2012.3.393 David Scott

Crystal Perez: This is Crystal Perez. Today is February 1st, 2012. I'm interviewing David Scott in Atlanta, Georgia for the DeKalb History Center. Mr. Scott is a former Vice President of Scottdale Mill. During which years did the mill operate?

David Scott: The mill began operation in July of 1901, and we announced closing in February of 1982, and it took us until into May of 1982 to run the stock out of the mill.

CP: OK. During which years were you at the mill?

DS: I was employed full-time at the mill from May of 1958…until 1984 or '85. I was the one appointed to liquidate it and shut it down.

CP: OK.

DS: But, I had worked there in the summers, starting when I was 16, which would have been 1951.

CP: So, the mill…it would be safe to say that the mill was a part of your life since a very young age.

DS: And, before that, my father was President of the mill, and so, it was a part of my growing up. I lived on a hill, and I could see the mill from my home. So, it…it was a part of my life from my earliest days.

CP: Your great-grandfather, George Washington Scott, is the founder of the mill?

DS: George Washington Scott was the…provided the financing for the mill, and he gave the money for the stock…1/5 to each of his five children. So, his five children were the original owners, but he put 100% of the money into it. And, my grandfather was his oldest son. He had four daughters. So, my grandfather owned 20% of the stock, and he had six children. So, my father owned 3 and a fraction percent of the stock. And, I have a brother and sister. So, I owned a little over 1% of the stock. Everybody said that I was the owner of the mill. I think I bought another 1%, and I had 2 or 2 1/2 percent of the stock.

CP: Oh, OK.

DS: …never more than that.

CP: Did you know George Washington Scott?

DS: He died in 1903, and I was born in 1935. So, I didn't know him.

CP: OK. Did you hear about him, growing up?

DS: Oh, yes.

CP: What are some of the things that you heard about him?

DS: Well, he…he was a man, home educated by his mother, who educated him, primarily, with The Bible. And, he was a man of principle and integrity, and he, obviously, was very intelligent. But, he worked hard, and whatever he committed himself to, he followed through. His word was more important than his wealth. He…his mother was an immigrant from…a Scottish-Irish immigrant from Ireland, who left Ireland at the a…Ireland at the age of 16, came with her widowed mother and a sister on a sailing ship. Her sister died at sea and was buried at sea, and she came at the age of 16 into Pennsylvania. And, in central…a small town in Pennsylvania, Alexandria. And, within a few years, married a widower with four children…he had four children, and she bore him seven children. So, the impact of his mother with him throughout his life…although he left home at the age of 20, just a month or so after the death of his father. He came south, started a plantation in Florida. When the Civil War broke out, he joined the ranks of his adopted South, became, eventually, a Colonel. His friends ran him for governor of Florida, and he was not elected. Some say he had majority votes, but he was not allowed to take office during the transition after the Civil War. Some say he lost the election of nine…of 1868. He, then, moved to Savannah and started a business in, I think, exported cotton. His partner, through questionable activities, caused the company to go broke. The yellow fever epidemic occurred. His brother died from yellow fever. Then, he moved to Atlanta and began in real estate, at the time that Atlanta was recovering from the Civil War. He built a fertilizer plant and made a fortune from

fertilizer and sold the plant. From his wealth, he went back to Savannah and paid off everybody that he hadn't been able to pay off when he had to go into bankruptcy, with interest.

CP: Wow.

DS: …debts that he had been forgiven by law. And, he sold the fertilizer business. He took the money and built…and started Agnes Scott College. And, he…he had it named in honor of his mother, who was the influence on him throughout his life. He also used part of his wealth and invested in Scottdale Mills and died two years after Scottdale Mills was operating. And, his son, George Bucher Scott, operated it for 20 years and died. And, my father became President. My father, Julius Scott, became President in 1920 and was President until, probably…probably, 1970, when his nephew became President. And, I was working under my cousin, Hansford Sams, H-A-N-S-F-O-R-D Sams. And, I can give you a little write-up on George Washington Scott.

CP: That would be great. That's, actually, very impressive. I learned a lot that I did not know before, in my research. And, not only was Mr. Scott significant to DeKalb history, Decatur history, he was also significant in Southern American history.

DS: Well, if you…if you will look on any automobile map, if you will look 15 miles south of Tallahassee, it will show a historical site called The Battle of Natural Bridge. If you go down there, there is a granite obelisk that mentions the generals and other people

[…] battles, but it will say that George Washington…Colonel George Washington Scott set the strategy and led the battle. It'd say he didn't have enough troops, that he went and took all the students in a seminary in Tallahassee to help man the lines. But, he blocked the advance of the Union troops that had come down the Mississippi River into the Gulf and landed at Saint Mark's Lighthouse and were coming up to invade Tallahassee, and he figured out where they would come and set up the defenses and defeated them. And, it's the only Southern capital that was never invaded by the Yankee armies.

CP: Wow. Thank you. That was wonderful, wonderful information. Do you know who built or…and/or designed the mill?

DS: The mill was financed by George Washington Scott and built at his initiative, but his son would have been the primary…the one managing the construction. They would have had a engineer…an engineering company that designed and built mills, and they would have hired people to do that. My understanding is a sawmill was set up on the site, and since buildings weren't constructed from steel at that time, they cut down pine trees and sawed them up on the site and built the structure of the mill from wooden beams, some of them 12, 14 inches…12 x 14 inches. There was no electricity. So it was powered by steam. Also, I've discovered that George Washington Scott was the first person to use steam power in Florida, which was very flat and, therefore, had no waterfalls to power anything by waterfall power. But, he used steam to power grain mills and saw mills and was the first person to do it in Florida. So, he'd had some experience in his early life in steam power. They built the factory along a small, very small creek, was able to run a

water piping system to raise the water above the creek to fill a pond…very ingenious way to get a pond where there was no waterfall.

CP: Right.

DS: …and the remnants of that system are still there. So, the coal came in on a railroad track. The coal dropped from the bottom of a car, through a trestle and then shoveled into wheelbarrows and rolled it into the boiler and shoveled into the boiler. And, some of those men worked with me, and they had barrel chest like NFL football players.

CP: That's amazing.

DS: The mill I operated, one 12-hour shift when it started up, because there were no electric lights. They had lots of windows, and air conditioning was to let the wind blow through the mill and…and take the heat out.

CP: OK. You mentioned earlier that you grew up around the mill?

DS: Mmmhmm.

CP: Where did you attend school?

DS: I attended school at Glenwood Grammar School in Decatur, Georgia, and then, Avondale High School for 2 ½ years, and then for my…half of my junior year and my senior year, I went to a boarding school near Orlando, Florida.

CP: Oh, OK. And, you came back home to go to Georgia Tech?

DS: Yes. I went to a liberal arts school up near Chicago, and then I transferred, took…majored in chemistry, and I transferred to Georgia Tech in 1955 and majored in textile manufacturing.

CP: Why did you decide to major in textile manufacturing, besides the obvious reason?

DS: I found that my abilities and gifts were in the scientific area. I enjoyed physics and chemistry, had great m…had great difficulty with literature and history. And, it just…after c…after coming out of the Army, I was in the Corps of Engineers in the Army, and in the…trained in the Rangers in the Army, and I…I realized that my gifts were to make things and solve problems.

CP: Well, that would be working at a mill.

DS: Mmmhmm.

CP: [laughs] You started at Georgia Tech in 1955. When did you end…

DS: I graduated in 1957.

CP: …your studies? 1957.

DS: …went into the Army, briefly, and then came out and in ’58 went to work at the mill.

CP: OK. And, how was campus life during the years that you were there at Georgia Tech?

DS: Well, the first thing to say that…at Georgia Tech, there were 6,000 male students and 6 female students.

CP: Wow…6. [laughs]

DS: And, I lived at home and drove the 9 miles back and forth to school. And, my campus involvement and activity was primarily in a Christian organization called Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, which I found very significant and beneficial to me. And, in many years ended up on the board of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. I was taking 25 credit hours a semester at Georgia Tech, and there was not much time for campus life activity, other than this one activity. But, I took 23 to 25 credit hours for four semesters.

CP: Wow. So, you're right, you didn't have much time for other things. [laughs] Are you currently an active alumnus?

DS: Not particularly.

CP: OK.

DS: I make contributions, but not much else involve…not…not…but little other involvement.

CP: What kinds of changes did…have you witnessed at Georgia Tech, especially considering that you were still active with that organization?

DS: Well, besides the fact that I probably…I may not be able to qualify to get in today…

CP: [laughs]

DS: Back at that time, the State required Georgia Tech to accept every Georgia student who had taken and successfully passed the courses required for entrance to Georgia Tech.

CP: Well, that is a significant change.

DS: …and, when we entered Georgia Tech, we all gathered in an old gymnasium, and the first talk to us about the realities of Georgia Tech was that there was a person sitting on our right and left. That made three of you. One of you won't be here by Easter. So, whereas they could not select students for enrollment, they had other ways of selecting the students that they felt capable of receiving their education.

CP: I see.

DS: And, we used to joke about Georgia Tech was a long building with no windows, stretching from Atlanta to Columbus, and there were little holes in the building with conveyors going out, and you could go from Atlanta to co…to Columbus and see these students being thrown out on these conveyors to end up in Fort Benning.

CP: [laughs] So, that's pretty much how it went, back then, huh?

DS: It was a…It was an engineer factory, and…

CP: [laughs]

DS: …in those days, you…they were training high level engineers and design people, but they were also training technicians who operate the factories in Georgia and around the country. Today, Georgia Tech does very little in training the technical people and focuses on the higher-level design and inventions and developments. And, Southern

Polytech in Kennesaw would probably be…and the community colleges around the state would be more likely the source of the technical operators, such as I was in that day. So, that would be, probably, the biggest change today. Georgia Tech's graduate school is almost as big as its undergraduate school, and the emphasis at Georgia Tech is on the graduates. And, the undergraduates are primarily being prepared for graduate school.

CP: Right. Do you feel…

DS: And…and about 45% of Georgia Tech, today, are women.

CP: Right. Do you feel that your studies at Georgia Sta…at Georgia Tech prepared you for your work at the mill?

DS: Yes. It was designed exactly for that. I could have taken textile engineering, textile chemistry or textile manufacturing. I took textile manufacturing and spent my life related to that. I think my shortcomings at Georgia Tech were…I was ill prepared for managing people. I was very prepared for all the mechanical and scientific challenges, but the management of people was my most difficult area.

CP: They most have realized that, because I notice that now they do have business programs there.

DS: They had industrial management in those days, which were for people that really wanted industrial management, but largely for the football players.

CP: [laughs] We won't go into that. How would you describe your family's socio-economic status, as a result of the mill?

DS: Well, my immediate family or the family of the descendants of George Washington Scott…I'm going to address this, initially, as…most of the descendants of George Washington Scott and then I'll deal with myself, and my brother, my father, and his three children. We certainly were raised in the upper echelons of Southern society. However, you can do your research, and you will not find a single descendant of George Washington Scott who is extremely wealthy and living off of inherited stock. No family was permitted to work in the mills who did not get a technical education or an education that would prepare them to contribute to the factory operation.

CP: So, there was no nepotism, basically.

DS: None. And, there were not many family working in the mill for that reason. There were…in my days, there were…well, in the life of the…in the 80-year history of Scottdale Mill, there was only…there were only six descendants of George Washington Scott who worked there, and one of them for only a couple of years. So, that's down to five. And, another one moved to Georgia Duck and Cordage Mill and spent his life there. So, that gets it down to four. So, George Washington Scott's son, George Bucher Scott,

and my father, James Julius Scott, and his nephew, Hansford Sams, and myself would be the only descendants of George Washington Scott that were…that prepared themselves and were allowed to work there.

CP: Now, did you say his nephew, Sams?

DS: Mmmhmm.

CP: Did he go to work at another mill? Is that what you said?

DS: No, his…my father's brother, Milton Scott…

CP: OK.

DS: Went to work at Georgia Duck and Cordage Mill and eventually bought controlling interest in it and spent from 1920 until 1988 at the mill. He worked there for 68 years. He lived to be 106.

CP: Wow. Now, how did he manage to be at another mill, instead of the family mill?

DS: Well, it was still a family mill. Scottdale Mills was…began operating in July of 2000…of 1901. As I had told you, George Washington Scott gave, as a gift, 1/5 of the stock to each of his five children.

CP: Right.

DS: …only one of whom was a…a man. The other daughters were all married. One of the daughters' husband insisted that she demand her money out of the mill, and he went up the railroad track about a mile to build a mill and run it as he thought a mill should be run.

CP: I see.

DS: And, within a couple of years, he was go…he was nearly broke. And, George Bucher Scott, who was running Scottdale, went up and tried to help save his sister's money. And so, he was running both mills, and when his youngest son, Milton Scott, came back from 18 months in France, in the first World War, he…correction, correction: when my father, Julius Scott, who had finished three years at the University of Georgia, had lung problems and went out into the Southwestern territories, into what's now New Mexico, and this is before New Mexico was a state, and he and his brother, Robert, became cowboys. But, there was a heavy drought out there, and it was hard to get a job as a cowboy, but they got a few jobs, briefly, and then they got started working on building a dam in what's now Southern New Mexico. And, when he came back from his cowboy days in the Western lands before New Mexico was a state, his father put him to running a dairy farm, and after a few years, the government came and said that they thought the cows had tuberculosis, but they had a cure: one lead bullet in the head of

every cow, which was an instant liquidation of the dairy, at no compensation. And so, he went to try to help his father, George Bucher Scott, get the duck mill started. And about 10 years later, George Bucher Scott died, and my father, with his experience in Georgia Duck, went to Scottdale. His brother, who had been back 1 year and ½ from France, went to the duck mill to run it and eventually bought the stock. My father worked in the duck mill, had a cot in the office, worked day and night, trying to make a profit, and in the third year, he broke into the black, and I don't remember the exact dollar amount, but it was like…for the entire year, he had made 37 cents. But, it was in the black, for the first time.

CP: OK. Was there a "golden age" of the mill, as far as you know?

DS: The mills…the mill, you know, prospered through the teens and 20s, and then many mills shut down during the Depression. They didn't make any money, of significance, but they were able to keep the plant open during the Depression. My father says he kept it open by a prayer and that each time he seemed like he couldn't make the payroll, something would happen, and he'd be able to barely make the payroll. The Great Depression…the c…the country elected Delano Roosevelt in hoping that he could come up with approaches to break the Great Depression, and he did…he…he established the cons…Conservation Corps and other ways to put about 3 million people to work, but unemployment never got below 15 percent, and at times it was high as 30 to 40 percent. And, in fact, in 1937 and 8, they had a second depression or recession, where employment, unemployment went up to about 38 percent, and the depression was never

corrected until the second World War. And, it was a production that was demanded of our country in the second World War that broke the Depression. During the second World War, the government controlled your profit. So, the profits were low. But, following the second World War, when all the…when…when people had been under rations and couldn't buy things, and all the soldiers came back, got married, had children, and wanted to build houses and furnish their houses, the period from 1946 to 1950, was probably the "golden age" of the company. Then, there were some struggles in the 50s. And, in the 60s, from about 1960 to 1968, was another period of substantial profits. And, when I speak of substantial profits, I think I need to be more exact. When I talk to young people today and ask them what they think a large manufacturing plant with 6 or 7 hundred employees…what percent profit they would make, young people tell me 20, 25 and, some of them, 50 percent. In our "golden days," we made between 3 and 4 percent. And, in the more difficult days, we made from 0 to 1 ½ percent. At Scottdale Mills, I never saw profits reach 4 percent. But, they were…they were adequate, as far as our family was concerned. Our salaries were our primary financial return from the company. In…in…in…in some of the latter years, they were paying about 5 do…about 100 to 120 thousand dollars in dividends. I said I had about 2%. So, my dividends from the mill, on my stock, were in the 2 to 3 thousand-dollar range.

CP: OK. Now, you've mentioned that your family started and owned several mills, and also, you've mentioned Agnes Scott. Are there any other industries that your family was associated with?

DS: At this point, I'm going to talk about my father's family. My father, in 1935, was asked to manage Whittier Mills that was owned by General Butler's estate in Boston, Massachusetts. General Butler was a Northern general that sacked New Orleans and is known to have stolen cotton and silver from the plantations around New Orleans. But, he apparently took the wealth from the cotton and silver, and he built eight textile factories in the North…eight or…approximately, eight. And, then, in 1895, he built Whittier Mills in Atlanta, which is on the northeast side of Atlanta, on Bolton Road, where the Chattahoochee River exits under 285, next to the Chattahoochee Brick Company. It's in the section of Atlanta called Chattahoochee. This plant employed about 650 people. My father was given one share of stock, so he could attend stockholders meetings, and put in charge of the mill. Twenty years later, the Board of Directors in Massachusetts called him up and said, "20 years ago, when we put you in charge of Whittier Mills, we had 9 mills, eight of them in New England. They were all making money, and we had one mill in Atlanta, Whittier Mills, that was losing money. We put you in charge, and today Whittier is making money and all eight of our mills in New England are losing money." He says, "How would you explain it?' My father said he didn't know. He certainly was not smarter than the people up there nor better educated. He says, "I've sought to honor the Lord in my business, and He has blessed me." And, two years later, three…two or three years later, said they were going to shut the mill down and offered to sell it to him and his nephew, Hansford Sams. And, they operated it for 11 years. They had 11 hundred thousand dollar bonds, and they paid off nine of the hundred thousand dollar bonds, and due to the change in import laws, they had to shut it down after 11 years. That was Whittier Mills that they were involved in. I spent 25 years paying off the debts

and selling the property of Whittier Mills. Half of…more than half of my career was involved in working out that situation. Then, Scottdale Mills we've mentioned. My grandfather, George Bucher Scott bought land east of Decatur and had a dairy farm where DeKalb Hospital is now located. And, they divided the land for DeKalb Hospital at a very low price, 44 hundred dollars an acre, I believe, 40 acres, and gave him the land to extend North Decatur Road from Lawrenceville Highway through their property. And, so, they were selling off this land that they, essentially, or almost lost during the Depression. They gave the…they gave the deeds to the banks they owed that to, and the banks gave them back the deeds and said, "You can manage it better than we can." They, eventually, paid off their debts. The same thing happened to Scottdale stock. They had to give the stock to the banks. The bank gave it back to them and said, "you can manage it better than we can." So, they had…they had the…they were selling…began selling this land off of the dairy farm after the second World War. I just completed that last year. The spin off mill, Georgia Duck, the majority was bought by Milton Scott in the late 20s. The minority was owned by my father. And, that mill was sold in 1998. And, it was then resold to the biggest company, Fender Dunlop, who took the various components out of the mill and distributed over three different locations around the country and shut the plant down and tore the building down last year, in 2011. During the War, the government asked my father, Julius Scott, and Hansford Sams to start up another factory to inde…increase the production of tent duck for small pup tents for the soldiers. And, they went to Winder, Georgia, found an old warehouse, and set up a weaving operation, where the yarn or thread was shipped in from other plants, and they wove tent duck, they set it up to weave tent duck. And, about the time they got it going, Mr. Sams went into

the Army and so my father was left to run Scottdale, Whittier, and the Winder plant during the War, and his brother ran the duck mill. All of which were all war goods. So, those would have been the early business that my family were involved in. George Washington Scott was heavily involved in real estate in downtown Atlanta. He built the first skyscraper in downtown Atlanta, at Whitehall and…I'd have to look it up, but it was called The Century Building. It was five stories high. At his death, the news…I never checked this out, the newspaper said that he may have owned more property in downtown Atlanta than anyone else. I don't know what it is, because I've never seen any income from it. I know of two parcels he owned. One was…I know three parcels he owned. One was one of the corners at Five Points. One was the equitable…the property that now contains the Equitable building on Peachtree Street. And then, the Century Building. They're the only ones I know of that he owned. So, he was in real estate and fertilizer and textiles.

CP: OK. Where, exactly, was the mill located?

DS: The mill was located on East Ponce…on the west side of East Ponce De Leon Avenue, 2 ½ miles east of the courthouse in Decatur, north…the road, Clarendon Avenue intersects Ponce De Leon at the point where the mill was located. The mill has been torn down, but the warehouses are still there and being rented to artisans.

CP: OK. And, do you know why that particular site was chosen?

DS: Well, the site was chosen because they already owned the property, and it was along that creek that they could get the water to run the boilers.

CP: OK. And, do you know how much square footage the site occupied?

DS: Well, the…the mill was on 16 acres of land. The…that did not include the village. George Washington Scott put his investments in what was called George W. Scott Investment Company. He owned a lot of land, and the mill, itself, was on 16 acres, and the village was probably on another 30 acres. And, the building, itself, at the time of…when we shut it down, it was 250, 000 square feet, but its original building probably was […] 50 to 75 thousand square feet.

[telephone rings]

CP: I see that you have a photograph, here. Would you mind describing the layout of the mill?

DS: The mill ran east to west, and the original mill was this part, right here, that has the white roof. And, these were the warehouses behind it. The railroad track came off parallel to Ponce de Leon and came in between the warehouses and the mill. And it…the main part of…the manufacturing part of the mill were two floors, and this tower had a tank up there to pressurize the sprinkler system, in case of a fire. Back here, there was a well and another tank that provided water for the…for the…for the…for the sprinkler

system. This was the gin house…this was the gin house, where the farmers brought in their cotton on wagons. All cotton, originally, when the mill cranked up, was within wagon-hauling distance, and it was ginned here. This was the boiler room, and this is the smokestack for the boiler, and this little line here was a pipe running through the pond, which was down here, to provide the water for the boilers. This…but, this was where the bales of cotton and the finished goods were stored. This building, here, was a cafeteria that was…had old Southern cooking. And, the prices…or the quality of food was such that people from Decatur flocked out there, including the judges and the government people and the police…the lady that ran it was amazing. She ran the cafeteria. She ran an accounting business. She ran a farm and a boarding house. And, whatever she managed, you didn't have to worry about.

CP: Was she employed by the mill?

DS: She was employed by the mill to run that, but these other things she did on her own.

CP: OK.

DS: See, she lived down near what's now called Lake Lucerne. She had a little farm at Lake Lucerne, but back then, it wasn't called Lake Lucerne. It was called…can't remember the name, but it wasn't a pretty name. That's why they changed it to Lake Lucerne.

CP: [laughs]

DS: But, she had property right down there, about 5 acres, or so.

CP: So, during lunchtime, you would have members of the community form outside the mill…

DS: Mmhmm.

CP: …come to the mill to eat lunch.

DS: And, the cafeteria would prepare food, and we built a cart that could be pushed…pushed through the mill. This is before the days of vending machines, and since we had live steam, the cart was built to have water in it, and we would run this live steam in it til the water was 212 degrees. And then, somebody would push it down the 1st floor and up the elevator, and down the 2nd floor, and the people that got it first, the food was a little hotter

CP: [laughs]

DS: …than the people who got it last. But, that went through the mill maybe six times a day.

CP: OK. And, you…

DS: Then, later on, it was…it was…we put in vending machines and shut the cafeteria down. After we shut the cafeteria down, the Alcoholics Anonymous asked if they could use it, and they rented it. And, they had 21 meetings a week for al…for alcoholics to come and meet. They said they wanted to…their idea was 28 meetings. They wanted a meeting four times a day to where no alcoholic could ever say there was not a time they could meet that was convenient. There were…there would be corporate presidents, teenagers, and street people in those meetings.

CP: Hmm. Now, you've described the layout of the mill. Was that a standard layout for a textile mill or was it more individualized for that?

DS: Pretty much standard. Back in those days, they built multiple-story mills, and later time to maximize the material handling, you would have only a single-floor mill or more anchorage. But, we would manufacture the thread on the top floor and then send the thread down to do the weaving on the bottom floor. And then, ship it out to the inspection and warehouse area.

CP: How were the buildings designed? And, what I mean by that is: you mentioned earlier that in the beginning they used wood to construct…

DS: OK. I will describe the…I'm going to describe the architecture and how it changed through the years, not just for this mill, but for most mills in the South. Originally, the mills were built out of wood because steel wasn't available or either wood was cheaper. But, the bays in the mill were 25 foot wide, and the support beams…going widthwise, they were 25 feet. Going lengthwise, there was a support post every 8 feet. So, you had a lot of the plant occupied with this…these rows of posts, which was not ideal to moving products in bulk, but that's the way they were moved…they were handled. Then, in the late 1920s…now, this would have been in the 18…late in the 1800s and into the early 1900s. By the 19…by the late 1920s, somewhere around in the 1920s, they moved to steel structure with brick walls, I called them curtain walls, the walls didn't support weight. In the wooden…when the structures were wood, the exterior walls were heavy brick walls, starting maybe 2 ½ to 3 feet wide at the bottom and […], and they were load-bearing. But, when they put in steel structures, the walls were not load-bearing, generally. The…load was carried by the steel beams, even around the periphery of the building. Then, in the 60s…50s and 60s, the structure went to single floors, and…steel buildings with wide bays, instead of 25 feet up to 32 feet wide or wider, and instead of 8 feet between the posts, there would be 30 or 40 feet between the posts. And, the curtain walls on the outside would be built with two layers of brick, with about 4 inches of hollow space in the middle, which would be poured with insulation, vermiculite insulation, to help you hold the temperature and humidity, which was essential to production…different humidities for every department. And, there would be extensive air conditioning systems throughout…millions of dollars worth of air conditioning equipment. We could hold the temperature and humidity plus or minus 2 degrees

anywhere in the plant, and we could…we could change the air every 5 to 6 minutes and filter it.

CP: Impressive. You mention that there was a village. Was the worker housing located…did it share the site with the mill or was it located a little further away from the mill?

DS: I need to go back and describe the culture and the economy of the time the mill was built, which explains the "why" of all of this. When the mill was built, there was no electricity. There was no county water. There was no county sewage. There was no automobiles. There were no paved roads, pract…essentially. Very few…parts of Atlanta was not paved. There were, essentially, no paved roads near. There were no street cars, and there were no stores, no shopping centers, and no schools…no DeKalb County schools. The police department of DeKalb County consisted of one Sheriff, and that was the environment in which you…George W. Scott and his son, George Bucher Scott, built Scottdale Mills. So, they had to build the mill to provide power, steam power to operate it. The steam engine powered a big flywheel. It powered a shaft running down the top floor and the bottom floor, and there was sub shafts off the main shaft, and eventually, there were belts that dropped down to every machine, to power every machine in the plant. Since there was no transportation, the only way people could get to work was to walk. So, the village had to be built within walking distance of the plant, and everybody that worked in the plant either had to walk or ride a horse to the plant. And, in those days, essentially, everybody but the executives walked. My father, when he ran the mill,

started running the mill in 1920, lived in Decatur 2 ½ miles away, and he rode a horse to work everyday. He told me that in the cold weather he would take a big heavy coat and hang it over the open fireplace 'til it got blazing hot, and then he would put it on and bolt…and bolt…and button it up, and get on his horse and ride to work, even when it was 15, 20 degrees. So, that's why the villages were built…the village were a necessity. The villages were trouble for the management of the company. If people don't own their houses, things get damaged unnecessarily, and every time a screen door was kicked out, they would holler at the mill to send a carpenter down to fix it. After the invention of automobiles, and transportation, more and more people came from greater distances, and in 1957, the company sold all of the houses to the employees…offered to the employees who were living in them. All but one bought them. The average price was $4,000 a house in 1957. The company arranged the financing with DeKalb Federal Savings and Loan, and the company guaranteed all the loans until 20 percent of the loan was paid back. In other words, no employee had to make a down payment. The company guaranteed the down payment to the DeKalb Savings and Loan. And, then, when 20 percent was paid off, DeKalb Savings and Loan cancelled that guarantee, and everybody but one bought their own house. So, in 1957, the village became DeKalb County Village. The same way when the company was built they had to provide housing, they arranged for a doctor to move in on Clarendon Avenue. His name was Dr. Allgood, and he spent his life there, 50 years, with the people in the community. I remember his retirement dinner. My father gave a report that he had done a study, and he said, "Well doctor, it looks like you've signed 5,000 death certificates and 5,000 birth certificates. I'm hard pressed to see where you did much good."

CP: [laughs]

DS: Also, after…I think around 1905 or 10, the company hired a nurse and set up a clinic for the people in the village, and they had a dentist to come by once a week. They gained the land and built a school and stocked with teachers and had to build a home for the teachers. And, then, in the…1923, DeKalb County set up the school system and built…started building grammar schools, and they built Scottdale Grammar School and Avondale Grammar School, and I think, Clarkston and others, and people in the village went to the Scottdale Grammar School. Back in those days, it was segregation, and I think they built in the black community Robert…a school that's now called Robert Shaw, and later, Hamilton High School. But, the initial years of the mill were all segregated.

CP: Can you describe what the worker housing looked like?

DS: Worker housing, initially, were…a house with, basically, four rooms and a back porch with a rail, of which would be a wash basin. There would be a well in the back of each house and an outhouse and a black pot in the backyard, where you would build a fire under it and boil your clothes in it for washing. Later on…and there would be a fireplace in each house. Later on, the mill…I can remember this happening. When I was a little boy, they underpinned the houses with concrete block or brick to make them warmer. And, at about the same time, they put bathrooms in each house and did away with outhouses. In 1957, when the houses were sold to the people, you could see people's

personalities came out. Instead of them all being painted "mill white," people would paint them the colors they liked. Somebody would add a carport or a garage. Somebody would add an extra room, and they just began to take the personalities of the owner.

CP: What types of equipment were used at the mill?

DS: Well, the mill, initially, took the cotton from the farmers, ran it through the gin to remove the seeds, bought it from the farmers, and processed it with an opening room, where you would open the bale and begin to blend the bales to have a consistent flow of cotton. And, then, you would do the preparation called "the picker room" and you would go into the card room, where you would comb it out…comb out the short staples and most of the trash, and then it would go through two stages of drawing, where you would pull the fibers beside each other to make them parallel and both…pull it in one direction and another direction to make the fibers parallel. Then, it would go through one or two processes to reduce the bulk from about an inch in diameter of loose cotton down to various sizes to prepare it for spinning. That process was called "fly frames" or "roving frames," r-o-v-i-n-g. Then, the cotton would go into a spinning frame, and the spinning frame would have a drafting section that would have rollers going successively faster to reduce the bulk and then put the twist in it to give it the strength and wrap it on the bobbin. At that point, then, you split out to make the thread for the lengthwise threads in the loom, called a warp, and the crosswise threads that go in the shuttle, which is called the filling. Liter…literary people call it "the woof," the warp and the woof. I never heard the word "woof" ever used in a textile mill. It was the warp and the filling, because

the filling filled in the thing. The, the warp would be put from a thousand to five thousand threads across the width of the loom, and you'd make it as long as you could, but it would have to go through a starching operation to make it stiff and to where it wouldn't fray up and would be stronger in the weaving. So, it would be dipped in starch and then dried to an exact 6 percent moisture regain. And from there, it would…to start a new style, you would draw it in through the stop wires, the harness, and the reed, thread by thread. Whether it was 5,000, a person had to bring every one through. Once you had that pattern on the loom, you had a machine called "the tight end machine," and this machine could go over there and tie those 5,000 knots in about 30 minutes. Then, you'd weave it, and different settings on the loom would weave different types of fabrics. You would take it off and about a hundred pound…50 to a hundred pound rolls and take it to the cloth room, inspect it, repair it where possible, grade it, bale it up, then put it in the warehouse and ship it. We did not have any finishing. This was called "griege goods," g-r-i-e-g-e, the French word, meaning "raw." We made textile griege goods in this plant and shipped it off to other finishing plants or sold it to people who took it to finishing plants to finish the fabric.

CP: During the time that you were at the mill, were there many competitors?

DS: There were…the country was full of competitors. It was highly competitive. I said we never made…our best years, we made approaching 4 percent profit. But, it was a highly, highly competitive industry, as is…as has finally ruined…finally destroyed the

industry, as the international competition has taken it away from us. There is almost no textile industry left in America.

CP: The employees of the mill…did some of them come from these other mills?

DS: Yes. Initially, not so much, but when I was there, we recruited as much as we could from other mills. But, during my days, my early days in the 50s and 60s and 70s…early 70s, the hardest problem we had was finding employees for the work. We were a low wage industry, but we were steady work, and the checks always cleared the bank. And, so, if…if we had been out in the country, we would have been much better off, because it would have been easier to get employees. There would be less competition. But, we were in metropolitan Atlanta, and in much of that time in the 50s and 60s, unemployment was around 4%, 4 to 5 percent. And, in many cases because our wages were low, we would be people's last choice. And during the s…during the early…during the early or mid 70s, we began to recruit heavily from the inner city of Atlanta. And…which was the most difficult area to train people to work. Many of the people had never learned discipline at home, never learned discipline at school. Many of them were dropouts from the juvenile court system. And, then, we got our opportunity. And, we made many mistakes, but we finally developed a training system that could, effectively, train the inner city workers. Three times, congressmen came up to us and asked us what we were doing that other people weren't, and we would try to tell them, and once they realized it was very, very hard work, they never called back. They were obviously looking for something they could throw a pile of money at and get a big headline. How effective

were we? We got to where we could take a class of 40 trainees, and I could guarantee, mys…the president of the company, that we could train them and have them on the jobs at standard work production and standard quality in 8 weeks, with 50 percent of them making it and 50 percent of them gone. So, out of a…out of a class of 40, we could get 20 employees, and the 50 percent that we lost, most of them were lost within the first 10 days. We would…could guarantee inner city young people 19, 20…18, 19, 20, 21 years old that we could have them earning a regular paycheck in 8 weeks. We would not ask them their educational record. We would not eliminate them for their criminal record, although we would never hire anyone that we knew to be a sex offender. I don't mean immoral. I mean a sex criminal. But, I've hired robbers, burglars, and murderers. But, that…we would only require…we would guarantee them that they could be running a job in 8 weeks if they'd give us two things: cooperate with the people training to do the work they know how to do. It was never a problem. There wouldn't be five people out of a thousand. The second thing was they had to come to work regular and on time. We told the…we thought we were very smart, and very good at training, but we had never learned how to work anybody that wasn't there. We weren't that smart.

CP: [laughs]

DS: And…that was the problem. There was no lack of ability. They had the same range of capability as anybody else, but it was the discipline, and we learned, at very great difficulty, how to break the discipline. We finally realized that it was a little bit like the wild horses or mustangs out on the Western plain. They run free. They are

undisciplined. The cowboy catches them. He puts them in a corral. He does something called "breaking the horse." Whatever he did, he called it "breaking the horse," and after that, that horse could be used for any meaningful work that they needed the horse to do. And, we realized that we were breaking horses. And, some of them were great people, but they had never learned discipline, and we did the hard work of breaking the horse. And, once they trained at our place, they could go to work anywhere else. We told them, "If you go through our training and work for us, if you get a better job and give us one week notice, we will give you an excellent reputation, and we'll send you…we'll give you an excellent recommendation and send you off with our blessings." We put through the plant and train…took into training, in those years, somewhere between two and four thousand people, and I've sometimes wondered, "who's breaking horses, today?" You know, all of our type of jobs have been exported out of the country…

CP: Mmmhmm.

DS: …which at that time, I fought with all that I could. I lobbied. I worked with the industry to try to get congress not to open up free trade. Today, I am not sure that it isn't best, but I sure didn't think so at the time, and our country has lost a lot because of it. And, part of the struggle now with people not having jobs is related to the fact that we are no longer a powerful industrial nation. In my working days, I never worked with an individual person who was poor or unemployed or desperate that I couldn't offer a job if they would come to work regular and on time and cooperate with the trainers. Today, I can't do that, and that's a real loss. I work with a lot of people in my church that have

struggles. I go to a multi-cultural church. I am a minority in my church. I'm among the minority, and it…I am sad that I cannot help people find work, as I could when I was running the textile factories.

CP: Hmm.

DS: Oh! We, eventually, solved our worker problem with the refugees.

CP: Hmm.

DS: …and I would have to say that we, then, did not emphasize hiring out of the inner city because the refugees were much easier to train and worked longer. We hired, at one time, 66 Laotians in one group. Our training program was so good that we could train even people that couldn't speak English. Of the 66, only two spoke English. And, we put them to work, and in the first six weeks they worked, out of the whole crowd, we only had two people absent for a total of two days, out of 66 employees.

CP: Wow.

DS: Then, later we needed more employees. We hired another group of Laotians, 25 in that group. It was an utter failure, and we lost 25 out of 25. We did a research project to see why. The first group were from the lowland people, who had 50 years exposure to missionaries and the American military and were used to mechanization and were used to

working at night. The second group were mountain people, who had never worked at night and had never been exposed to mechanization. We found that they were happy to get jobs in America in landscaping and fishing or things of that nature. But, they were…we had some interesting experiences on personnel. Turn the thing off for a minute…gotta go to the restroom. Do you need to go to the restroom?

CP: No, thank you.

DS: …that's the kind of thing you'd want.

CP: Exactly. Did Scottdale Mill interact with other mills in any kind of way?

DS: Oh yes. There was a Georgia Textile Manufacturers Association, which is a association of virtually all the textile manufacturing companies in Georgia. And… we met once a year at Sunrise Resort…back in Florida, and we'd go over things of our mutual interest. And… we would organize lobbying for our interests at the state capitol and at…in Washington. And…those things that were essential for the health of our industry. At one time, the United States sold cotton to internationals at 5 and 6 cents a pound less than they would let us buy, so that gave us an uneven platform. Then, later on when other industries after the Second World War began to produce lots of textiles with brand new machinery that had been provided them by the US…by the United States… aid helped them recover from the war, then they had more modern equip…machinery than we did and then they were competing back with us, the government giving them

cheap cotton and low capital costs…put a quota system and only allowed so much textiles to be imported back into this country. So, we were lobbying hard not to increase those amounts significantly because you can't run a business without a market. And if your market is given to countries with low wages and you've only got a small fraction of profit, you can't survive. During my days at Scottdale, particularly in the 60's and 70's when I calculated it, of every dollar of sales we had 40 cents was labor. The rest of it was raw material and overhead. And, so we had 40 percent of our total cost in labor…and we were only making…2 to 3 cents per sales dollar. You can see how competitive it would be. Then there was also the American Textile Manufacturers Association, which the elected leaders…the Georgia Textile Manufacturers Association, the South Carolina Textile Manufacturers Association, the North Carolina, the Alabama and so forth and the cotton producers would all go to try to see that their interests were considered by the law makers so yes there was…and I could even…and a…as a…a…a superintendent running a factory from the people that I would meet at these conventions if I was having trouble with a process in the plant, I could call up somebody I had met in these conventions, and they would let me come into their plant and learn how they had solved the problem. And, likewise, we'd let them come in and solve the problem at our plant because these workers in the plants that spend their lifetime there…some of them have amazing ideas. I'll just give one example. One idea that was…I can't say it was developed at Scottdale but it was used there for over 40 years, ended up solving a problem in space exploration. When they…after the first man was on the moon and they were…had these space suits that were pressurized because the air outside wasn't pressurized, they found that when a astronaut would bend its arms or knees, that these inflated tubes would collapse and the

collapsing would change the volume in the tube and increase the pressure of air in the tube. They were trying to find a way that they could make a suit that would not collapse when you bend at the elbows and the knees. And, they knew that you could knit a circle, but knitting doesn't make strong fabrics. They make flexible fabrics that'll bend all kind of directions, and they needed the strength of weaving. And they said "well, there's no way to weave a circle." And, they came down to the textile school at Georgia Tech and talked with them, and they said, "no, there's no way to weave a circle." But, the superintendent of our plant happened to be visiting the textile school at the time… no he had… an ex-superintendent that was working somewhere else went there and he heard them talking, and he said, "you can't weave a circle?" They said "no. That's interesting." They said, "why?" He said "Scottdale Mills has been weaving circles for 40 years." So, by this time the technology was at the Georgia Duck and Cordage Mill, Scottdale had shut down, and so mechanics from Georgia Duck and Cordage Mill went to Georgia Tech's textile school and took one of their looms and set it up to weave a circle. And… so that was, you know, something that you wouldn't learn in school but something that […] we could…we were weaving a seed bag to where the edges were woven together, and then we changed the weave... we had a bicycle chain with e…we could put this little bump in the bicycle chain, and every time we went by, it would change the weave and would weave the bottom together. So when we got through, you could just cut it off and you'd have a bag. Turn it inside out and you'd have a very strong bag for expensive seed like alfalfa and things of that nature. You wouldn't need it for corn or wheat, but these grass and hayseeds were very expensive. And, so they would weave these tubes out of…polyester, you know it by dacron, and then they would put a mandrel in it with a

shape to put something on it and on the heat they would form it into a ripple effect, to where it looked like the tube coming out of the back of your dryer.

CP: Ok.

DS: …the corrugated tube…

CP: Mmmhmm

DS: …where you can bend that tube and it won't collapse. And, they made that into some of the uniforms. And, I think they've come up with something different now, but back in the 70's and 80's, say the 80's and 90's, they were using the technology developed at Scottdale Mills…

CP: Hm.

DS: …to weave the joints in astronaut's uniforms. But there were a lot of develops…Scottdale was the first company to ever figure out how to weave corduroy on a basic loom. Everybody said you had to have a real fancy loom to weave corduroy. And, during the Depression when we'd need to weave corduroy, this Hansford Sams was going to Georgia Tech at the time, and he was working in the supply room. And, they put him in the loom, there, and he figured a way to weave corduroy and…corduroy was…became…basic corduroy was woven by that method all over the textile industry.

And, it was developed at Scottdale. So […] different…another thing we could do, we could weave cloth double on a loom and unfold it and have cloth twice the width of the loom. And, I remember we had a lot of business we gave to the Army to make these wide pieces of cloth to use on their targets. They would put this cloth on a target, paste a paper target on it, and people would shoot it, and then they'd bring it down in the hole…they'd paste a patch on it…and set it up…

CP: Hm.

DS: …have a marker show where the…where the bullet went through it. But that's the way targets in the Army would work. I used it when I was in the Army.

CP: Hmm. Please describe the administrative structure at the mill, if you can?

DS: Well, the administrative structure at the mill, there was a president. And, in our plant the president under him had [phone rings] an executive vice president who… [phone rings] had various duties. You would have the sales area [phone rings] and we sold the plant with two or three people, and we were…tremendous volumes…and, we were selling big quantities. And then there would be a…a superintendent of plant, who would run the plant. And, then, under him would be a technical department. And, then, there would be a…the…a head of the weave room, head of the spin room, head of the carding and opening room, and head of the cloth room, and somebody buying cotton. And, then

there would be...somebody running the office and the payroll and book work, things like that. That's basically the structure of the mill.

CP: OK. And as far as the actual production workers, did they have different job titles or were they just…?

DS: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, there would be lots of job titles. You want me to go through all of them?

CP: [laughs] Depends on how many there are.

DS: I'll go through the basic ones.

CP: OK.

DS: OK, there would opening room operators, picker operators, card hands, they call them, drawing hands, fly frame tenders, spinners, winders, walkers, slasher operators,that puts the starch on it, drawing-in hands, weavers, battery fillers to put the little bobbins in that would go in the shuttles, doffers to take the…doffers and the… doffers to take the bobbins off the spinning train, doffers to take the cloth off the looms. Mechanics in each department. Card grinders, spin room mechanics, winder mechanics, loom mechanics. cloth inspectors, lift truck drivers… and lots more, but those are the basic ones.

CP: OK. And you mentioned that you worked at the mill as a youth. When you became vice president, did you ever participate in any production activities?

DS: I was involved with the people all the time inside the plant. And…I would plan the modernization programs. I just remember once that we had…we had to…do our modernization. The company had a policy there'd be no work on Sundays, sort of like Chik-Fil-A. And, it was rigid policy, only emergencies. And, emergencies basically weren't permitted to happen.

CP: [laughs]

DS: I think in 23 years, we had 5 emergencies. Fires, floods…that kind of thing…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …would be an emergency. But, we had everything organized to…to get it done during the week and not be…not shut the plant down. You knew you couldn't work on Sunday. You had to organize it almost like a military campaign that knew exactly what happens. Well, right at…the day before one of these things was to begin the crane operators went on strike. And, so everybody said "well, we're not going to be able to lift these machines up on the top floor." Well, I said, part of my job was…I knew that I was a problem solver. So, I went up Ponce De Leon to a contractor's equipment place and looked around. They had these new cranes that were hydraulic operated with these little

levers routing these cable cranes. And I said, "how long it'll take you to teach me how to operate that crane?'' He said "about 20 minutes." I said, "Get on it." And, so they showed me how to operate this crane, and I called back and told the head of the mechanical department that we're going to start…change equipment. I said "get your people ready, we're going to lift them up." He said, "how you going to do it?" I said, "Get ready, you'll find out when I get there." So, I drove this crane down Ponce De Leon, having only been on it for 20 minutes, and pulled up there and put out the out riggers, and told them to hook up the taglines to the first machine. And, I lifted it up into the second floor, and by this time the master mechanic looked at it, and he said, "Get down from there, Mr. Scott…and let me do it."

CP: [laughs]

DS: So, then, he did it, and we kept on schedule.

CP: OK.

DS: And there was another situation where…this is not exactly the worker level, but I remember one time when we were putting in some new equipment that didn't work, that I worked three days in a row, 24 hours a day. 'Course, I was about dead, but…then another time I was executive vice president and there was a superintendent under me. And, the weave room was having major trouble, mostly related to labor problems. And, the superintendent had fired about 5 different weave room heads. But, you can fire

somebody, and if you can't bring in somebody better, you just make it worse. And it got worse and worse. And, finally, the president of the company called me in. He said, "would you be willing to step aside being executive vice president and go in under the superintendent and see if you can turn the weave room around?" I said "Under one condition." He said, "What?" I said, "You keep the superintendent who hasn't done the job off of my back. Let me work for you, and I'll go in…report in at 6:45, 7 o'clock in the morning and work the 12 hour shifts that it will take. And…standard production is measured in a weave room as to how many times the shuttle crosses all the looms. And, somewhere around 90 to 92 percent of the absolute maximum is what you're expected to get. That number in the shuttle crossings are measured in thousands and a…a pick is a thousand shuttle crossings. You're suppose…we were supposed to have 82 thousand picks a day. When I went in there it was around 46. Almost 50…a lot of that was because of absenteeism…people get really…plant doesn't run, people…are so discouraged they won't come to work. And, so there would be a lot of equipment standing, but what was there was low quality and low production. And, I'd never run a weave room, and I was…actually, I was frightened. I didn't know whether I'd succeed or not. But…and, I told you working people was not my strong suit. I had learned my people skills in the Army and then the Rangers, and it takes a little bit different approach in a factory. But, I could solve problems, and so this was a major problem. So, I went in and got the three overseers that ran the three shifts, and I said, "I've been sent in here by the president of the company to turn this room around." And, I said, "Do you all know what has to happen to turn the room around?" I said, "How long have you been in a weave room?" "30 years." "25 years." "15 years." I said "Do you all know what has to change to turn it

around?" And, they said "yes." They had to say yes, that's their profession. I said "well, I don't." And I said, "This is the way we're going to do it. The three of you are going to decide what has to happen and in which sequence. You all say, 'this has to happen, this has to happen, and this has to happen.' I'm going to make it happen, but you're going to control what we do, but I'm going to make it happen." Well, it didn't pick up right off I was going to make it happen through them, but I was in there for…something around a half a year. And when I came out, the picks had gone from 46 thousand picks to 78 thousand. And, I wanted to stay in until I got them to 82 thousand, but the superintendent above me was getting edgy…

CP: [laughs]

DS: …and he wanted to get me out to where he could go back and be responsible for everything. But, I learned something about managing people. And, I learned it right out of the Bible. Jesus said, "if you are to be great, you've got to be a servant. The one that will be the greatest will be the servant of all." And, he talked about servant leadership, and I'd never been into that before. I was coming through the Army and all, and I was in the boss category. So, I told them, I said, "we are going to change our leadership style." I said, "Who's the most important employee in this weave room?" to these three supervisors. They didn't know what to say. I said "hmm, is it him? Is it us? We'd better not say." So they said "we don't know." I said "you've been here all these years and you don't know who's the most important employee, here?" I said "I know who the most important employee is." They said "who?" I said "It's whoever makes the product that

we can invoice and sell, converting the money to pay everybody else and the electric bill, which was about a million dollars. It was the 5th largest consumer of electricity in DeKalb County, at the time. And…and, I said, "That's the weaver." And, I said, "Each of us and every other employee in the weave room is here to serve the weaver. And, if we serve the weaver well, we'll be successful. And, if we don't serve the weaver, we won't be successful." And, so, I reconstructed all my concepts of management to take 350 people and get them from fighting with each other and blaming each other. "What's wrong?" "It's their fault?" And to…how can we serve the weaver to where her job is easier and that she can make more and better fabric that we can sell? And, That's a long story but it's probably the most significant experience in my 41 years of managing factories. But, it was successful…oh and one other thing. There was only one employee fired in that 6 or 7 months.

CP: Hm. That's impressive.

DS: Mmhmm.

CP: As far as interacting with the workers, did you maintain a formal relationship with them or were you sometimes informal?

DS: Mostly informal.

CP: Mostly informal.

DS: Never w…I never wore a tie.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …and I never ask a man to do any work that I wasn't willing to do myself.

CP: And, did you or your family develop friendships with the workers?

DS: Some of them…I would s…you know…when I got there, people weren't living in the village so much, but they were…some of them traveling from 40 miles away. But I knew, when I was working inside the plant, I knew the names of most of them…knew what was going on in their families. And…yea, I…I…I wouldn't say… I was working 10 – 12…10-12 hours a day and 6 days a week and involved in my church on Sunday. And, during the time that I was superintendent, I wasn't married. I didn't get married until later. So, we were on first name basis, but as far as a lot of social activities…not a lot.

CP: OK. And, the…friendships that you did develop, did they continue after the mill closed?

DS: Yea.

CP: OK. What is your perception of life at the mill for employees?

DS: Most people were working to get a paycheck that would clear the bank and that there weren't any rainy days, not like roofing or construction or something like that. The wages were not on the high end, but if you knew you were going to have 51 weeks of work a year, and frequently overtime when you needed extra money, 'cause if you work 24 hours a day and somebody is absent, you've either got to hire extra people or have people to work over, and you don't know what skills you're going to need. So, most of the time somebody gets to double over either 8 hours or two people 4 hours. Somebody will come stay over 4 hours. Somebody will come in early 4 hours. And, they…many of them became good friends. And, but it…it was hard work, and some of it was dirty work. But, a lot of work is dirty. And, some of the people when we shut the plant down made it out and missed it, and some of them didn't. But, I would say that when the process is ran smoothly, they enjoyed being at work. But, all process don't always run smoothly.

CP: Naturally.

DS: …particularly, when you have a product like cotton that varies like it does. And…but, the…the…the biggest difficulties that people had is when, for whatever reason, the threads broke too much and the machinery broke down too much. When things didn't…didn't run well, people didn't like coming to work.

CP: That makes sense. And, how would you characterize life for you at the mill?

DS: Well, I found that…well, I wanted to do work that I could do exceptional work with less than average effort. As opposed to do less than [phone rings] to do less than average work [phone rings] at more than average effort.

CP: Right.

DS: And, I found that I had the abilities [phone rings] to deal with the kind of problems that were in the plant. [phone rings] Some of the things that would make a good manager, I didn't have, and I eventually learned that. I always thought I'd be Chief Executive Officer someday, and about 20 years into it, I realized I didn't have those gifts, that I was…I had the gifts for a number two, and I could make any number one better, being his number two, but I didn't have the gifts to be a number one.

CP: Were benefits available to employees outside of their salaries and…and the housing?

DS: You know, that kind of thing progresses…progresses when you go back to the early days when I wasn't there. I can't speak to it. I know when I went there, we had medical insurance, but there was no such thing as major medical. And, when someone would have a major operation, which in those days didn't cost an arm and a leg like it does today, what would happen is the people would ask the company for help. And, we would say, "get people in different departments to take a…a collection, and whatever you collect, we'll match." So if it was a minor operation, they'd take up a…a lesser amount. If it was cancer or some major operation, they would take up more. And, whatever

they…whatever the employees did we would at least match. And, that was sort of the…we had basic, but if it went beyond…but we…in those days, it wasn't whatever your expenses are, we'll pay. We'll pay so much per day in the hospital and so much for this or that, so that our costs were controlled.

CP: Right.

DS: And then later on, wise or unwise, we put in a major medical health plan, and that helped, eventually, break the company. I saw the day when our health insurance costs far exceeded our profits. But, we didn't stop it. In 1965, we put in a retirement program, based on a 401K. And, we matched the employees' money at a certain percent, up to a certain percent. And, they could put in the rest. And, I remember putting in that program, and we shut…we…we met with groups of 20 or 30. I was attending meetings in the middle of the night, and all the time through there to present this plan to get people…'cause they had to voluntarily put their own money in it. And, we got a computer program that could access the payroll data and would calculate what would happen if you did 2%, 4%, 6%, on up to 15% of your pay…got the advantage of not having to pay taxes on it. In other words, the government put in some […] not get the taxes. And, then if the stock market… if the investment program did this percent, or that percent, or that per…this is what you'd have at age 65. So, if a person was 55, it wouldn't be much. But, if a person was 28, it would be different. At any rate, it came up that if a person who did 10%...it was like 10%, but I remember the dollars better. An average employee, if they put in $30, which, I think, was $300 a week, yeah, about 10 %, it would

cost them $20, because the government would put in the other $10 from the taxes. And, we were currently making 9.5 % on the investments that they invested. We had professional people doing it. We…at that time, we were making 9.5 %. I remember taking 10% and saying…I figured if you were below 30 and put in that $30 a week, when you were 65, you would have $750,000. And, then, the company had a profit sharing plan in addition to that, which at that time, was putting in about 1/3 of what that was, so that would be another 20…that would be a million dollars. So what it amounted to, if an employee would change their lifestyle and live off of $20 less a week and do it until they were 65, and if we could continue making that 9.5-10% on the investment portfolio and they'd have a million dollars. So how I presented it was, I had this program to print out a sheet for everybody with their name on it and their actual data out of the payroll records showing what they earned calculated all these different ways. And, so, when they would come in, we would hand them this sheet. They would be groggy from working all night or working the evening or something, you know, and another one of these darned meetings that management's doing. And, they'd lay their heads down on the desk, and they, you know, they were not interested at all. And, I had an overhead projector, and I would look around for about a 28-year-old or something…27, 28 year old. And, I said, "Ronnie, let me have your sheet." He said, "What do you want to do with it?" And, I said, "I want to use it to illustrate my talk." Well, he didn't want people to know his personal information. And, he'd look at me. He said, "What do you want mine for?" I said, "Well, Ronnie, I just want to show these people out here how you can become a millionaire." He said "what you talking about?" I said "I want to show them how you can become a millionaire." All these heads start coming up…these sleepy heads start coming

up off of the lunchroom counter. And, he said, "You serious?" I said "Ronnie, I'm dead serious." Out comes the paper. I'd put it on there. And, of course, it's blurred on the screen. And, people don't have their glasses on or something. And, I said, "Ronnie, if you were to put t…tw…if you would change your lifestyle and lived off of $20 less a week and invested it in this program, and we were able to get the returns that we've been getting for the last five years, guess how much you would have when you retired." "$7,500?" Then, everybody's looking at him. "$75,000?" Then somebody up there says, "Hey, that's $750,000!"

CP: [laughs]

DS: And, they looked at me, "is that right?" I said "$750,000." I said, "Ronnie, I lied to you. You won't be a millionaire. You'll just be ¾ of a millionaire. However, the profit sharing plan, you…if you're able to make profits, would add another 250,000. You would have a million dollars.

CP: Right.

DS: And, I said, "You could put more money in there if you want to." Oh, before I said that, to get them all awake, I said, "Well, Ronnie, I told you I was going to tell them how you would become a millionaire. I said, "I got four ways you can become a millionaire." And they're all interested now, nobody is sleepy anymore. I said "you can win the Reader's Digest sweepstakes, and you'll be a millionaire." " Ha ha ha." And, I said, "

Well, there's another way." I said, "you can win the lottery, and you'll be a millionaire." "Ha ha ha." And, I said, "There is another way, Ronnie." He said "what's that?" I said "you can marry a millionaire." Then everybody […].

CP: [laughs]

DS: …and they all went on. And, then I said, "Now there is a fourth way." And, I said, " What it is…" I said, "see this sheet up here? See down there?" I said, "What does it say? It says name." I said, "Can you sign your name there?" He said "yeah." I said "what's that next say? It says percent." I said, "If you put 10% in there, 10% of your wages, which was going to be $30 a week…then I showed him that it would be $750, 000." And…and, he says "I can't hardly live off what I got now, ain't no way I can live off $20 less a week." A bunch of the others said the same thing. And, I said, "OK, you know what we've done? We've narrowed this discussion down to one issue. It's not whether you could become a millionaire; it's whether you could change your lifestyle." And, I said, "So now here is a blackboard or a chart with paper on it." I said, "$20," and I wrote $20 up there. I said, "What…how can you change your lifestyle that would save that?" […] I said "Ronnie, you smoke." He said "yeah." I said, "How many cartons a week do you smoke?" He said, "1 ½." I said, "What does a carton cost?" He said "$10, max 30 or 40." He says, "$10." I said, "Well, Ronnie, if you quit smoking, you could save $15, and now we're only looking for 5." And, I said, "Could you cut back on your beer, $5 worth a week?" He said, "Mr. Scott, I can't cut back on the smoking."

CP: [laughs]

DS: He says, “Ain’t no way. I’ve tried before. But, ain’t no way I could cut back on…I can quit smoking.” I said “Well, Ronnie, that’s no problem.” He said, “what do you mean it is no problem?” I said, “If you don’t quit smoking, you ain’t gonna need a retirement.” [laughs].

CP: Nice. [laughs]

DS: …and everybody laughed, but they got the point.

CP: [laughs] Right.

DS: And, we went into other ways. What if you were to go from $50 deductible to $500 deductible on your automobile policy? What would that save? What if you started bringing your lunch instead of going through whatever you’re going through per lunch? And, they figured they could save 2-3 dollars a day. So, if it’s $3 a day, that’s…that’s 15 or 10 dollars a week. And, I said, “You see, we’re not…” I said, “to…to save a million dollars is not the issue. The issue is will you change your lifestyle to save some of what you’re earning and live off of less.” Well any rate, later on, the people that put these… the consultants that put these things in came and told me, said “twice as man…twice the percentage of your employees, are contributing to their 401K than any other factory we are dealing with.” So, it was just the method that we presented it, in a way to wake them

up and to show them the hard facts. And, then I could go on to say I had a African American fellow that shouldn't have been working the mill. He…he had musical ability, but he couldn't make a living at it. He ended up cutting the grass and hauling the trash from around different places…way below his ability. But he comes in one day, virtually crying. He says "I've been renting a house for $315 a week." And he said, "My daughter's got brain cancer." Another daughter had something about as bad, and his wife was sick. And, he said, "They've notified me they're going to sell the house, and I have to vacate by a certain time. Somebody is going to fix it up and rent it for $600 a month. I can't […] Then, he says, "What's going to happen to me?" And,you know, I felt sorry for him. I sat there and, you know, I'm a problem solver. I said "Roscoe, you got a 401K account?" He said "yeah." I said "how much you got in it?" […] "I don't know." So I called the personnel department, and they told me he had $12,000 but he could borrow 6. I said "why don't you buy a house?" "I couldn't buy a house. I've never bought a house. I don't know anything about buying a house. Who could sell me a house?" I said "go and look around the neighborhood and see if you can find a house similar to what you're accustomed to living at and see what it would cost to buy the house." So, he left. That got him out of my office 'cause I felt sorry for him. And, I called up a bank and I said, "I want to speak your…the person ahead of your real estate department, your mortgage department." And, I said, "I've got this fellow." They said "What kind of credit's he got?" I said "I don't know. I'm sure if you got all his utility bills, you'd find him it was sorry credit. He doesn't manage too well. But, I said, "He's got a steady check, and he's got a 401K account." They said "Oh, no bank in Atlanta wants to loan to somebody like that. So we've got to consortium. All the banks have gone together…" I never heard of

this before in my life and probably you never have, either. "….So, we have a consortium in Atlanta, and every one of us that has somebody like this with bad credit but has steady income; there is only one man in Atlanta that he can borrow from. And we all back him. If he says loan it, we loan it." So I said "I want his name and telephone number. So, they gave me his name, and I called him up. And, finally, when I got him he'd come back and told me what could buy the house for, $30,000 or something like that. I've forgotten what it was. And, I asked this man what kind of a down payment would it take and what would his notes be with his escrow? He figured it up, and it came to $315 a month. And, he needed $2000 down or something like that, when he had 6 he could borrow. So he came in and I said, "You can buy that house." He said, "How?" I said, "Because of your 401K account." I said, you can borrow to buy a house, but then you'll have to pay back that debt by taking more out of your thing." And he said, "What's it going to cost me a month?" And I told him. "Really?" He couldn't believe it. So, long story short, he buys the house and moves in. 'Course, he comes praising me. I said, "Look, don't praise me. You made a decision some years ago. And, because you made a decision to save money, you can solve your own problem. I didn't do it. Sure, I found the answer for you, we worked together." So, about 3 months later, he comes back, crying again. He says "The pipes in the house are no good. They are all bursting. I don't know whether it was that blue plastic that was no good or whether it froze in the cold weather." And I said, "What'd it cost to fix it?" "Our plumber said $1,800." I said, "Well take the $1,800. You can borrow 6000, you'll borrow 2. There's another 1800." So, he did it and fixed it. And, he was still working there, living in that house when the company sold in '98. So, we had that. We had one week vacation. At the end of 5 years, they got 2 weeks vacation. At the

end of 15 years, you got 3, and that…that held for me, as well as them. I worked there, but I hardly ever took the 2 weeks. 'Cause the vacation week…when the whole plant shut down, we did maintenance that we couldn't do…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …with the plant running. So until I got married, I really didn't have any social life, much. I never dated. I'd go work at a camp or something for a week, and that'd be it. I took boys out cave exploring and mountain climbing, things like that. Today, they'd probably investigate me

CP: [laughs]

DS: …for molesting boys or something.

CP: I would hope not, but you're right. [laughs]

DS: I never thought about it back then…

CP: No one did.

DS: One of my cave explorer guys that I went out a lot with was John Pruitt of Channel 2.

CP: Oh, really?

DS: Yeah.

CP: [laughs]

DS: …when he was a kid. John Pruitt and I entered a place in a cave a mile and a half under a mountain that we know we're the first two persons in the history of the creation of the world to enter.

CP: Hmm.

DS: I told that story with…like that with him once, and he said, "You were second." (Laughs)…

CP: (Laughs)

DS…I was one step behind him.

CP: Wow, that's a great story.

DS: But, anyhow, it was a…we did pioneer exploring. I had my Ranger background, and these guys were good.

CP: Oh, OK.

DS: Most of them were Eagle Scouts. And, they graduated from Eagle Scouts, and what are they going to do next but do that? Then, I…I was called on by the State Patrol once on a cave rescue and found 3 boys that'd been lost for 3 days.

CP: Hmm.

DS: I was the one that found them. That's, sort of, one of the highlights. But, there was a 10-year period, back there, between when I started working and when I got married that I did most of that wild stuff.

CP: (Laughs).

DS: Although, at 76, last week, I took my 14-year old grandson on 40 zip lines and 25 cable bridges. So I ain't lost it all.

CP: Oh, so you…you participated in that.

DS: I went with him on every one.

CP: Wow. (Laughs). That's impressive for me. And, I'm only in my 30's.

DS: There's a place in Banyan Mills…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …south of Douglasville and c…and Carrolton, that's got a real professional top flight situation. And they told me they'd had a 90-year-old go through some of their zip lines.

CP: Hmm…that's impressive.

DS: They said, though, that their extreme zip lines, that I was the oldest person to ever gone through it.

CP: OK, well congratulations. [laughs]

DS: [laughs]

CP: I…I've been in the healthcare field for quite a few years, and I've come across many people who worked in, not necessarily just textile mills, but many different mills, that are developing respiratory illnesses. Was there a high incidence of respiratory illness at the mill?

DS: OK, you're asking about byssinosis. Byssinosis got its name coming out of the coal fields, where they had black lung, which they called something –osis. I've forgotten what they called it. And, everybody said that you got byssinosis from working a textile mill. Well, we had a mill that ran a lower grade cotton, which meant the dust levels were higher. And, if you had a problem, we should have had it worse. Well, the government said that 35% of our people would have byssinosis after a certain period of time. Well, the government is talking about lawsuits and medical expenditures, because we were very concerned about the lawsuits, as well as effect on people. And, we like all the other textile mills and in conjunction with working with them through this Georgia Textile Association, were interested in looking into it. When the government passed these OSHA laws that said we had to filter the air to get down to such-and-such a particulate coming out of the air. Well, our industry spent $2 billion trying to meet these requirements. And, I worked my tail off trying to meet those requirements, and I couldn't. And we did lots of things to filter the air. I'd done lots of things to filter the air before they ever passed the OSHA thing. In fact some of the men in the opening room…I remember when I set this thing up. Before I'd been there 2 years, I went in there and I couldn't stand it. I'd figured out how I thought I could get the dust out of the air. It was blowing out of the machines where they would open the cotton and blend it. And the machines were kind of enclosed. And I figured I could seal the machines and put pipes out the back and put a negative pressure inside the machine and make the machines leak in.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …and then take those pipes and run them through a filter. And, I got approval to spend the money and spent it up. And, the day I turned it on, I stood there with the workers who lived in there, and we watched as from the floor the air cleaned clear. And, we could just see it until it finally passed our heads to where you could hardly see across the room from the dust to where it just looked clean.

CP: Wow.

DS: And they said that...any rate, I had these machines and did all I could in the rooms that were the worst problem, and there was no way on earth I could meet it. And, frustrated, I took the equipment out in the parking lot, way away from the mill. And, I couldn't meet it out there, either.

CP: Hm.

DS: It was…It was ridiculous.

CP: Right.

DS: The standard put together by these long-haired…

CP: [laughs]

DS: …Ivy League lawyers, coming out writing rules for Washington. But, still, what was byssinosis? So, the textile people had a big convention in Greenville, SC that I went to. And, we got the government medical people, the doctors, that we could…they could make their presentation, that we could ask questions. And, our questions was, after they made their presentation, "How…at our level, how could we diagnose byssinosis to tell if we have a problem?" He said, "How do you diagnose the problem?" I heard this with my own ears. And, his answer was, "Well we see if you've got bronchitis." And, he went down through all of the various lung diseases. "And, if you don't have any of those, we deduce that if you've got a lung problem, then you've got byssinosis."

CP: Mnmhm.

DS: Now, how would you like to be in our position when told that?

CP: Right.

DS: And, so, we resisted full testing of all employees for reasons that it would the end of us if…particularly, if our competitors didn't do it. And, finally, the government passed a law and dictated that every one of us had to do a test in-house to determine everybody that had any compromised lung function. And, then the people we identified with any compromised lung function, we had to send them to professional people for analysis. We sent ours to the Emory Lung Clinic. There were 650 employees, and the Emory Lung

Clinic…the head of Emory Lung Clinic told me, after examining everybody that had any dysfunction, that we had 2 byssinotics in the plant, both of them reversible,

CP: Hm.

DS: …and we had one of the dirtiest cotton. And, I've got to go back to the bathroom. Turn that off for me.

CP: OK

DS: The head of the lung clinic at Emory also told me that, at that time, and many, many mills were sending him their people, just like we did, that he had not yet met a confirmed byssinotic that wasn't a problem smoker.

CP: Mm.

DS: And, he said, "I'm not saying that smo…that smoking causes byssinosis, but I'm saying that smoking, apparently, makes people more susceptible to whatever it is in the air in textile mills that cause it." Now…So, basically, that was the end of our major problem with byssinosis. We found out that the best that science had to diagnose at that time, that out of 650 people, we didn't have 220 people, we had 2 people.

CP: Right.

DS: …and that both of them could…and one of them, I remember, was in the weave room, which is the least likely…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …and she was not a smoker. The one that was in a dusty area…we only had to move one person, basically. Now, having said that, do I believe that there is something in the air that causes a problem with people? Yes, I do. I have sensed it myself because I was out there all the time in the same dust that all of them were. And, I could sometimes feel something. My brother, who became a preacher, had no interest in the mills. He had a more serious problem, but he was just working in the lab doing testing one summer. He worked one summer in the mill, and that was it for him. He knew he wasn't going to spend his life in the mill. So, I know there's something, and that…what I've learned since that it's not the cotton lint, that it is a dust that comes off of the…of some of the trash that's in the cotton.

CP: Mm.

DS: They come off of some of the insecticides they use, but the government way, way overblew it. I'm sure with the lawyers that were making all of the money off of the coal mines, which had a legitimate problem with silicosis, with the silica off of the dirt and the coal dust that has destroyed many persons' lungs and life. Now what happened in the

industry, when somebody brings up this kind of a health problem, you've got a whole industry out there with all the capital investment that you can't change [snaps fingers] like that. But, knowing that we'd been threatened once, and that we'd spent $2 billion trying to get the dust out of it, the machinery manufacturers went to work, and they began to make all the machines that vented inward and came out through filters, and they greatly reduced the process. And in the process of doing that, they found ways to make the machinery more productive. Take a card, in my day, 6-8 pounds was about the production per hour on a card. They would comb it, you'd have this little…a film coming out of it that had been combed, and got…the trash fell to the bottom , and you had something that would suck the trash out. They developed a card that could do equal quality for close to 100 pounds an hour. So, you…when you went to modernize, you were buying 1/10th of those number of machines, you're taking up much less floor space, you had much less air conditioning, and, basically…and much less air to circulate, and you had all these savings. So you ended up greatly reducing whatever the concentration of whatever it was in the air at no great, crippling expenditure by doing it over the natural life of the machinery, rather than being forced to say if you don't have it by this date, you are out of business. The other thing that some of us did was to separate all of the cotton out of the mill and not allow a fiber of cotton in the mill to process into yarn. If we needed cotton in a fabric, we would buy it from another mill. And, we would be processing dacron, and nylon, and rayon and they don't have a problem. So we…we could get rid of the problem that way and then spend the money on just a few […]. Over the period of years, it became a non-problem but it was a real scary problem when it went on. In my entire lifetime in the mill…when I went back after that and tried to find out

who had real serious lung problems, there was one person that I, I think eventually died of a lung disease, and he was a carpenter working outdoors, separate out of the mill. He was the carpenter that maintained the village, when we had the village, but he lived to be 90. So, you know, after we all tested our people, and most of the mills got the same kind of reports that I did from the professionals, not from the lawyers, it seemed to fade away. The smoking seemed to be the bigger problem. But, I'm not saying there wasn't a problem, because I have felt it, myself, but it's not …when they could not…when they told us that they couldn't diagnose it except if they couldn't figure it was anything else that they were going to then say that everybody else that had a problem, that we had to pay for…that ain't right.

CP: Right.

DS: In fact, when OSHA came through, that was another […] for us, not for the…I'm not talking about anybody else. We had a very…we were tied in with all these other textile people through the Georgia Textile Manufacturers Association, and we had safety programs in all the mills. And, we worked with the Liberty Mutual and the other insurance carriers that paid our work injuries, and so forth, and we competed them and one another. And, then, the… and the…the insurance companies had their professional safety engineers that would come through and work with us. So, we had a good program, and it was a professionally designed program. And, it was one that results were published. In other words, what…my results were were available to every other mill, and what their results were. So, it was a risk of embarrassment or it was something that our

bosses would kick our rear ends, if we didn't deal with it. And, when OSHA came through, I remember the first inspector gave me a list of 168 infractions. And, I was required, by law, to sit down and for him to read me all of these infractions. I think I went to sleep.

CP: [Laughs]

DS: But, in looking at it, I saw something. And, I'm… tell you this story, not that the whole program was no good, but it was like the byssinosis program, it was…it was a problem. When he got through, I said, "How could you tell that these machines are not grounded, electrically grounded." He said, "I have this little box I put on there, and if goes, "buzz," it's not grounded." I said, "I don't believe the box can do that." Well, he says, "Look, how stupid," you know, "he was raised out in the country somewhere." I said, "No, I just…I don't believe it." And, so he was frustrated, and of course, I was trying to get him real frustrated. And then, he said, "let's go out." We were in the office. I said, "You've said here that this machine here," which was an adding machine, "…Is that machine you've got listed here that it's not grounded." I said, "Try your box on it." It buzzes. He said "See there, it's not grounded." I said, "Yeah. See there, your box is no good." He says, "Why?" I said, "Look at the machine. It's a hand-operated adding machine. It's not got an electric motor on it.

CP: [laughs]

DS: [laughs] And, he looked at it. And, then, I sat there and I said, "you know, what's my congressman going to say when I call him up and tell him that all these billions of dollars that he sent to put our share of the work to make us have safe companies, and you're paying a big salary and a big expense account to come down and tell me that my hand-operated adding machine isn't grounded. What's he going to say?" And, of course, now he starts crawling. And, when I had walked around with him, I, literally, would hear him under his breath. When he would find something, he'd say, "gotcha… gotcha…"

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …and, 'course, he's just making me boil, and so this was my chance. But, what happened from then on, he seemed to not want me to talk to my congressman, for some reason.

CP: [laughs]

DS: He got very cooperative, and we worked together, and worked through the whole thing, and solved it all…and solved all 168 things, without any fine or anything. And, five years later I checked in the safety records in our plant and in the mill…and in the textile industry, as a whole, had been unaffected by all the OSHA expenditures. Now, if we had been a construction company digging ditches, and the ditches caved in on people and don't have any organized safety things, it'd be different. But, that was…the government regulations was a major frustration to me. And, of course, I'm not involved ,

anymore, but those are just…when you hear about regulations that industry is objecting to and raising canes about. Another area that I was involved with on with on this textile association, that didn't involve us because we didn't have a finishing plant, was the pollution that comes from textile finishing plants, which in the textiles was the largest employer and the largest sales dollar of any manufacturing plant in Georgia, during most of my, if not all, of my career. So, the order had to be finished, so…and, all of this would have effluent coming out, and there were problems. But what happened there as opposed to these other things, instead of the New England lawyers getting together, Georgia Tech and the engineers from the textile companies and the government people got together. And in working together, they came up with progressive ways to solve the problem. Much of it had to do with recycling effluent, saving the cost of heating it, filtering it and re-using it to where the cost of cleaning up the rivers and streams was a very minor cost that the companies could come up with savings through the engineering at Georgia Tech and other places, and this would be on a progressive basis. And, so you could do it without destroying your industry. One last thing on the regulation, Whittier Mills, when we were put out of business, a law was passed at the time they changed the…the…the laws that allowed imports to come in at higher volume, that if your business was destroyed by these ch…these new laws affecting imports, that there were remedies at law from the government. There were 8,000 people who filed requests for consideration that they said that… most of them had high-paying lawyers doing it. Hansford Sams, our president, put together his report himself, went to Washington without a lawyer, and made his presentation. There were 15 cases that were granted the benefits from the law. He was one of the 15. This law gave us a grant to have a feasibility study to start a new

business. It gave us something else, I've forgotten. And, then, it gave us low-interest loan. And, I think we could borrow money at 4% to build and start a new business. The carpet industry, the tufting industry had been the biggest growth in textiles in the history of America in Dalton, Georgia. And it's a wide-grade tufting. It's got…the carpet tufting's got 8 needles per inch. The next step was fine gr…fine-gauged tufting, with 25 needles per inch to make wall coverings and upholstery material. And, this was at the cutting edge of that. We thought, "Well, maybe we could get into the fine-gauge tufting." So, we found property near Winder. We found a man who was vice president of fine-grain tufting machine in LaGrange and offered him about 25 or 30% of the stock if he would come and run it for us, since he had the technical know-how. We got a list of all the machinery and put all the organization together and planned the business structure of the business, which we knew when we were running several businesses. And, we passed everything but the…but the requirement that the government had at that time for cleaning up the effluent. And, we looked at it. And, we…what had…at that time, we'd have to clean up the water much cleaner than it was when we took it out of the river. And, there were only 2 methods that we could clean the water up. One was reverse osmosis, and the other was distillation, and the cost per gallon of cleaning up was more than the cost of a gallon of gasoline, at that time. There's no way you could operate anything with that kind of expenditure, and we could not start this plant without solving the problem. And, this is what was presented to us: "You've got to give us an answer for cleaning up the effluent by the 15th of September to meet the laws and the requirements. Well, the laws and requirements of the time…there was no way that you could do it and properly run a business. Well, they were going to produce new regulations that were coming out the 15th

of October. So, we were required to meet…to give a plan to meet the requirements coming out the 15th of October by the 15th of September or lose all of the help. The 15th of October were delayed until April the next year, and we lost our…we lost our benefit from the law, which you can imagine how we felt about it. But, in the long run, that was in 1973, and this horrendous recession came in ’74 and ’75, when the Arabs raised the price of the oil. And, so, we were very thankful that we weren’t sitting with a big investment to pay back during the recession…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …of ’74 and ’75. But, again, it just is a specific situation where industrialists have a problem with government regulations. What happened? I told you that the engineering schools and the manufacturers and the government went together and came up with a solution that gave the Georgia textile industry the best record of any industry in Georgia of cleaning up their effluent. It’s not that the government shouldn’t…shouldn’t insist that it be cleaned up, it should…they should do their job and let the professionals do their job and they can participate. But, these…byssinosis and the cleaning up the air in the textile mill, the manufacturers and the scientists were not involved. It was the government regulators.

CP: Right. You mentioned that there were smokers at the mill. Were there a lot of smokers?

DS: About half of them.

CP: About half. That's pretty significant.

DS: This was the same when I was in the Army.

CP: [laughs]

DS: …about half the soldiers smoked.

CP: There you go.

DS: About 50% of the adult populations that I were involved with…I don't know that there were of half of them smokers, but it…it was whatever the population was.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …Probably worse than the population, 'cause were not…we would get… a lot of our employees were coming from the lower echelons of society.

CP: Right. Did they actually smoke inside the buildings at the mill?

DS: Yes. We had smoking areas because the fire was a very serious problem. Cotton…we were 100% cotton at Scottdale. Cotton is made of cellulose. Wood is made of cellulose. If you take wood and shave it to as fine as a cotton fiber and dry it to 6% moisture regain, that's how flammable cotton is. Another illustration of how flammable cotton is: we had an emery wheel that when you grind metal on it, sparks come off; you've seen sparks off the…?

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …and unwisely, we had it next to a wall, and something in the walls can get covered with lint. Once, I saw the lint on the walls set on fire by that emery wheel. I grabbed a fire extinguisher and ran down the wall trying to put it out. I could not run as fast as the fire went down that wall.

CP: Wow.

DS: Now what happened, the fire burned the lint off the wall and went out.

CP: OK.

DS: But, that's how flammable cotton is. So fires were always a problem. And, I've seen lots of fires, and I learned to fight fires. I learned to train people to fight fires, and we could handle it. Only a few times, we ever had to call the fire department. If it got in the

roof, I called the fire department or if it was a warehouse fire, I called the fire department. But…we had an arsonist in the plant one time trying to burn us down. But, the day-to-day work most of the fires would come from the opening of the cotton as it came through, if…if there was a bolt or a nut or a piece of metal, it would strike a spark in some of these beaters, then it'd set the thing on fire. We had sprinklers and all those…all the things that handled it. And, the cotton would be sucked by vacuum. We would have something like that. And, we'd have a magnet here and a magnet, powerful magnet that would pull out all these metal pieces. We learned to handle it, but it was a problem.

CP: OK.

DS: …but not from smoking. I don't think I ever know of a significant fire because we had those areas set off and controlled.

CP: OK.

DS: …but there were a lot of smokers.

CP: [laughs]

DS: …and particularly in the earlier days. It got less in the later years, but chewing tobacco and spitting.

CP: Mm.

DS: I heard of one textile manager: he was so frustrated nobody paid attention to his signs, “don’t spit on the floor.” The only way he got them to read his signs: he had one sign that said, “Don’t spit on the floor. Be a sport and try the ceiling.” [laughs]

CP: [laughs] That’s pretty clever.

DS: And…and, the motors under the machines,

CP: Mmhm.

DS: the motor would have kind of a cowling where air would be sucked in the circular motor. When you go in and change those motors, these cowlings on those motors would be that thick and snuff at tobacco where people there would spit on the motor,

CP: [groans]

DS: …and it was so hot it would try instantly, they were just nasty. [laughs]

CP: Yes, it sounds nasty. Were mill-sponsored activities provided for the employees outside of work?

DS: Yes, in the early years, and no in the later years. In the early years, the whole social life was centered on the community, on the mill village 'cause everybody was in it. The mill built a clubhouse, and so boy scouts and girl scouts and other activities were in…in the clubhouse. Medical lectures by…mother had been 15 years a nurse when she married my father, who was 45 years old when he got married, and she would come and teach the women in the village how to do hygiene. She had a Master's in…she had an RN and a Master's in nutrition and hygiene from Columbia University, in New York, although she was raised on a homestead in Western Canada. So, my father was part of Southern aristocracy and married a sharecropper's daughter. The cultures, they would be like two rivers intersecting. Sometimes there is a little turbulence.

CP: Mmhm. [Laughs] I'm sure.

DS: The big activity was the baseball league, and the whole village was built around a full-sized baseball field. And, every afternoon, everybody in the village would sit around the bank, and the women and the children…the children would play and the women would talk. They would socialize. There was no televisions, no radios. You know, they did their knitting and crocheting and what have you, and all those kind of things, and there were churches. But, that baseball team was the life of the village, and everybody knew everybody that played, and everybody was hoping that somebody was going to make the major leagues. And, one person from Whittier Mills did make the major leagues.

CP: Mmm.

DS: …so he was known in all the leagues, and they played the other mills, all around. And…and I remember that, that was during my early days. And, what put an end to it was the automobile.

CP: Mmm.

DS: Once the kids could cruise the automobile, they were not interested. An automobile also meant that you could hire people from a much larger radius, and many of them didn't live in the village. So, somewhere in the late '40s, was the end of the…after the war, there was the end of the…the very active social life of the village, related to the mill. The mill would give everybody a turkey or ham for Christmas and… but, those would be the primary…and…and the mill provided the medical care up until when the county health department took over, provided the schooling until the county took over the schooling. But, the automobile changed everything, probably for the better.

CP: Speaking of innovations at Scottdale Mill. What is meant by the term "pockets"?

DS: Well, to be honest with you, I never heard the word, but looking at this newspaper write-up, the women in the weave room took a scrap piece of cloth and made an apron with pockets in it to put their scissors and their…their reed hook and their scissors and

their other things in the pockets of this apron. And, that's, apparently, what was called by pockets. I always heard it called an apron.

CP: Now, was that something that you could find in the other mills in the area or is that something that people at Scottdale Mill came up with?

DS: No, I think it…I think you could see it at other mills, too.

CP: Ok. Now, speaking of people that you remember from the mill that you may still be in contact with or may not, do you…what can you say about JP Woods?

DS: JP Wood and his sister were born to a lady who was, I think, a weaver in a mill in LaGrange, Georgia. And, her husband left her, and she moved to Scottdale in the village and got a job in the mill. And, her son JP was…she, apparently, was bright, and both of her children were bright. And, JP, J they called him, was raised in the village. He moved into the Scottdale village when he was 6 years old. And, he grew up, and my father and others would tell me he probably broke as many windows in the mill by throwing rocks through them as any other little boy around there, because it was covered in windows, and he was a little boy and, you know, there wasn't any activities, except what boys do. When he grew up, his mother had been in the mill, and he didn't want to work in the mill, and so he became an insurance salesman, didn't go to college, at that time. And, he sold insurance to the mill people and then to the Black community, which was separated on the other side of the railroad track, in what's called debit insurance, where you would

pick up 25 cents a week from these people. One of the people he sold to was the local fortune teller, whose name was Toby Grant. And, Toby Grant, on Fridays and Saturdays, would have a line around her house, including people from as far away as Buckhead. But, she was…she had a very strong reputation as fortune teller. And, he was one of her clients. And, J has told me many a story about Toby Grant. But any rate, there was a man who was superintendent of the spinning room named Johnson. And, Johnson had 3 boys that worked in the mill, and he also had the prettiest girl in the neighborhood. And, J fell for Thelma Johnson, and Thelma Johnson ended up being my father's secretary. And, Thelma Johnson told J he couldn't marry her unless he agreed to go…to get a college education and do something with himself. And so, this guy who didn't have much interest in college, he started going to night school because he wanted to marry Thelma. And, so Thelma became Thelma Wood. And, they needed a salesman 'cause they were…they were looking for a salesman, and my mother told my father, said, "What are you doing looking for a salesman?" Says, "You won't find anybody that's a better salesman than J down there. You're taking care of his wife."

Mrs. Scott: You're not starving to death?

CP: I'm OK.

MS: It's dark.

DS: …and so my father began to look at it and said, "you know, probably…" And, so, anyway, they hired him as a salesman, and he got through night school and college. And, he…you know, he was a…he was a person well-met, and he became a salesman that sold Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, U.S. Rubber Company, Goodyear, Goodrich, people like that. And, he worked on…when the company closed down, he was in his 70s and retired.

MS: This is that City Mortgage thing.

DS: You go ahead and take it.

MS: Hello.

DS: Tell him…tell him…find out how I can contact him.

MS: Hello.

DS: …and…

MS: Hello?

DS: ..but, he was one of only two salesmen for the company. And, but he was a…he came out and…he ended up being a vice president of the company. But, he…once…and they lived on Briarcliff, where Briarlake dead ends into Briarcliff. If you go east from

there, on the right hand side, the corner house that's got a huge rock in the front yard, they built that house. That was their house until he died. He reached down to pick up a grandchildren…a grandchild, and all the blood rushed to his head or something, and he stood up and fainted and fell over backwards, and his head hit the driveway, and it killed him.

CP: Hm.

DS: But, J knew everybody. J knew all the judges. If we had employees that got in trouble with the law, it would be J that would get me or something, and we'd go up and […] law. There's a…there's a cemetery over here called Washington Cemetery, and there's a church on the edge of the property, and there is a grave there with the name of Henry Hill, raised on Glendale Avenue in Scottdale. And, I knew Henry Hill's father. He was Joe Hill, and he was the head deacon at the Norman Grove Baptist Church, across the street from his house, his house isn't there. But, he was…never been to school, and sometimes he'd ask me to witness his "x" when he would sign a legal paper. But, I was good friends with Joe. I was over there sitting on the porch with him when he was 101 years old, the year he died. I said "Joe, what's the oldest memory you can come up with?" And, he said, "Well, I don't know if it's a memory, but I remember being a little…ti…tite," he called it. "and a government man rode up on horseback with a fancy uniform and told us all to gather around, and my mother took me up there, and he read to us the Emancipation Proclamation." I said, "Joe, nobody else is ever going to tell me this. I want you to tell me everything you can remember." Well anyway, it was Joe's son

Henry…and a police took him behind him for speeding, and he got scared and took out down Memorial drive and outran the police to his home in Scottdale. But, by that time, there were about 8 police on his tail, and there were 8 blue lights circling his house on Glendale Avenue. He goes in his house and comes out with a shotgun, doesn't fire it. His father sees it, and he comes out there and, "give me that gun." And…he gave him the gun, and he says, "Now, you've got to turn yourself over to them." So they took him in and put him under the jail, I guess. But, so Joe comes to J and says, "Can you do anything for my boy?" And, J and I went up there, and I remember the judge was a real tough judge. He was the judge that put Martin Luther King in jail and accused him of drunken driving and wouldn't let him out when Bobby Kennedy sprung Martin Luther King out of jail. It probably resulted his…in…in his brother getting elected President of the United States. But any rate, that was the judge. He was hard-nosed. And, we went there trying to plead in Henry Hill's behalf, and this judge wasn't too anxious, but finally he says, "Well J, you tell me what to do." And J said, "I'd sentence him to 5 years in prison, charge him $400 that he has to pay off with his own money, so much per month, and I would not require him to serve his sentence and put him on probation for 5 years, subject to any other problem." He said "J, J, J, you'd make a good judge." And, so that's what he did. I went over there and saw that grave, where he died in his 60s, and I called up his sister and brother. I said, "Did Henry ever have any more problems after that?" She says, "Not a bit." She says, he drove truck all his life," and said, "he had…he was active in his church and never had another problem with the law his whole life." And, I could give you a few more things like that with J. But, J was our contact with the judicial system and others because he supported their elections. But, he was a people person in anything and

anything involving people. He loved it. His daughter married a man that had a leading jazz band around the South, for his day and age. And, his wife, Thelma, got sick and was in…confined to bed for 10 or 12 years, and he looked after her 'til she died…until he died, and then she died shortly after that. So that's…but, J…J was a great guy, and he was a product of the village.

CP: Who was John Wells?

DS: John Wells was an African American, and he had, in his early 20s, got in trouble with the law, and he was in jail. I don't know what the circumstances were, but the master mechanic…John had worked on road building equipment, and he…and he got put in jail. I know what for but I'm not going to s…well, he was running liquor. And, our master mechanic sprung him out of jail and gave him a job. When Scottdale shut down, he was the oldest…he…he…he had the highest seniority of any employee. He worked the rest of his life, and he never again had any problem with the law. He was kind of the utility man in the machine shop and a night watchman. People had…some would make, per hour, twice as much as he would make, and he would end up with the biggest check in the payroll, week after week, time after time, because he would always do overtime. He could run the boiler, and if the boiler flamed out in the middle of the night, at 3 a.m., somebody's got to get the boiler cranked up. You'd call someone, "no, I can't come." You'd call John, and all you'd hear, "yes, sir" and he'd be there to get it going. So, he call him, and he would end up working 80 hours a week, with 40 of it at overtime. So, that would be equivalent of his pay at 100 hours. But, you could trust him with anything.

He was faithful. He was unflappable. One of the problems in being an employer and running a business is employees try to take advantage of you on injuries. And, if they get hurt at home, they'll do their best…many of them will do their best to say it happened on the job and make you pay worker's compensation. And, one of the big problems of justice in America, not the worst because justice for the poor is probably the worst, but as far…it's just as unjust to not give justice to the wealthy as it is to not give justice to the poor, both's unjustice. It's common knowledge that a company like ours, facing a jury in a workman compensation case virtually never wins. We probably had hundreds of cases that the insurance company did, and I can only remember winning one, and John Wells was the person who testified in our favor. This man claimed that…came in Monday morning, which is a bad time for workman compensation cases. Early Monday morning a lot of people report hurt. This man said he had hurt his hip or broke his hip or damaged his hip pressing down a lever on a spinning frame, early Monday morning. So, John Wells told us that he saw the man trying to leave early on Saturday, climbed the fence and jumped off the top of the fence down on the ground and grabbed his hip and was limping off. So, John is called to testify at the trial, and the lawyer representing this man expects to win because he always did. And he said "John, that was 6 months ago. How can you…you can't remember that that was the Saturday before this Monday, when he reported that." "Yes, sir, I remembers." "Well, you…just be honest, a minute. You can't remember." "I remembers." And, five or six times, that's all they get a, "I remembers." And, the whole group there, the courtroom and the jury are getting interested, and he finally says, "Tell me, John, how you could possibly remember that that was the Saturday before the Monday that he reported that." "I remembers 'cause that was the Saturday that

Mr. Scott's bull got out, and he came and asked me to put a brad in his halter." [laughs] And, the whole courtroom burst into laughter, and when the jury voted, they found for the company. To my knowledge, that's the only one we ever won in court. [laughs]

C: [laughs]

DS: Most of them settled out of court. But anyway, when the mill closed up, and I'd laid off 650 people, less one, it was John. And, John would look after the sprinkler system and do the watchman at night, turn the watchman's keys. And, then when we eventually sold the property, I hired him to drive for my mother after she'd had too many accidents and was in her 80s. And, he would take her to the spa, and she would work out on all the machines and swim. And, then he would take her back to Wesley Woods. And, then he got cancer. He lived over, off of Memorial Drive. My wife was from Lookout Mountain, which is upscale in Chattanooga, and we went to visit John's home, and my first wife came out and she says, "I'm really surprised." She said, "They had to have a decorator to design the interior of that house." I said "Well, let's go ask him." We asked him, and he said, "oh yeah, we got Rich's to do us a decoration plan." He said, "We just…we got some…had money for some curtains. We just do a piece of the plan here, a piece of the plan here." And, so they had handled themselves well, and they had four children, and one was a nurse, and one was a school teacher, and one was a professional iron man, and one was a drunk. And, I'd hired that drunk John Wells Jr. and…probably 20 times. I'd done anything for John. And, eventually, we talked, and he said, "Mr. Scott," he said, "you don't understand." He said, "I don't have any friends that aren't like me." And, he

said, “If I quit drinking, I would have to change all my friends.” But, he ended up going to the Atlanta Union Mission Farm in Athens, and to my knowledge, he spent the rest of his life there. I guess, made friends with the people that ran this farm through Atlanta Union Mission. In John’s last days when he had cancer, I went over there with my two boys. And, we were sitting there, and my boys, they liked him ‘cause he’d helped them drive a tractor. One of them was driving a tractor for me, and he got it hooked around a tree and couldn’t get it out. And, he called John. John came up and helped him, so they…they were good friends. And, John kept talking about his yard, and he couldn’t get his boys to clean the yard up, and it was covered with kudzu. And, I got home, and my two sons says, “Let us go there. We can clean up his yard for him.” He had about an acre yard. And, so they went over and cleaned up his yard and all the kudzu and cut it down, and got it loaded on a truck for him to haul off. And, when I left, he says, “I just can’t believe it. My boss’s sons have just done my yard.” [Laughs]

CP: [Laughs]

DS: [laughs] But, then he died. He had a wonderful wife, and she worked in the office running mimeograph machine, making copies and forms and things, doing whatever they needed in the office. But, a great guy, and he was a personal friend.

CP: A nice story. Who is Robert Smith?

DS: Robert Smith was in the Army in Europe, and he came out, and I think it was 1946. He went to work at the mill 'course that's 12 years before I did. And, when I got there, I soon learned that he was an excellent loom fixer. And, many times when I would get frustrated, including the time when I went in to run the weave room, if I didn't know what to do or there was a conflicting idea, he would tell me what had to be done to fix something, and he was always right. He's the best loom fixer I ever met, and in his later life, I remember him telling…he said, "Yeah," he said, "I know everything I've known all my life," but he says, "as you get older, it's harder to get up and down." He said, "Fixing looms you got to get up and down." So, he says, "and I can't do what I used to could. So, sometimes I would hire a student with mechanical ability if we had to overhaul a whole bunch of looms, and he could supervise." And, he says, "I can show them what to do," and he says, "they can get up and down like I can't get up and down." But, he…he was a good fellow. I've seen him recently, but he still lives in the house that he lived in back then, on Stone Mountain-Lithonia Road, across the railroad track in a big house and everything kept perfectly in order. But, the best…the…the loom fixers are top-skilled in the textile spinning and weaving, and he's the best loom fixer I've met in 41 years.

CP: And, Evelyn Fortner, what can you tell me about her?

DS: Evelyn Fortner's father worked in the mill, and she was 1 of 7 sisters, several of whom married people from the village or the community. And, she married Horace Fortner, who ran slashers, which put starch on the machines. And, in his early 60s he had

a heart attack and died. She had two daughters…she had one daughter and a son. I went to Avondale High School with her son. Her daughter was younger. But, she had lived all of her life in the village, went to the school run by the factory and then was a student in Avondale Grammar School…at Scottdale Grammar School the first year the county operated the school. And, she just said there was no life better than living in the village when she grew up young and that she was going to live there until she died, and she lived there until she died. She had worked in the spinning room, and then she went into the laboratory. And, when we would get a new fabric, she had learned to analyze the fabric and come up with all the technical information that we could duplicate the fabric, from the weights of the yarn to how many counts per inch, the type of…how much twist was in it, how much shrink and contraction. And, she would give us the technical information that we would put in a book that we could always duplicate that yarn and many, many other laboratory functions. And, when Scottdale shut down, she went to the Duck Mill, in the laboratory at the Duck Mill, but active in the Ingleside Presbyterian Church. It was reported that anytime a young kid, usually a boy, would get upset with his parents and run off away from home, that he would end up with Evelyn. And, she would get him back, put his head on right, and get him back in his home. But, she had a heart as big as a washtub.

CP: That's nice. If you can, please describe race relations at the mill.

DS: I went to the mill…as I said, I started working in high school in 1951, and I worked all the summers but one. And, that summer I was in Fort Campbell, Kentucky in ROTC

summer camp. Then, I went to work full-time in 1958. The mill was completely segregated through…from the time it was started. And, somewhere before I got there, the white and black bathrooms and drinking fountains had been removed. So, the…the basic issue of segregation was that African Americans would only be employed for, what I call, the "push and pull jobs," material handling but not running the machinery or fixing, or the higher paid jobs. And, I came into that situation, and being raised in the south, you know, that's the way it was. And, I would think about it sometimes and didn't feel right about it, but that's the way it was. And, there was a time, before the government required it, that I was sitting down with the card room overseer, whose name was David Long, a good Presbyterian, went to Decatur Presbyterian Church, and he said, "we need an operator for a certain machine." Actually, the machine was the pickers. And, this machine…there were 7 machines in this room, and there'd be one man operating it and one mechanic that would go back and forth from…between the pickers and the opening room. And, there had never been anyone but a white person as a mechanic or an operator of the pickers. The people who worked in the opening room who undid the bales and put them in that dusty place, when I went there, they were all African Americans. And, Dave sat down with me and says, "I am having trouble filling this job and the pickers on the first shift." I said, "Why don't you move up somebody from the 2nd and 3rd shift?" "They don't want to move." And, I said, "Who's the most qualified person you've got to put on the pickers?" And, he said, "So-and-so, but he's Black." Well, that was the first time I'd ever had to think about it like that. And, I said, "Dave, are you comfortable holding a man back from improving himself and his family just because the color of his skin?" He said, "No, I'm not." And, I said, "Are you willing to offer him the job?" He says, "Yes, I

am, if you'd let me." But, he said, "What are we going to do about all the other people? What are we going to do about the other workers on the 2nd and 3rd shift and the mechanics? Basically, the 1st shift mechanic has, basically, got to serve him." I said, "Well, there's a lot of talk going on about this, and you know, Washington's talking about forcing people to do this and the other thing." I said, "I don't like being forced by Washington, but," I said, "I've got an idea." He says, "What?" I says, "Let's let the other 5 people in the department make the decision." Now, if I did it today, it would be against the law, but it wasn't against the law then. So, we got the other 5 people together, and we said, "You know we've got this job open. We're having to double some of you over, doing more work than we want to." Let's just call him Ron. "…it's clear, in our judgment, the best qualified person we've got here to put and train for that job." And said, We've decided that we are willing to put him on the job but, you all are affected, too. And, we know that it's a lot coming out of the government that's forcing people to do things, but we are going to give each of you five people veto power on this man. We…you know him, and we think you know that he's qualified…that he's probably qualified to run the job. If any one of the five of you say, "no", he will not get the job, and you will have to go home and live with it that you blocked this man's opportunity to advance himself, purely because of the color of his skin." And, they knew if I said it, that I would do it. There was no…there was no question of whether I was playing a game. I was trying to work through a situation that had never been done before. And, they asked some questions. One of them was, "What if he doesn't hold up his end of the thing? What if he doesn't do all of his work? You're gonna make us work harder. What'll you do?" I said, "I'll fire him." I said, we'll try to train him and get him to do better. If he doesn't,

I'll fire him." They said, "Well, we've gotta…give us overnight to think about it." So, they go back and think about it, and all 5 of them said "No, we won't stand in his way." Then, Dave Long said, "Fine, proud of you. Now, one of you have got to train him. Who will volunteer to train him?" 'Cause that would…might stigmatize that person to the other employees there, and there's probably 120 employees in that department. And, they said, "Give us another night to think over that one." So, the next day they came back, and I was blown away. The one man in the group that I thought would be least likely to train him, a 64-year-old man, who lived in the country all of his life, stepped forward and said, "Mr. Scott, I will train him." And, that was, you know…everybody else looked up to him and if he was willing, with all of his background…So, he trained this fellow, and fortunately, it was a piece-rate job. It had clocks that counted the production. And, when he was trained and turned over, I kind of stayed out of there and let Dave Long handle it. And, about a…a month later, I went by there and asked, I think I asked the 1st shift mechanic, I said, "How's Ron doing?" And said only…he made one remark to me. He said, "Did you see them pick clocks?" His production was equal and beating the other guys, and so, that was the beginning of the change. It was close to the time when the requirements came, but it was before the time the requirements came. So, we then looked at it, and by this…and…and the managers in all the departments were not comfortable with the culture that we had inherited. And, so we said, "Now what are we going to do? We've got people that have been here for 20 years that have got ability to run much better jobs, yet they're still sweeping the floor. But, we've got other white folks here who have been waiting for opportunities to move up, and we move them up by seniority. You've got to work on this job, and whosever senior here goes to this job, and this job, and this

job." So, we made one concession and solved, over time, our racial segregation problem. We said, "Our seniority policies from here forward: when there's an open position, the person that's qualified and wants it can move…can…can bid for that position without having to go through all of the intermediate steps." And, so from there on, anybody could train for any job, which were the machine operator jobs or the mechanic jobs. We had the most problems with mechanic jobs because when we would train somebody and they could say that they were a trained new mechanic, they could become a mechanic almost anywhere. And, so we couldn't…we…we rarely got somebody to stay with us. They…we would train them, and then they were gone. But, we had some strange problems that we had to work through, and they would… sometimes you couldn't quite figure them out. But, the African American churches were having programs where they would train their people how to put pressure for integration, and they were telling them they were being discriminated against. And, every one of ours had been discriminated against the whole time they'd been there, but now they weren't, as far as we knew. We did all we could. We couldn't undo.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …everything. But, they… some of the people […] knew they were being discriminated against. They were trying to figure it out. And, this one situation I'll mention and then drop it at that, but there was a lady that had been sweeping in the weave room for 20 years. And, she had had the ability all these years to, probably, do whatever she wanted to do. And, so we moved her from sweeping and trained her to weave and put

her on the highest job that we could put her on. And, she was trying to figure out where she was being discriminated against. I told you we had this food cart that came through the thing. Well, he was supposed to stop, I think, at 3 places in the weave room. Sometimes when he wasn't rushed, people would ask him to stop, and he would stop and serve them, but he was only supposed to stop at these three places. Well, she was in-between one of these places, and right opposite her was the superintendent of the department. Both of them waved him down. And, he wouldn't stop. And, she broke out and cursed the supervisor out, curse words. And…major disrespect, and said, "because blankity-blank, he wouldn't stop, but I know he's…" I don't know what word she used…"discriminated against me." I used…I don't know what she used. And, he told her to come in his office, and he said, "I can't let you…you don't have to like me, but you can't disrespect me from my position." And, he said, "I don't know what I will have to do about that, but why…what evidence can you give me that he's discriminated against you?" And, then he…she would buy something off of his cart, he would give her change. Hold your hand out. [coins clinking] She said, "because he won't touch my hand." Did you touch my hand? And, I didn't touch your hand?

CP: Mhm.

DS: [coins clinking] That was her reasoning, that she was convinced he was discriminating against her. Well, there was no other evidence, whatsoever. But any rate, how do you deal with those things? But, there were those kind of things were the only problems I had. I remember one other fellow that…we moved him up, and he was on a

job right at the weaver's rate or a little higher. And, after about 3 or 4 months, I thought, "I wonder how much…how that's affected his lifestyle and his family." I knew he had a family. So I went to him, called him by name, and I said, "You've been making more money, lately. I'm just wondering how it's affecting your life and your family." "Oh, Mr. Scott, I'm so glad you told…come here, let me show you." He took me out to the front door and pointed…pointed to the parking lot and says, "Look at that Thunderbird." [Laughs] That was one of my most disappointing experiences…

CP: [Laughs]

DS: … of seeing people upgrade themselves. OK, I don't know of any other…can you ask me any more questions about it? I'll…I will tell you anything.

CP: Well, actually, now I am wondering if the race relations at the mill mirrored race relations in the surrounding community, at that time.

DS: No, because the village was still segregated, and the Blacks lived in their segregated community across the railroad track. Now, the area across the railroad track is integrated, and the area on the white side is integrated. At least, it is integrated because we had built some apartments when we were trying to get employees, and those apartments we built had been integrated. And, they're in the middle of…they're on the edge…they're a part of the village. I don't know whether any of the houses had been integrated or not. But, I would say there was not…there was not relationship problems in the community that I

knew about. But, I wasn't in the Black community, like I was in my own community. The Black community…the social leadership in the Black community was in the churches. And, there had been churches there forever. I was involved, a good bit, in [coughs] Joe Hill's church. My brother, I told you, became a minister. And, his…his…between his junior and senior year in high school, he went to Joe and asked if Joe could help him start a Sunday School class in the afternoons. And, so Joe let him use his church, and I went with him. And, so we knew…we…so, then we would get invited to their special programs and their 4th of July goat barbecue that Joe always killed a goat, and they would have singing groups come through. And I remember sitting there and seeing them little singing groups, and they had a…a wooden stand on the front, about this high, with a pitcher of water on it. And, I remember sitting there and they'd get to going, I'd see the water splashing around the top of that pitcher. [Laughs]

CP: Mmhm. [Laughs] What about in school, either grade school or Georgia Tech or both. How was race relations in school?

DS: It was segregated.

CP: They were segregated, at that time?

DS: I…I was out of school in 1957.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: I, I went to…I told you I went to school up north. And, I went to Wheaton College before I went to Georgia Tech. And, that's where I first encountered…where I first had close contact with African Americans.

CP: Mm.

DS: And, we had a Dixie club up there. And, there was a young lady a year ahead of me from Birmingham, Alabama that joined our Dixie club, and she was one of 12 children of a steel worker in Birmingham. And, she was the valedictorian of her class. And, she'd had the highest grades in the school in the last 15 years. And, a white church in Birmingham had a vacation Bible school in the inner city, and they recognized this girl that had some extraordinary potential. And, they… that church followed her up and, and helped her get to this school. Well, that was the first time that I remember meeting an African American peer, who, I realized, was my superior. And, so that was my first exposure. And, then I got to thinking of my father and my uncle and at their livelihood, and I realized they had never met and knew, at close hand, an African American that would have been their peer. Now, there were people in Atlanta, but they didn't know them. But, I realized that neither of them…my father never met one of his peers. Then, I remember, I was sitting in the room when my uncle a…his banker, whom he'd borrowed millions of dollars from for the plant. The new banker came in, and he was African American. And, I still remember he was the oldest…my uncle was the oldest continuous commercial customer in the bank, Bank South, you may remember it.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: And, I sat there, and my…my…my uncle's father lived through the Civil War. My grandfather lived through the Civil War. He was 5 when it started, and…well, 6 when it started and 10 when it ended. And, his father fought in the Civil War. And, he and his father went through all of the reconstruction after the Civil War and all the stuff that went back and forth there that…you know history better than I do. But at any rate, I would say that my uncle was…would be classed as a racist. Although all of the African Americans liked him, but he did see things different than we do today. But, anyway, so we sit down there in this room, and I am there with him. And, he's sitting down looking at this young African American who has been appointed head of the branch bank that he borrows money from, and this is the first time they meet. And, so, I wondered what's going to happen, you know. And, so, when they got there and started, this young banker said, "Mr. Milton," he said, "you're the oldest commercial account that our bank's got, and this is the first time I've been put in charge of a bank." And, he said, "You're one of our bank's most respected customers." He said, "I want to know what I have to do to please you and make you satisfied with our bank." He didn't bat an eye, and he said, "Johnny," guy's name was Johnny Jackson…Johnny Johnson or Johnny Jackson. "Johnny," he said, "You've got to give me all the money I need to run my business at the lowest rates that I can find anywhere in the world. And, you've got to get me all the tickets that I need to the University of Georgia football games. [laughs]

MS: [laughs]

DS: And, Johnny didn't bat an eye. He turned to his assistant, there, and he said…he, he said…he turned to Mr. Milton, and he said…no, he turned to his assistant, and he said, "I'm delegating to you , you keep in touch with Mr. Milton's treasurer, Leon Rosebury , and you get him all the tickets he needs for the university football game." Then, he looked Mr. Milton in the eye, and said, "I'll get you all the money you need." [Laughs]

CP: Oh. [Laughs]

DS: So…

MS: But, didn't he have tickets to the games, anyway?

DS: He…

MS: Well, he sat on the 60 yard line for 50 years, or something.

DS: Well, he was the oldest…

MS: …most long-term attender at any Georgia games.

DS: He had graduated the University of Georgia in 1916.

CP: Wow.

DS: But anyhow, he would sometime want extra tickets or, or he had tickets in Athens.

MS: Ah.

DS: And, if they played at…

MS: …on the road…

DS: …Georgia Tech…

MS: OK.

DS: …he would need tickets or if he wanted to go to Alabama or South Carolina, he would need tickets.

CP: Gotcha.

MS: But, he went to the University of Georgia […]

DS: …they always gave tickets.

DS: But, anyway…

CP: Mm. [laughs]

MS: Can I get you a clementine or something?

CP: I'm fine, thank you. [laughs]

DS: You can bring me back…bring me one.

MS: OK. [laughs]

CP: Did you experience any…as, as close as…

DS: I…I…

CP: …Decatur is to Atlanta…

DS: Wait a minute, just other thing…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: I…I had…we had more serious…I had…when I was working there, I had more serious problems with the Communist party than I did with race relations.

CP: Hm.

DS: But anyway, you didn't ask that question.

CP: That's ok. That's…that's good to know. As close as Decatur is to Atlanta, and you did go to school in Atlanta at Georgia Tech, did you experience any events associated with The Civil Rights Movement?

DS: No, cause I went there before it all happened.

CP: Ok. So even though you…

DS: Well, no, wait a minute. Yes, I did.

CP: Ok.

DS: I told you that I was involved with this Christian organization called Inter-varsity Christian Fellowship.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: And we would hold…we would support and encourage people to have Bible studies in the dormitories [phone rings] and at the campus for evangelistic purposes. And…

MS: Hello?

DS: …many people that had no religious background, they would sit down, and we would have them study…read what was in the Bible and discuss it. No professionals, no ministers, no nothing, just students. Well, we…everything we did was open to anybody, but there weren't many Black people at Georgia Tech, then. There were only 6 women. But, there was a…I remember, we had a conference, and we had a group in Mississippi at…Hattiesburg, Mississippi. And, a group were coming to a conference, and by this time I was out, and I was, I was married, and we told them they could stay at our house in transit from Mississippi to South Carolina or wherever the conference was. Well, somebody told us that there were…told my wife and I that there were two African Americans coming in the car with three of us, I think a total of five. And, see, we wanted to make sure that, you know, we didn't have any…anyway, so, we get…so, we had one of them in our daughter's room. We had two beds…a White fellow and Black fellow in my daughter's room, and we had…we mixed them up in the house, and all of them had beds. They didn't have to sleep on the floor. And, in the daughter's room, you know how girls are, they've got animals all over the place, stuffed animals. And, so, there was a bear on these beds. There was a polar bear and a brown bear. So, when they came in, they looked around the house, and the two boys told us later it was the first time they had ever

walked in a house that had wall-to-wall carpet. And, we showed them their beds, and it just so, accidently, happened that the African American got the bed with the brown bear and the White guy with the polar bear. And, so, when he stood there and that was his bed and he looked at that bear, he turned and said…to his friend and said, "They knowed I was coming." [laughs]

CP: (Laughs).

DS: Then, there was one other instance. We were having a conference in…with…in…the FFA Camp at Covington, Georgia, which is owned by the State of Georgia. And, we…we had an African American from…from Gainesville in Florida, and he was coming. And, this was in the heat of the opposition of the state officials, back when everything was getting integrated in the mid-60s, '65 let's say. We had a very good relation with the head of the camp. I was working then, but I would go down there with them, I was not married. And, when I'd walk in, he'd say, "Oh, I'm so glad to see you. We just had a conference here every weekend." And says, "They're all so hard to be deal with." And he'd say, "I need to get away with my wife." And, he'd throw me the keys. And, he says "I've left the safe open." He said, "Collect the money, put the money in the safe, and lock it. Leave the keys on my desk." And, he'd leave, with his wife, for the weekend. I'd say that's a pretty good relationship.

CP: Oh, yeah.

DS: Amazingly, he'd tell me to run his camp for the weekend.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: And, I'd make sure all the students spit polished every room, the bathrooms were clean and everything was swept. And, he'd come back, and it wasn't a typical college group. Well, we got notified from somebody in Gainesville, Florida that they had African American…they had a Black that had registered. He wasn't African American. He was from Africa. So, we called and told this fellow that we were coming, that we'd be bringing this African, and he said, "I can't let you do it." Said, "My bosses have, actually, told me no Blacks." We said, "Who is your boss? We want to go talk to him." Well, I found out, and another fellow working with me, that it was not possible, in those days, to find out who was responsible.

CP: Hm.

DS: We went to every government agency in everywhere, and it was their responsibility.

CP: Right

DS: I gotta go to the restroom, again.

CP: No problem.

CP: OK.

DS: I spent the best part of a week, tracing down every person that everybody told me to talk to, and there was no way on earth that you could find out who was responsible and who could make the decision. Not possible.

CP: Hm.

DS: And, so finally we came to the decision that we were going to have to tell that fellow he couldn't come. And, we had all of our people just praying, 'cause we didn't want to do it. And, so we told the person in Florida they were going to have to contact the fellow and tell him he couldn't come. We had done everything we could do. And, but, there was a lot of praying going on. And, this fellow looked out…he told us he looked out the window, and he saw this fellow walking up, and he says, " I just sort of sunk through the floor." He said, "the guy opened the door, and he came in and just started apologizing." And, he said, "I'm just so sorry." He said, "I know I have committed to come, but he said, "I've had a conflict, and there's no way I could come. Is there any way that you could let me off and give me my registration fee back?" [laughs]

CP: That's funny.

DS: So, we gave him his registration fee back, and we made a decision that we would never schedule another conference in a place that we could…we couldn't invite anybody

that wanted to come. And, we told the director, which he was very disappointed ‘cause we were his time off…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …and he…

CP: Right.

DS: …always wanted us. So, we found places that we could go. And, down there they had a full kitchen and food service, and all we had to do was tell them how many people, they’d prepare the visit, and we’d just pay the fee.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: But, these other places, we had to do our own cooking. And, I went to this lady at the cafeteria at the mill, and I would say, “I needed 175 for Friday night, Saturday morning, Saturday noon, Saturday night, Sunday breakfast and Sunday noon.” And she’d take her cre…crew with her machine and cut up the salads and different things, and she’d put each meal in 2 boxes about the size of a file box, maybe 3. We’d bring them down and put them in a walk-in freezer or refrigerator. We’d get the students, and we would put about 4 students on each meal and give them the boxes. And, she’d written the instructions, and we’d say, “it’s your responsibility to fix the meal.” And, so they would fix the meal, but

it was trouble. And, about 2 years later, this guy at the FFA camp called us and said, "You can bring your group back, now." He said, " I can take anybody that comes." He said, "they're not advertising it, but" he said, "the rule's been changed.

CP: Hm.

DS: Our group had the first integrated student chapter in any university in Mississippi, in those days. And, the person, the student… and, these are student-led groups…the student who did that ended up, in his later life, as being the person who broke the massacre of over 2 million people in southern Sudan.

CP: Wow

DS: He was…he was a missionary, and he also had a Ph.D. in peacemaking and conflict resolution. And, if you would look on the…February the 7th, I think it is, 1999 copy of the Washington Post, on the front page you'd see a picture of Black Sudanese jumping and hollering and celebrating with one white guy, there. And, if you opened up the center page, there'd be two full things of color pages of this peace negotiation, and he's the only non-Sudanese involved. But, he was later than…d'you ever heard of World Vision?

CP: Mmhm.

DS: He was, after that, he was hired by World Vision, made a vice president in charge of peacemaking and conflict resolution around the world. And, he's recently retired. But any rate, he…he was the student who formed that chapter. His father was editor of the newspaper in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. This organization, today, is probably the most fully integrated Christian student work in America. You'll find 100% Blacks, 100% Whites, about 20%...15-20% of the organization's staff are African American. And, some of the department heads are African American. They started groups in all the universities here in Atlanta. But, I guess that…I, I never saw any…I can't identify any conflict in the…in the factories, except the fact they were segregated.

CP: Right.

DS: I am sure there's people who were segregated that have a different story to tell. I remember the most interesting cultural picture I saw, if I wanted to write a cartoon, this was at Georgia Duck and Cordage Mill. We had hired…we'd hired, there, lots of people that came through the English as a Second Language School in Clarkston. And, we would get the Bosnians, the Serbs, the Russians and various ones that…and others. So, we ended up with lots of, of Blacks and Muslims and Christians and radical Christians. And, we were all Christians and would support evangelism, and all that, but we'd, sometimes, more problems with the Christians that they'd try to read their Bible and witness to the Muslims and would nearly have a, you know, a war…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …in the middle of the factory. And, you can have everything in a big factory that you could have in a city. But anyhow, one scene that I'll never forget was a redneck…there was an African American with a t-shirt with a big picture, here, of, of a Malcolm X, sitting on a smoking stool right beside a redneck of the most extreme order, with a big picture, here, of a confederate flag, just sitting there talking to each other.

CP: [Laughs]

DS: [Laughs] You know, in, in, in the plant, they would focus on their work…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: …and themselves. If I had walked over and pointed that out to them, there'd have been problems.

CP: Right.

DS: But, as long as it…it wasn't a problem for being who they were, it was alright. Now, we didn't a…we didn't allow supervisors to curse. We'd fire them. If you do that they, don't curse. [laughs]

CP: [laughs] Mmhm.

DS: And, we…so, sometimes…I remember the, the old man, the guy that had controlling interest of the Duck Mill, he…when he saw an African American with a t-shirt on that said "I am a sex devil." And, he looked at it and told the supervisor, said, "fire him now, and send him out." And, that was the end of it. I…he just wasn't going to have it.

CP: Right.

DS: But, the racial problem was the fact that we discriminated against the race. And, I am thankful that we took our steps a few years before the government took theirs. But, that's…that's how it happened. It didn't…it wasn't anything that I thought and said, "well, you know, this is bad, and we have to do something about it." It was, "we've got to fill this job."

CP: Right.

DS: "Who's the most qualified?" Uh-oh, that's…and, so, we just…we…and, and, I found that it was not in myself, my supervisor or my workers to stand against somebody's advancement if they were responsible for it. If they were in the culture that did it, they were in that culture. But, if they were personally responsible, they wouldn't do it.

CP: Right. OK. Were female workers treated differently at the m…at the mill?

DS: Yes, originally, and no in the latter years.

CP: How so? How were they treated differently?

DS: In the early years, only men would be weaving and running machines, and women would be doing the lighter work. Of course, later on, the heavier work was not as heavy. But, I don't remember the change, there. I just remember, probably, before I got there and when women would be doing the weaving or doing whatever men did. They were paid the same thing […] be piece rate, and they would be paid by the, by the pick or by the, by the production rate. But, it was an hour rate. There were no difference in pay. Now, if there was a job category that was easier for women to do and they seem to head toward that job category, I can't say that that job category didn't end up with a lower rate. But, if they both did the same job, it was the same pay.

CP: So the difference was, mainly, in workload?

DS: And culture, and it changed. I can remember trying to get women to be mechanics. And, in the spinning room, I ended up with two women that were overhaulers, which was a mechanical…mechanic job, and they did excellent and stayed on the job. Most of the time, I would train them, and they would quit. Also in supervision, I'd try to put women in supervision, tried to put Blacks in supervision. And, some blacks […], but many of them didn't want it. And, the women…I never got a woman to stay. But, there were some Blacks that stayed in both Scottdale and Georgia Duck.

CP: OK. As far as the mill closing, what was the process, from the beginning when you found out that you were facing closure up until the doors actually closed?

DS: Well, we probably lost money in the last 5 or 6 years, every year but one. So, we could see the decline in profits. I think it was in 1980 or '81 we had…we wanted to go into a, a […] fabric. It's the one you see in the expensive restaurant that kind of has a pebbly look. It, it doesn't look like a plain weave, it's kind of pebbly. The napkins and the tablecloths…

CP: Mmhm.

DS: … and the very highest things. It is called mummy cloth. I think it's a cloth that they found in…on a…found the weave in mummies in Egypt, I don't know. But, it's called mummy cloth, and it takes a more complicated loom. It takes a loom with a control mechanism, something like to play a piano, to weave it. And, I was told to set up about 40 looms that could weave it at the highest efficiency and the lowest cost because we were struggling, then, to survive. And, I remember getting Robert Smith, and he set out a overall program. We got these looms, where they were running 92% with 2 or 3 % off quality. And, it was costing us 91 cents, and we were selling it for thir…93 cents. I think we had 2 cents a yard in it. And, we were kind of pleased with that. We were making about 12, 13 dollars a week per loom. And, about 5 or 6 months after that, a ship docked in New York that had a big load of that fabric from the…somewhere in the orient. And,

they were selling it for, I think, 57 cents a yard. And, we had done the best we could, and we were selling it at 2 cents, and you pretty well see the writing on the wall. We had…starting in 1959, we had modernized every plant with the latest, every room with the latest quality, the highest, the most efficient machinery. We spent several millions of dollars over 1959 through…through the 1960's. And, see, we'd gone several years with low profits or no profits and actual losses. When you run a factory, you can…you charge the depreciation of the machinery against your expenses, but you're not spending the cash. You're using up the machine. And at some later point, you're going to have to buy a new machine, but you can write that off as depreciation each year. So, while we were losing money, we were not necessarily losing that much beyond our depreciation out of cash. We could…we knew we couldn't survive forever, but we were not […] cash […]. But, it got to be a cash loss. And, we met in November of '81, myself and my boss, Hansford Sams, and Milton Scott, the fellow that owned the Duck Mill, who by that time, he did not want any people in the family to criticize the way we'd run the mill, and we could see things were going the wrong direction. And, his mill was making a specialty…making conveyor belts, and they had designed a new type of fabric and new type of conveyor belting. And, they were making big profits, like 7%, like 7 cents on the dollar. And, he said, "I don't want anybody to cor…criticize the way we've handled their stock and their investment." He said, "I want to buy…I'll offer to buy everybody's stock that our companies don't already own." Everybody that is not outside the immediate family, basically everybody that not…that are outside of the immediate family, eventually, bought everybody in the immediate family, too, because they've gone down through two or three generations. And, I pointed out to him, I said, "if you own 80%, you

can take their losses off of your profits. That's part of the law, its one company, and your losses merge into it." So anyway, he bought…and, so, he owned control, if not 100%, I'm not sure, but he had…definitely had control. And, he was, in making the decision…in November, we looked at it and said, "if it doesn't turn around by February, we've got to shut down." And, so, we began holding back on expenses and trying to get orders, but you can't run without a market, you can't run without a market that you could sell at a profit. And, so, we'd gone through…they had gone through, I hadn't, but he had gone through The Great Depression and survived. He'd gone through 7 recessions and survived. And, we thought this would…might be another one, but it wasn't. It was a structural change in the economy. And, nothing changed, and we met in his office, I think the 1st of February, and we made our reports of what the status was. And, he said, "Is there anything new? Is there any way, any hope that we have?" And, we said, "Not on the horizon." And, he said, "Well, do we have any option other than to shut it down?" And, we both said, "no." And, it's 'cause…he'd, he, he'd come in a buggy from Decatur as a boy at age 6 and watched them build the mill. So, his whole life was there, and his grandfather… and he knew…he had seen his grandfather. You know, he was 8 when his grandfather died. But, you know, he lived in the…he lived in the memory of his grandfather. And, so he said, "Well, shut it down." And, he sat there and looked out the window towards Scottdale, and he turned to me as he watched his options to see what his next decision was. And, he pointed towards Scottdale and looked at me, and he says, "get my money out." [laughs] So, that was…that was the shortest job description I'd ever had…

CP: [laughs]

DS: …and my boss sold off the inventory. And, my job was to lay off the people, shut down the machinery, sell the machinery…my boss was involved in selling the machinery, found somebody to chuck out the machinery, and sweep the floor and keep, keep insurance and a watchman on it and security. And, that took from February 'til, probably, the end of May. And then, we looked for a sale, and we got a sale from a company in Chattanooga that was going to convert it into a place to incubate new businesses. And, the guy went bankrupt, and I re-sold the plant to the DeKalb Farmer's Market. We, then, after 7 or 8 years, tore the plant down because it was too expensive to maintain, and it had deteriorated to the point….there had been vandalism…a building like that, people go in and steal the copper out and things like that. The roof leaks, and then the floors warp, and the building is gone. And, that's how you liquidate a plant.

CP: The long and the short of it. Were provisions made for laid off employees?

DS: We didn't have any money. And, we could work the employees while they ran the product out. So, it was probably the first or second of February when we made the decision. So, we decided to tell them, immediately, if any of them wanted to make decisions on their own. So, I think within the next four days, I had meetings on each shift and told them. But, one day I got over here, I think, what I said to them…no… this is the…this is the notice that we finally made. I talked to them personally, but that's the notice. That's exactly what was included in the notice, which…we helped them get their

unemployment claims, convert their insurance, provided them references for employment. But, that meant 650 people had to get employment. I checked in the remaining textile mills in the immediate area, and there were 6 openings, and I told them that. And, so, here is what I told them: And, this is another one of the things that I am most pleased with, what I was able to come up with. They…basically, the Lord gave me wisdom 'cause I sure enough was asking for it. But, I said, "Most of you will not find textile jobs. There are 400 mills going down at the same time we're going down. "And, it got worse after that. It, it actua…it, it increased until there, virtually…I know of one operating mill left. I am sure there are more, but I used to know most of the mills in Georgia. There is one up in Northwest Georgia, Tryon, making denim. And, I don't, I don't…I can't name any others without researching it…among thousands. But I said, "You all are mostly good employees. The main issue is absenteeism. Every employer's biggest struggle is people that don't come to work regularly, on time. I said, "I can get 6 people jobs." And I said, "over the period of you looking for a job, I can probably place 15 people. I am not sure I can commit to placing any more than that." And I said, "Many of you will get jobs through friends and family. You'll have friends and family work at places say, 'we've got a job.' As you get jobs, you do the work like you've done for us, but be sure to do work to where your employer will see that you're a special employee, like they would want. And keep your eyes on and your ears on. And, when you hear of another opening in that business, go to your supervisor and say, "that opening has come open. I know an employee from Georgia Duck that I think can fill it." And, you all help each other. And, if you can't find a job, you come back and put your name on a list at the company, and we will do what we can from people that call us." When we started, that

list was that long, about 7 feet long. And, some people decided it was time for them to retire. They were in their 60's, anyway, and didn't want to work anymore, owned their own house. They paid off their $4,000 house that they'd had for 20 years, and…25 years. And, I would…I remember getting a call from a lady who was a personnel manager of a place on…off of Covington Highway. And she said, "I've hired 20 of your employees." She says, "I've not had a dud, yet." She says, "I'll hire anybody you recommend, that I have an opening for." The employees were doing the job to attract other people. I had a African American lady come in unkempt, hair in a mess, chewing snuff. "Mr. Scott ain't nobody going give me no job." I said, "Well, I think you're right if that's the way you're going to ask them." I said, "Do you realize you came in here to me, and you've got a lot of snuff in your cheek, your hair hadn't been combed and brushed, your dress is a mess and you're negative on every word you've said to me since you walked in my office." I said, "Let's look at it another way. How far'd you go in school?" "Fourth grade." "You've got a fourth grade education." She said, "yes". I said, "You've worked for Scottdale Mills for 15 years and have a near-perfect attendance record." "Yes." I said, "You learned our job in just a week or 10 days." She said, "Yes." And I said, "You're 59 years old." She said, "Yes." I said, "Let me show you something: that if you straighten yourself up and do what you can do to make a positive presentation…" And, I picked up the phone and called this lady. [clears throat] I said, "How are my employees doing at work?" "Oh, fine. I'm just tickled to death." [clears throat] I said, "I have a person I want to recommend to you. I know you've got a job there that's le…putting price labels on merchandise, and I know this lady could do that job." I said, she's got a fourth grade education, she worked for us, faithfully, for 15 years, her attendance record is excellent,

she's 59 years old, and I know you would like somebody younger. But, you and I have hired these young people come in," I said, "when you hire these youngsters that come in, what percent…percentage of them are gone within 3 months?" And she said "50% or more." I said, "well, we've seen 60 and 70 percent gone." I said, " This lady will be with you for 5 years, minimum, if she, if her health doesn't break, but she has no health problems, now. And, you would have no problem with her. And, I wond…wondered if you would give her a consideration." She says, "But, Scott, I don't have an opening, now." And, we talked more. She, she didn't want to hire her. She…and we talked. At the end, she said, "send her on over." And I said, "thank you." And, I called her up, and I said, "She told me to send you over for an appointment." And I said, "fix yourself up, look like you're going to church, get that wad of snuff out of your mouth and see if she'll give you a job." She went over there, and they gave her a job. Well, I would have people come…I…the hard cases would come, where I could place them up. Two years from the time we closed down, and workman's c…unemployment insurance got extended. I think it started with, I don't know how many months, but it went for at least 18 months. But, two years after we shut down, I crossed the last name off of that list. Now I can't say that everybody had a job because some of them retired. And, we couldn't contact them, but they knew where we were. And, if they wanted help, they came back there. But, twenty-four months from the time we closed the door, I crossed the last list…the last name off the list of people that were asking us for help. And, those were the only benefits we gave them.

CP: It's more than a lot of people get, especially these days. How do you feel about your experience at the mill?

DS: I enjoyed it. And I'm…as I look back over it, I realize that all the work I did and the factory did…we made…we spun the thread from a bale of cotton, wove fabric averaged 4 ½ feet wide, long enough to go from the North to the South Pole every year, 12,000. We, we wove…we spun the thread and wove 12,000 miles of fabric every year, with a hundred…with 650 people. But, I think what I think back on that is most significant is the ways that we were able to work with people. Those are the only thing that really lasts and has any value in my mind. I think of all the technical knowledge I have, there is no place to sell it or use it, anymore. But, those things that I did that last have to do with the way I helped or encouraged people. I can remember we [coughs] hired…frequently would hire people on their first job out of prison. Somebody's got to do it or they're going to be right back in prison. We felt we should, and we had tough enough management that we thought we could handle anything and probably could. Once, I looked around and saw that I had 6 murderers working for me. Almost never a problem, then I realized one of them was a psychotic murderer. Then, I had a problem.

CP: [laughs]

DS: How do you fire a psychotic murderer? And, we figured out how to do that to where he was pleased, and we were pleased. Anyway, we worked through that. But any rate, I never got a permanent employee from hiring prison release people. They would work for

me until their parole ended, and then they would evaporate the next day. But, it was a contribution to the community.

CP: Mmhm.

DS: I think of those 2-4 thousand people that we trained off the streets of Atlanta, 50% of them had jobs. And we would train them, then they'd go on to other places, and we'd train more. It wasn't very expensive. We had a training director, an assistant training director, and then we would have an instructor of about every 4 people. And…the…but, the, the things that last are things that are not that visible. I think of a scripture verse that says that Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth or rust corrupt and thieves break in and steal. But, lay up yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth or rust won't corrupt." And, I thought of that verse as I stood there, in about 1984, and watched them take sledgehammers and break, break up the spinning frames that I had arranged through…when I put my first new department together, modernized the room, brand new equipment in 198…1960. And, then in 1984, I saw them taking it out, breaking the cast iron with sledgehammers and dropping from the second floor into a truck, and it just splintered to pieces. And, I thought, you know, those things that I thought was very important at the time really don't have any lasting value. And, I actually saw that pile of scrap metal down in Highway 15, going west out of West Point, Georgia near a little town called Quigley, I think. But any rate, as a, as a pile of scrap iron with somebody holding it up there waiting for the price to go up, just a mountain of scrap iron.

CP: Hmm.

DS: And, I thought, "Well, so much for things that I thought were really important." There's other things more important.

CP: Right. Well, Mr. Scott, that concludes the questions that I've prepared for the interview.

DS: OK.

CP: Is there anything more that you'd like to add?

DS: No, but here's a, a history of Scottdale Mills that I put together when sociology groups would come and want to interview me to find out about the old company store and all that kind of stuff. And, I explained why you had a company store when there was no other place to buy something.

CP: Right.

DS: When we got out of the company store, we wrote off the uncollected bills that we had billed employees…could never collect it, $75,000.

CP: Wow. Well, on behalf of the DeKalb History Center, I'd like to thank you for your time and your contribution to the preservation of DeKalb's history.

DS: OK. Let me show you something that the history…the DeKalb History might be interested in.

CP: OK.

DS: Look at this.