Christie: So uh, in addition to church, what did you do in your free time when you worked at the plant? Did you have any activities that you enjoyed in your free time?

Roy: Fishing (fishing?), camping, swimming, (did you do that with

your family?) Yeah, we did it with the family first, 'til the girls came and stole 'em away from us. [laughter] Then we had to go it alone. We'd go to Summersville a lot. We didn't go to these, once in a while we'd go to these close places, the little water holes. Beechfork and Greenbo Lake, and places like that. Whenever we'd have a couple days off from work at the factory, we'd go down there, put the kinds in down there. And then we went to Summersville and that was it. See, we went there to the Summersville Dam and most of the time you're ruined on all these others. (is that right?) The water's 300 feet deep and clear as a bell, just like city water. (wow) You could swim in it and open your eyes and look around, see the bottom, don't burn your eyes. You could drink right out of the lake, if you want to. About 60 miles of shoreline. It's huge around (wow, sounds beautiful). People camping at places, you can watch deer come down across on the other side and get water and stuff. You can fish and swim anywhere you want to. They have a nice big swimming beach, the water, the sand's just like this rug, soft, they rake it every day. But that would...make it easy to walk around in, see, if you go swimming. Some sand hurts your feet. But not up there. The air up there, we were up there 2 weeks at a [inaudible]...just to get the fresh air in their lungs. We'd go up there and stay 3 days and my arthritis would be gone. (really?) That's how I used to keep in shape. Just go up there for a week or two and come on back and I was ready to go 'til the rest of summer. It was 10 degrees cooler up there than it is here. Whatever it is here, it's 10 degrees cooler. When it's 90 here, it's 80 up there. A good breeze blowing. That's what we did for recreation. (well, that's good) Outside of playing the piano and the guitar.

Christie: Did you ever go out with friends from work? Did you ever go out with the men from work? (no) No.

Roy: Go fishing once in a while. Maybe hunting. Hunting and fishing. She had a brother that fished. My boys, they love to hunt and fish, too. I got a son, he loves to fish and hunt. I made a big hunter out of him. Look at him on my wall over there. (oh, wow) (Your son?) That's his first deer. (wow) Year before last he got three deer, and last year he got two deer, was it? He lives in Shady Springs and he's a high school teacher up there, had a lot of fun, teaches some of the children [inaudible].... So they think 'cause he teaches their children, he is some kind of obligation to let him hunt. So.... You know how a teacher is around a place. (uh-huh. Well...) He's looking for turkey this year. He's tired of goin' for deer. He started fishing mostly too, pulls out a trout that long, big as my arm he got up there; him and one of the girls. He has two daughters. One of 'em fishes just like a man. [chuckles] They both play on the softball team. They won the championship three years straight. (mmmh, they must be good) Yeah, until they left town, until they went to West Virginia University. One of 'em is, the other one's going to Beckley University. About the same thing. The reason they went

there, their boyfriend's go there.

Christie: Was there anything else you wanted to tell me about the plant? And about your experience there? Did you have any memories that you'd like people to know about?

Roy: We had some wonderful people up there to work with, you know. Friends. We had a man named Marlin Chaney (Chaney?) Chaney. And he come in up there, he started in on that end, and the lights would be red and he'd go from one machine to another and by the time he went out, the other half would be green again. He was just that good. You know, when they, they give you a quota. (uh-huh) And if you make over that you'd get a bonus, see.

Christie: So what were the red and green lights for?

Roy: That shows you're not making any bonus, you're under. (oh) That's your machine not running right, or you ain't running right, one of the two.

Christie: So the green means it's running right? And...

Roy: If you're in the green, your machine's cutting them out as it should and it's packin' it. So they uh, they watched their machine and watched the light on the wall. That light would get green, you better get, or gets red, you better see what's wrong...in some way. Yeah, he was, with this stuff, some kind of a man. All these machine's would be in red. He would start over there on one and work on it a little bit and work on this one a little bit and sometimes it'd be just something minor, like the sheer is cut off or something. And, uh, when he got through with it [inaudible]...He was just like that.

Mrs. Hicks: How many did you make an hour?

Roy: It would be eleven hundred. (Eleven hundred dozen in...) Eight hours. (in 8 hours?) Yeah, I believe that's what it was. It was close to it. All those baby food jars standin' up like that and roll 'em down the line. I made the first penicillin that come in there. (you did?) Bottles, yeah. That was on an old four-head machine. They soon took them out pretty fast. I loved that penicillin bottle, I liked to make it. It wasn't so hot like the rest of them big bottles, so it made it easier to, for me to get in there closer and work better. So, we'd make those penicillin bottles and those crooked neck jugs, making 'em about that long, with long necks on 'em. They were crooked. They put that job on my machine. I'd make as much as a \$50 bonus in a weekend, see (wow). So when the boss come around and said, "Well, I'm going back to operating machines. I don't want to foreman no more." He said he wasn't making enough bonus. You could make more bonus on a machine.

Christie: So did, did you do shift work the entire time you were there? (shift work?) Mmm-hmm.

Roy: All the time. (all the time?) Seven to 3, 3 to 11 and 11 to 7. Five days. Then you switch over. You'd be going to work 7 to 3 and you'd switch over to 3 to 11. You worked 5 days, then you'd go back on the midnight shift, work 5 days and then you'd have a couple days off, and you'd go back on the day shift again. Just 'round and around, sometimes.

Christie: That must have been hard on you. Your schedule changing every week.

Roy: You don't sleep good of a day. You have certain hours you sleep. I come home, if I went to bed, I forget what time I went to bed, I'd be, I'd wake up wide open, wide awake at 12 o'clock. I got to where I'd lay back down about 6 o'clock, maybe, and sleep about an hour before I went to work, and I did pretty good. It was rough. [chuckles] Shift changes every 8 hours. I mean, every 40 hours, you work 40 hours. And if you worked over 40 hours, they paid you time and a half. If you worked on Sunday, they paid you time and a half. But if the holiday fell on Monday, they'd pay double time. They'd move Sunday to Monday. It was written like two holidays, right there, the holiday was the reason they changed it. And you could work, if you wanted to stay and work over another 8 hours, oldest man, you just sign your name up there on the board. All you had to do was just stay up there and get on a machine that wasn't taken, run it for 8 hours.

Christie: Double shift?

Roy: You could run 7 to 3 then work on the 3 to 11 if you wanted to.

Christie: Did you do that, a lot?

Roy: I done it a few times, but I quit. I didn't like it, I was gettin' old, you know, when they started that.... It didn't work out so good when you don't get the proper sleep. But you made good money. Yeah, we, we made a good living. A good pension. Of course, we done a lot, she sold Avon on the side. I uh, I mean, this was our fourth house. We bought 4 houses before we stayed in this one. And it was so well built, in the study the floors were hard, you know, it's all hardwood and everything. It's got a wood burning fireplace and all, so we loved it and we just kept it. We have a good garden, (mmm-hmm) and outbuilding, offstreet parking in the rear. So we...we just settled down here like a cabin, [laughing] fixed it up like we wanted. Fixed up everything in the house that needed to be fixed. And the woman that sold her the house, she lived here and she was a big friend of hers, she had married and moved out again, and the house was vacant. So the church wanted to buy our house across the street there. So she

called up there and her daughter says, "Well, you're in luck. Mother's in town today and I'll talk to her about this house." So she called her mother on the phone, and she said, "Well, go there and get the keys." Some men had it down there. "Do whatever you want to with this house before you move in," and said, "whenever the church pays you for your house, you can pay me." So that's what happened.

Christie: So how long have you been in this house?

Roy: How long we been here? [talking to wife in background] Thirty-three years. (wow) It'd last, if you'd never touch it, it'd last another 20 years. All masonry. But that's what we did, you know, so we wouldn't have to be moving around or somebody come along and say, "I'm closing her out, I'm gonna sell it," or something, you know, where you're renting. We never would rent very much. We'd rather live in a shack and to pay payments on a house than we would live in a good house and to pay rent. 'Cause after ten years is up, you ain't got a penny to show, nor not even a house. [inaudible]...with nothing. You get all your rent money that you could have paid on a house.

Christie: You're buying his house for him. (yeah, that's right) The best thing to do if you're going to buy a house is buy you a piece of ground and get Jim Walter's to build you whatever kind of house you want on it, at a price. And they'll finance it for you. And they will uh, build it like you want it. And you won't have to spend a penny 'til it's ready to move into, see. Otherwise, you could get somebody to build a part of a house, you have to go to the bank to borrow money to build the rest of it. I never did like that idea. Get her built and get it over with. The cheapest way to do it is to get you a nice big trailer already put together, like up here on Route 60. Pick out one you like and buy you a piece of ground, and put her down on that ground, see. So we've been here 33 years with the church right in our backyard, we just have to step across the street to get to church. She's been teaching Sunday School class over there for 40 years. So...we've got a good church, good preacher. Three years ago we had 600 over there on Easter morning. Now we have an average of 300 now, isn't it? On Sunday's? So we're close to church, close to Vinson High School. Boys all went down to Vinson High School. That's what makes it so good. You're close to school, if you got kids, close to church. There was a store over there, but they closed it down. So we still got a store up at Camden Road, it's only three or four blocks away. That's how come us to settle down here. Then I was working at Owens I just had to go over the hills to get to the factory. I had people working around me, people working at Owens living around me, so if my car quit, I'd get on the phone or holler at 'em as they went by. [laughs] And get to work.

Christie: So a lot of your neighbors work there.

Roy: Yeah, then bus...bus would run a little later over in another block. I checked that out for transportation, you know, and everything, I had to get to work some times. You've got to take all that stuff into consideration as you get old, and it all dies down on you. They threatened to shut this factory down 20 years ago. Every time we had a union contract, well, we'll just shut her down. Finally they did.

Christie: Hard to believe they finally did.

Roy: Yeah, it's been up there for 80 years. They built that when I was born. (when you were born?) Yeah. See, I lived up in Teays Valley, and we kept moving down this way, gettin' closer to Huntington. Now we love Huntington, you know. More like home. West Virginia's more like home. It's our state. They got the most, one of the highest iron bridges in the world. And they have the big lake up there. We used to go up there camping, and go over and watch 'em build that bridge, that big high bridge. Gauley River, no, New River, built over New River. So we have a grand state, we've got the grand Huntington [laughing].

Christie: Well, how do you feel about the plant closing? Did you...that's going to affect Huntington?

Roy: Well, I would say it was gonna affect it some, but you know, a lot of people now's got too old to work at the factory anyway. [laughter] Guy said down there, said, "You know what happened to that factory? We wore it out." I guess we wore the factory out. Of course, I've been out of there 17 years. (yeah) And they shut her down. I've been out of there 18 years, then. It was a good place to work. You know? Good parking places, and credit union you could put your money in, and take it out, and do your borrowing. We borrowed money for cars 'til we got sick of paying on cars. So we just sold the car and got a cheaper car. I fixed it up and then sold it and made two or three hundred on it. Then I took the other one I traded for, and fixed it up, get another two or three hundred on that, first you know we had money come in this way. When we'd get money we'd take it up and put it in the credit union. And they'd pay us interest on it, see. They was paying 7% then. Now it's about 3 or 4. So it just stacks up. If you put money in there today, before the 10th of the month, it'll draw interest for that month. And the next month that month the money that you put in there, it'll draw interest the next month, see. First you know, it's drawing interest on top of interest. We found that was the way to save money. Any other way you can't do it. Plus you buy a few things. We bought 4 houses before we settled down in this one. Made money on every one of them. See, we bought a house at a little bit higher price, knocked out the taxes.

Christie: Well, was there anything else you wanted to say about the plant?

Roy: Well, I hated to see 'em shut her down on account of some people are in debt so deep, you know. Caught before they got the bills paid off. So uh...

END OF SIDE 1

Roy: ...it was a good place to work. I don't know what they gonna do with that. They tore it down and beat it up. We used to make all the Avon bottles, we used to make...made those gold cadillacs, you know, and volkswagons, like that. And we had a decorating shop up there that a decorating [inaudible]...And we'd stamp these big, and they had a stamp there with a nickel on it. And they'd hold it up against the bottle when it was still hot, and it would come off on the bottle, who that...just like glass. I think they shut that down and took it out. (mmmh) Of course, they had a place there they picked up all the glass there in town, and uh, rounded it up and rem-melted it. That way they took it out of our garbage place, you know, where we dump garbage. It didn't get in there 'cause all the glass was out of it. Owens burned it and melted it. Is this still on? (yeah)

Christie: We're about done, unless there's anything else you wanted to talk about. I just wanted to make sure if there's anything else you wanted to say about the plant or about your experience, that you had a chance.

Roy: Well, when I went to work there, you see, I had to wait a while to get a pay check. So they had a cafeteria back then and they had cooks back there. They'd have chicken and dumplings, make their own pies, and everything. And when you went to work there the first day you'd have to, if you did have a lunch to bring, you was half starving. You'd go back there and they'd give you a meal ticket, even if you worked just one day, they'd give you a meal ticket, and you'd go back there and buy anything you wanted to eat. And uh, and you'd buy a meal ticket, put it on your account. And you could go ahead workin' and eatin'. If you wanted to take some of it home to the family, you could package some of it up and take it home with you, as long as you paid for it. So that was wonderful, you know. And all the people that goes to work on a job, they ain't got much money, they run out of money, been out of a job a long time, and what do they eat on? You got to have something to eat. So that place there furnished them good dinners. The best in the world, back in those days. You get a bowl of soup for a dime, over 3 inches deep, or 4...the bottom was down in it, you know. A dime, it was about all you could eat. Finally, they pushed up the bottom of 'em [laughs]. The brought the bottoms up, the things you'd get your soup in, they brought the bottoms up a couple inches. You wouldn't get much, have as much soup for the same price. It was running real fine, I thought. But as I say, I don't know what happened after I left there. When I was there, it was still open. Fifteen, seventeen years ago's.....

[Mrs. Hicks talking in background]

Roy: Yeah, they changed it. When you go to have a mold change you just press a button and that would change 'em around. And then take a button wrench and set down and work all day on it, maybe change 200 buttons on the back them machines, made it run. Somebody just walk over there and press the button on the one you want, where you want it...automatic. They got automation in there then shut it down. I never could figure that one out either. [laughing] I think maybe they spent too much on automation and shut it down. 'Cause when I left there you didn't have no buttons to push. Then they changed it...computers. There's computers running the country. (yeah) A lot of them people out of work. But the companies are making more money, but the people working...like Walter Ruth said up there, he said, they told him they were puttin' in a machine take the place of a hundred men. [inaudible].... So one of the guys at the union said, "Yeah, but who you gonna sell, move the cars to?" That's what Walter Ruth said to the company man. "You're puttin' in this machine that will take the place of all these men, who you gonna sell your cars to?" (Exactly, exactly) Yeah. They're not worrying about who they're gonna sell 'em to. They're worrying about how they're gonna get 'em made. [laughing] Back yonder when Harry Truman was president, he guaranteed, he dared 'em to raise the price on anything. Everything had ceiling prices on it. So, one of the guys I worked with bought a brand new Buick for \$1050, a big four-door sedan. When Eisenhower got a hold of her, it went to ten thousand instead of ten hundred. Eisenhower released the ceiling prices on everything. Every bit of it went sky high. So then the country, the country started down, just like that. (mmmh) The guys couldn't pay the prices. So everybody started borrowing money. They started using these cards, you know, credit cards. They started using them and buying cars and stuff, on account of that big high price. They couldn't afford it out of their pocket. So they expected people to buy them cars, and go ahead working with what they was gettin'. And when the contract came up for the union, they wanted more money so they could buy a new car, to keep them union men working out there. [chuckles] Never could get together on something it just stays there. Take a high priced car, low price man can't afford it. (big loans) Without a loan. Get a loan and pay five years. Harry Truman got up there and said, "I'm putting ceiling prices on all that stuff." And he said, "If you borrow any money on a car, you can't pay it off in 12 months, you ain't got no need for it." When he was president, him and Roosevelt, you either had to pay it off in 12 months or you didn't get the car. That's a pretty good idea, keep 'em from raising the price of cars, you know. They can't see it today. They don't know what's going on. Clinton, he's trying to get it straightened but and he can't get no help. If he ever gets his bill through, this country will be a different county to live in. Doctors and medicine will go down. The automobiles will have to go down. He might have to put a ceiling price on everything after everything's

straightened out. They put a ceiling price on everything. You had a car, you could make 200 off of a car and that's all. And there's a certain price you could pay for it and a certain price the dealer could sell it for. If they caught him, fined him \$500. [chuckles] And when they took over this country, all the banks were closing and leaving town. All of 'em bankrupt, they've taken the money. The day after he was elected, you looked up here at town, there wasn't no banks open. Had an FBI man at each bank door and a big padlock on the doors, drill holes in 'em, put chains in 'em. He closed every bank in this town. Nobody'd get in. Everybody gettin' scared, you know. 'Cause they was closing them down, stealing the money. Then when they opened 'em back up, if you had any money in there, it was...it was worth \$10,000 what you had in the bank. I don't care if you wanted go get out your ten thousand, you'd get it. Then it went to a hundred thousand. Now it's up to a hundred thousand. If you've got any money in the credit union or bank, it's covered with the government for a hundred thou-. So that's what he did to the industry. So that stopped that stealing the money out of the banks. So he just had 'em all closed, dared 'em to open, dared 'em to raise the prices on anything. He said, "If you raise the price on anything," he said, "I'll put a factory to consumer price on everything." Boy, they was afraid to raise the price. They put the price on factories. Then you work on WPA they called it. When you went to work in a certain place you meet, you know, it'd be a building somewhere, you get to this building, that's all you had to do. You get there, you'd get in a truck and they'd take you out of here and they'd let you beat a rock in the road, just anything. And if any of the family got sick, you went to the doctor and it didn't cost you nothing. And it paid you so much a week to pay your gas bill and other bills. Then they give you free food. You go up there to the courthouse and you could get all you could haul in the back of your car, you know. It was good food. Such as bacon and beans, potatoes, stuff like that, and apples...you just load your car up and go on home and it didn't cost you a penny. They had an election, it was a landslide, where he went in there again, a landslide, and the other party, they didn't like that. So they worked around real hard and got back in again. Eisenhower came along and went in there. They cut out the WPA. You couldn't work out there on the road. You just sat at the house. You couldn't draw nothing. Sit there and watch 'em sell your house out from under you. That's how bad it was, when Eisenhower was in there. And it's been that way, still that way, see. Or was, I mean. Since they've changed presidents, things will change, if he can get the other party to go along with him on it, get it going again. But he can't get 'em up there. [inaudible]... The republican party...they won't vote for it, nothing he puts out. They says, "Well, you can't do that, ha, ha, ha, what'd you think you could give the people, free medicine see and free hospital. They laugh at him instead of signing the bill he got out. He's pushing it. Maybe one of these days he'll get her...signed up so people can have some free medicine. I feel sorry for people that can't afford to pay for one prescription.

There ain't no food on the table. (yeah)

Christie: Well, thank you very much....(Owens....) oh, did you want to say something else?

Roy: Yeah, Owens was a good place to work and uh, I loved every bit of it. I went up there and went and found me a job, and found me a wife. [laughter] That was the most important thing.

END OF INTERVIEW