



## Jeff Edgerton Oral History Interview, November 18, 2015

### **Title**

“Macro to Micro: A Perspective on Brewing in Portland”

### **Date**

November 18, 2015

### **Location**

BridgePort Brewing, Portland, Oregon.

### **Summary**

In the interview, Edgerton discusses his upbringing in Canby, Oregon, his early interest in science, the two years that he spent at Clackamas Community College, and his decision to transfer to Oregon State University. In reflecting on his OSU experience, Edgerton notes his progression as a Microbiology major, comments on his growing interest in food science, and shares his memories of campus and community life in the mid-1980s. From there, Edgerton recounts his first jobs following college, including work at Prepared Media Laboratories, and a position helping to structure a research laboratory at Reser's Fine Foods.

The remainder of the session is devoted to Edgerton's work in the brewing industry and his recollections of shifts in Portland's brewing culture. He begins by detailing the process by which he came to be employed as a laboratory technician at Blitz-Weinhard. In this, he also outlines the crumbling financial fortunes at Blitz, the many products that the brewery created and marketed, the work culture at the company, and his own mounting interest in becoming a brewer.

Edgerton then describes his shift from Blitz to BridgePort, outlining the specifics of his job as a quality assurance manager, and contrasting the environment at a small craft brewery with his previous experience at a very large brewing operation. He likewise shares his thoughts on the major growth experienced by BridgePort in the 1990s; the emphasis that he placed on insuring that BridgePort brewed a consistent product; and the changes that he observed as the Pearl District neighborhood developed around the brewery.

As it nears its conclusion, the interview shifts focus to Edgerton's activities as a brewmaster, and the strengthening of ties between BridgePort and the Fermentation Science program at OSU. The session ends with Edgerton's thoughts on points of pride looking back.

### **Interviewee**

Jeff Edgerton

### **Interviewer**

Tiah Edmunson-Morton

### **Website**

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/edgerton/>

## Transcript

**Tiah Edmunson-Morton:** We are doing an interview today with Jeff Edgerton at BridgePort Brewing in Portland, and the date is November 18th, 2015. Is your official title Brewmaster?

**Jeff Edgerton:** Brewmaster. I tell people Brewmaster Operations Manager.

**TEM:** Okay. Let's start with your birthday.

**JE:** My birthday?

**TEM:** Yeah, when were you born?

**JE:** 5/22/63.

**TEM:** And were you born in Canby?

**JE:** I was born in Silverton, Oregon.

**TEM:** Oh, okay.

**JE:** Yep, Silverton Hospital.

**TEM:** So really in the middle of hop country.

**JE:** Yeah, right in the middle of hop country, actually. It's kind of funny, yeah. But I grew up in Canby. My family was living in Canby at the time but my mother had a doctor that was based out of Silverton, old country type of thing, and she got to know him early on. And then he was actually my doctor until I was about forty years old, same doctor. He's a general practitioner kind of guy. So yeah, then finally it was just getting to the point where it's like "I'm driving to Silverton from Tigard every time I want to go see you, this is getting ridiculous, you know." And he's like seventy-five years old at the time, you know, so it's like it's getting to be a bit much, yeah.

**TEM:** Were your family, were they farmers? Were they involved in agriculture?

**JE:** Nope, actually my father was a machinist, he was a—he worked for a company that's called Willamette Industries. Made the saw chain for the timber industry, the forest industry. My mother was a homemaker and then she ended up working in a dress shop for about fifteen years.

**TEM:** In Canby?

**JE:** Mhmm.

**TEM:** And did they stay in Canby?

**JE:** They did until my dad retired and then they moved around a little bit and they ended up back in Canby, lived in a retirement village there. My father passed away in 2013 and my mother's living in Wilsonville now. So yeah, definitely—they're from the Dakotas originally, both of them are from the Dakotas originally but they came out this way with their families, followed their families during the Dust Bowl I think, and came out and settled in this area and have always been here.

**TEM:** Brothers and sisters?

**JE:** Two older sisters. I have one older sister living in Wilsonville, one of them living in Tualatin.

**TEM:** What was it like to grow up in Canby?

**JE:** Small town life, you know. It's a—well as a town it's kind of isolated from Portland, although it's more of a bedroom community. There's not that much industry there. There is some farm kids, I grew up with a lot of farm kids, but I also—my father was a commuter, he commuted to Portland every day. A lot of people were commuting. It was kind of maybe at that time, when I was a kid, maybe three, four thousand people. I think it's grown to about fifteen thousand people now. But very little to do there as kids, so there's a lot of trouble to be gotten into as a high school kid, you know, there's a lot of things that maybe kids shouldn't do as far as that goes. But I mean, no theater, no roller skating rink, no nothing when I was a kid, so it was like you kind of made your own fun to some extent.

**TEM:** Is it still like that? Do you feel like it's—or is it more connected with Portland now?

**JE:** I think it's more connected. It's grown some. Like I said, they've gotten a theater, they've gotten some more entertainment for the kids, and I think kids maybe are more focused these days with a lot of things for them to do. At that time, no, you know, computers were pretty new at that time, they were a new thing, so nobody had computers. I remember getting our first VCR at the house, you know, it was a big deal, that kind of thing. So I mean, technology has grown so much since then. I mean, it's like riding your bike was what you did, riding your bike, going fishing, going hunting. It's like I tell people now, it's insane to think of now, but when I was in high school I would go to—I would drive my car to school every day, and normally I would want to maybe, in the afternoons in the fall, go hunting with my friends. Well, I got a shotgun and a box of shells in the back, in the trunk of my car. Never thought about it, never really thought about it at all, because we would be going from school to go hunting. But nowadays you'd get arrested for that kind of thing, but back then, probably against the rules in a sense but it's like still, it wasn't thought of too much back then. Different time, kind of, in that respect.

**TEM:** Did you like growing up there?

**JE:** Loved it, yeah. I loved the town; I still have a lot of great friends there. It's a nice little town, very low crime, just a kind of salt of the earth kind of people, a lot of blue collar, you know, not a lot of pretense there.

**TEM:** What'd you like to do? So hunting, what were the things that you did that you remember liking to do when you were growing up?

**JE:** I loved cars, I was big into cars. Well, I mean, as a little kid I loved looking at cars and car models and doing all that kind of stuff. Basically you'd spend a lot of time riding your bicycle and just being outside, you know. I'd wear out tires on my bicycle like you wouldn't believe. My son's bicycle, I don't think he's ever wore out a set of tires, and it's still parked in our garage. They just don't do it as much anymore. And thing was, it was the kind of town where you grew up and where you leave the house in the morning on a summer morning and you might not get back till three in afternoon, and your mother doesn't worry about you, then. Now you would probably, but not then.

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**TEM:** Were you interested in science growing up?

**JE:** I was interesting in science and it was something that came up, especially going through high school. I mean, that was when it really hit home, because I was able to take some pretty advanced classes in high school. Maybe not as advanced as some of the high schools now, but we did an advanced biology class where you actually did surgery on a rat. We actually—rats have a tendency to develop tumors, and so we did a surgery on a rat and removed a tumor and put the rat back together, and it lived. It was pretty amazing really. It was just kind of a cool thing. It really got me into thinking about it. And school was actually, to me, it was great fun. I liked it. I enjoyed it a lot more; a lot of my friends weren't too interested to go to school. They had other things they wanted to do, but I loved it.

**TEM:** So when you started thinking about college, did you ever think about any place besides OSU?

**JE:** Not really, you know, because I started out - I wanted to continue working, so I actually spent not quite two years going to Clackamas Community College as well. And at Clackamas Community College, where I really kind of got more into the science things, you have to take some math classes and some other things, get them out of the way, that I knew I was going to be going to university but was able to do that. But I also took, you know, basic biology and chemistry and physics and the stuff that I really hadn't taken in high school, and it really kind of got me rolling, as far as my love of

science, I guess, as far as that goes. And so I spent some time talking to some of my teachers at the community college and they said "yeah, you want science in Oregon, go to Oregon State." Not a rich family, so I wasn't going to MIT; I was going to Oregon State. But I mean, great school all the way around, no doubt about it.

**TEM:** So did you enter as a Microbiology major? Was that what you intended to do?

**JE:** Yeah, I think I did have that as my original major when I went to Oregon State. I mean, I think I was like General Studies when I was at Clackamas Community College, but I think when I entered I, you know, I looked at the different curriculum and said "what am I interested in?" And I really did like the micro aspect of it; I liked using microscopes and growing cultures and things like that, so it's like yeah, microbiology was basically the direction that I headed from day one. I wasn't sure what I was going to do with it.

**TEM:** That's what I was going to ask.

**JE:** Yeah, I know that's the next question. I really wasn't sure what I was going to do with it, you know, and there's a couple directions you can go with a microbiology degree; there was like three directions. You can go into research and basically be poor the rest of your life. And I mean, you're certainly able to be around the universities and all that kind of stuff, but it's like "eh," you know. And I thought, like, I need to figure out some way that I can actually make a decent living to raise my family with this degree. So food, which is the direction I took initially, and I found out that food is a very, very tough industry to make a living in as well, at least from my perspective being a lab guy, a lab rat at the time.

And so at the same time, Blitz-Weinhard was the brewery in Oregon, so we're talking about early eighties. And so BridgePort was just getting started; in 1984 is when they started. But I never really knew that much about craft brewers, but I did know about Blitz-Weinhard because my dad was a Blitz drinking, grew up at regional breweries kind of thing. So Blitz-Weinhard was where I started my résumé. I thought, "well, where can I possibly make a good living, or a reasonable living with a microbiology degree?" It's like well, growing yeast and bacteria in a brewery would be a great place to do that. So I started sending my résumé out. I sent about six résumés to Blitz-Weinhard over a period of two years and finally got an interview. And when I got there, I found out that basically the reason I hadn't been interviewed was because they had just plain no turnover in personnel. There was just, like, nobody that had left for years. And then some guy got caught fudging data or something like that and he ended up getting fired and so they needed somebody to replace him, so they hired me, brought me in as an entry level lab technician.

**TEM:** Was there a link between Microbiology/Food Science and the brewing industry? Like macro brewing industry at that point, between OSU and the companies?

**JE:** I never even thought about it, and at that time there was no Brewing program, of course. So I mean, I had classes through the Food Science department, had classes in Nash Hall through the Microbiology department over there, and spent a lot of time with Bill Sandine, Dr. Bill Sandine that worked there, William Sandine. Incredible, really smart guy, did the Dairy Microbiology and headed the Dairy Microbiology. So that was kind of a class that really caught my fancy in a sense, because it had a lot to do with food, and in fact it was more applied to microbiology; growing cultures for making cheese. He brought cheese to lab class, just had, like, this whole cheese, you go up there and eat cheese while you're working, which is kind of probably not the best thing to do, but we had it there, you know. So it was cool, I enjoyed that part of it. So that's kind of what really got me rolling as far as the food part of it and making the connected between food and microbiology.

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**TEM:** Was there any—I mean so there wasn't an established brewing program, but was there talk about fermentation within the program, like, "let's focus on this?"

**JE:** You know, it might have been. I didn't really hear anything about it. You know, as an undergraduate, I mean, I don't think you're really quite as attuned to that kind of thing, I think. So it wasn't anything that I ever heard at that time, so that—you know, we're talking about, like I said, mid-eighties. So yeah, I mean, it's really in the wine industry, it was up and rolling big time by that point. So I don't know, they may have had something with the wine industry, but at that time I wasn't really a wine drinker either, so I wasn't doing that kind of thing.

**TEM:** So what are some of the things that you remember outside of class in being at OSU? Things on campus or things you were interested in doing when you were in Corvallis.

**JE:** Oh, you know, Monroe Street, beyond Monroe Street, the Beanery, you know, studying, drinking coffee until ten o'clock at night and going home and going to sleep, which I can't begin to do now; drink past noon and I'm done, you know. But things like that. I lived in the College Inn, which is now The Gem. It's called The Gem now; it used to be called the College Inn, so the big concrete building down there. Yeah, all the plethora of pizza parlors down there, you know, Woodstock's Pizza and Cirello's Pizza, I think there's—I don't remember how many; we counted one time. We counted a ton of them down there.

**TEM:** On Monroe?

**JE:** No, it wasn't just Monroe; it was all through that basically the kids all went to, so that was cool. You know, it's a lot of, you know, to me when I talk about it, I talk about going to the university for people. I talk about the fact that universities don't necessarily teach you how to be something specific, but they teach you how to learn and to have that love of learning and to really be able to pull things, you know, and pull more out of what you're doing and to be able to be well-versed in what you're doing. I mean, I took three terms of Shakespeare that I didn't have to take, just because I loved the learning aspect of it; just being able to be there in that atmosphere, it was like, you know, you—most people when they go as a freshman and sophomore they're like, "oh yeah, I just need to get through this, I need to get through it, I need to get through these classes." By the time they're a senior—and I felt exactly that way—it's like, "I don't want to leave. I want to stay here forever," you know, "I love this place, this is—for me this is the place to be because everything's here. Every possible, interesting thing in the world that I would want right now is right here," you know, that's what I love about Oregon State.

**TEM:** Did you ever think about continuing on and becoming a researcher?

**JE:** I did but I was broke, you know. It was one of those things where it's like, I had leaned on my parents pretty heavily and they did a great job for me. They did an incredible thing for me, as they helped me get my education and I was able to walk out of Oregon State with zero debt, and zero money, but zero debt. You know, I was totally broke, but I didn't owe anybody anything either, so that was that. I liked that aspect and I did not want to lean on my parents anymore at that point. You know, to me it was that point where it's like [inhales sharply] "I got to start making a living, I got to start being on my own." So yeah, it would have been, like I said, if I would have been independently wealthy, hey, I would have kept going to school forever. It would have been great.

**TEM:** Yeah. So you graduate.

**JE:** Yep, '87.

**TEM:** At that point, did you start sending out résumés before you graduated?

**JE:** I did, yeah. I sent out résumés to lots of different places. Like I said, I sent a bunch of them. I really was focusing on Blitz at that time, but it wasn't panning out for me. So I was, you know, I wasn't getting anything back from them, so I just started sending them out some other places. And so I ended up basically—where I got my first job out of school was actually a temporary job. It was with a place called PML Microbiologicals, or at that time it was just called Prepared Media Laboratories. So they made media for growing bacteria in Tualatin. A lot of people don't even know they're there, but they make it for hospitals and laboratories and research places and stuff like that, that want to buy a lot of blood augur for growing staph, bacteria, things like that. So I basically worked in their quality control labs; I just sat there for day after day after day just streaking plates, just hours on end. And it was okay, I did it for a summer. There was a woman that was on pregnancy leave, maternity leave, and so I took over for her while she was gone and did that, and it was like, "I'm glad she's back, actually."

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But at that time I didn't have a job, so I did a couple of odd jobs, because I worked in grocery stores and stuff like before. So I did a couple of odd jobs and then finally I got hired by Reser's Foods in Beaverton. And at that time I was married, so I was getting married to my wife and she lived in the Hillsboro area, so we moved to Beaverton, worked at Reser's Foods.

They needed someone to kind of put together a laboratory there. They had a laboratory sort of, they had—they ran some laboratory tests but they needed a really structured program. And so that was kind of my first real project coming out of school, was to put together a structured program for doing bacteriology, doing the fat test, doing all the different tests that they do at Reser's Foods. And so that was kind of a trial by fire to some extent.

**TEM:** Do you think that at that point in the food industry, was there more of a focus on—was there an increasing focus on quality control? Was that changing? Or was it just that they were establishing a program at the place you happened to get a job?

**JE:** I think it was just that they just never established a program. And I think it was changing to some extent; there was so much more emphasis on, you know, I mean you never heard of *E. coli* O157:H7 until about that time, as it's when basically bacteria are arising that are—or bacterial strains are mutating or whatever it happens to be—that are able to kill people, and they're able to really, really hurt people. So you've got strains of bacteria growing. Listeria was becoming something that was very, very much at the forefront at that time. You had problems with coleslaw and things like that in our cabbage. You know, they trace it back to there's—you used a certain type of animal manure to fertilize a field, and that manure had listeria that got into the cabbage, and that got into the, you know. So it's one of those things that I kind of enjoyed that puzzle part of it, but at the same time I'm thinking to myself, you know, "if I don't do my job exactly right somebody could get hurt. Somebody really could get hurt." So you have to be very, very serious about how you conduct yourself.

**TEM:** Was that a place that you considered staying?

**JE:** You know, the problem with it at the time was - and I don't want to cast any aspersions on the research in any shape, way or form - but the food industry is fairly low-paying, at least at that time it was, and I had a hard time thinking I was going to make a living there. I could actually make, at that time, I could actually make more money doing what I did before college working at a grocery store than I could at Reser's. And so I was like, "man, this is tough," you know, because it's like I got this degree now, I'm working for this company, I was hired because I have this degree and I'm making a lot less money than I was before, working at a grocery store and checking groceries. So I wasn't—it wasn't really on my radar as a place to stay. Plus, I don't know, like I said, food plants are interesting, especially if it's a sausage plant, where I worked there. So that wasn't really where I wanted to be forever.

**TEM:** Yeah. So Blitz calls and says hi?

**JE:** Yeah, so Blitz calls, yes. Yeah that was kind of a—that was a good thing actually. So yeah, I was there for about a year, year and a half or whatever, and worked on the laboratory. And so I get the call from Blitz and went in and interviewed for that. Now, so Blitz at that time, I don't know if you're familiar with Blitz-Weinhard or not, but very old school company, right? So this is develop—Blitz's history goes back to 1856 I think, so it was the oldest continuously operating brewery west of the Mississippi River. It's a 1.8 million barrel brewery in the middle of a downtown area of Portland, five city blocks. There's actually still a family connection because Fred Wessinger, who was the great-grandson of Henry Weinhard, still had an office at Blitz at the time, and he had done some brand development. He didn't own it anymore. Blitz was undergoing a multiple ownership situation. They had been purchased from the Wessingers by Pabst Brewing Company in 1979, and then Pabst had sold out, I think in 1987, to G. Heileman.

So when I came in there, I came in there in 1989, they were owned by G. Heileman. G. Heileman was having some problems at the time; so G. Heileman's a series of breweries around the country, or a network of breweries around the country, of which Blitz was one, Rainier was one, there was a brewery in California, Georgia, there's one in Texas, there's one—I think there was a total of like eleven or something like that. Bellville, Illinois there's a brewery. You know, there's a whole bunch of them. And so they were undergoing some problems, and it's a long series of events, and I don't know if I want to go through the whole process exactly, but basically the company was sold to an Australian entrepreneur, Alan Bond, in 1988 I think - '87 or '88. Right after Heileman bought it from Pabst, they turned around and sold again. They sold it for 1.2 billion dollars. That was right before one of the big stock market crashes; I think it was Black Thursday or something like that. And so the day after Black Thursday, the company, they were valued at like 300 million dollars, so lost like three quarters of its value in one day, and it was pretty horrifying.

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So what makes this especially bad is the fact that the bond corporation had leveraged most of the debt to purchase the company, so there was a lot of jump on debt. So I wasn't part of, you know, so I wasn't part of this thing, so this is a little bit of hearsay, but basically what it amounted to was the company was worth 1.2 billion, sold, a day later worth 300 million dollars. The company, or the bond company, figures out a way they can get rid of the company pretty quickly and get his money back out of it, because they had an airline division which they sold off, a little small regional airline, and they also had a bakery division, sold off those. He got his hard cash back out of it and then left, basically left the company with about 800 million dollars of unsecured debt.

**TEM:** So that's essentially three owners in...

**JE:** Yeah, a pretty short timeframe. But that's not even the most owners either, because, so then the company was—let's see, I'm trying to think of the sequence of events now. So it was Bond, and then it was owned by the banks for a little while, I think because he defaulted on his loans with them. But he got his—like I said, he got his cash back out of it. And then it went to a company, an investment company. It's a company that owned, for a while they owned Stetson Hats and they owned 7-Up and then they owned us. And then, let's see, it's Bond, the banks, the investment company, and then—and basically it went bankrupt at one point there. We still, we always got paid, so that was one of the things, and we were still making a lot of beer, we were making a ton of beer out of there. And then it ended up being purchased by Stroh in 1996. The dates are going to be a little fuzzy today...Stroh in 1996.

And Stroh Brewing Company was a company that, at that time, was basically debt-free, but they had about four or five breweries around the—or eighty-six breweries around the country at the time. And they started a bit of a consolidation process. And so I think we ended up with eight breweries or something like that operating at the time, all regional breweries. The problem was that they had a million dollars in debt that couldn't be serviced. It's just there; there was just no way to stay ahead of that. They owned some good brands, they had some great brands, they owned the Henry's brands, they owned Colt 45, Mickey's Malt Liquor, they owned Old Style. A lot of very profitable brands; not necessarily brands that you're so proud of making, necessarily, at the moment, or I mean at the same time. They're liquid money. I mean, you definitely make money doing these things.

So they owned these brands but it was just impossible to service that debt in the state they were in. It was just overwhelming for them. So basically the fact that Stroh bought the company was eventually what brought down not only that, those breweries, but also Stroh as well, and sucked them down to the point where, in 1999, they shut the place down.

**TEM:** Were there ever any other brands brewed at the Henry's—at the Blitz-Weinhard facility?

**JE:** Yep, they did contract brewing and they contract-brewed Sam Adams there, Boston Brewing Company. So that was Sam Adams lager they did there for a long time.

**TEM:** But not any of the other Stroh's brands, for instance? Were those still brewed regionally?

**JE:** We did—we had, what did we have...? I think there's like thirty brands that came out of there, so—

**TEM:** Oh, okay.

**JE:** But, because, there was, like I said, the Henry's family, which is between four and six brands, depending on what time of history you're talking about, the Colt 45, which is Colt 45 Malt Liquor, and the Mickey's Malt Liquor. There was a Carling Black Label, and there was a, you know, there was a whole series of value line brands, so Blitz, Blitz-Weinhard as a value line brand, Bohemian, Burgermeister, Schaefer, Stag, Schmidt, Blatz, Blatz Genuine Draft, A-1, the list goes on. There's like seventeen different value line brands that would come out of there - all the same beer, actually. People think that's kind of funny, but it's like you'll have one liquor that's called value line, one beer; you run the cans in there, you run Schmidt cans in there, when it's time to change to Stag you make a gap in the pasteurizer and you put Stag cans in, start running Stag cans.

**TEM:** That's branding.

[0:24:58]

**JE:** That's exactly what it is. So, there was - what's funny about that, like a funny story about that - is one time we pulled this article out of the *Oregonian*, it was an article - and I don't know who wrote it, it wasn't John Foyston, it was somebody else - but it was an article that was written and put in the *Oregonian* where people compared the cheap beers, is basically what it amounted to. And so, they're comparing Burgermeister, Bohemian, Heidelberg, and Blitz, which we knew were all four exactly the same beer, and they were talking about the nuances of the differences in these beers, and it was like, "hmm, okay. That's interesting."

**TEM:** That's the influence of the label.

**JE:** Right. But we also did for Fred Wessinger - who was, like I said, the great-grandson of Henry Weinhard - we did a St. Ides malt liquor, which if you ever watch *Boyz n the Hood*, the beer that they're carrying around there all came out of the Portland brewery. And we also did another one called Minott's Black Star, we did that one. We did all kinds of brands; we did all kinds of stuff there with the Henry's family and the malt liquor family and the value line family. It was kind of a mainstay for us. But there's lots of different things that happened over the years. I mean, we did, you know, the Henry's root beer; we did nonalcoholic root beer, we also did a nonalcoholic beer called Kingsbury. So, we made the—I got a great education in making beer there. It was incredible. These guys really knew what they were doing.

**TEM:** How many brewers were on staff when you started?

**JE:** At Blitz?

**TEM:** Yeah.

**JE:** You know, the entire company was about two hundred and fifty people total. I don't know exactly how many brewers *per se*. There were ten of us in the laboratory; there was a certain amount of office staff. I would say there's probably two hundred people that actually worked on the floor there, and probably between maintenance, packaging and brewing, you know. And they were doing two or three shifts, depending on what department they're into.

**TEM:** Yeah. Was there—so in the ten years that you were there, nearly ten years—

**JE:** Yep, it was about ten years.

**TEM:** As this, the company turnover, was happening, did you start seeing staff turnover as well? You mentioned earlier that people stayed there.

**JE:** Yeah, more toward the end, yeah. Certainly there was more, but there were a lot of guys. You know, the thing was, this was a Teamster environment; this was a union company. So there were a lot of guys that had been there for, you know, they were probably in there, close to fifty years old, when they were getting close to their retirement. You know, they were getting awful close to their union retirement, so those guys wanted to hang on as long as they could. They're not going to do that, you know, so they're—most of these guys hung on. It's a good retirement, it was a good—it was a good middle class wage, good way to make a living.

And then they loved doing it. I mean, they really were proud of what they did there, for good reason. I mean, the Henry's products were a great line of products. Everything that went out of there, everybody had some pride in the malt liquors or the contractors or whatever. They wanted to make sure it was perfect when it left the door. So, a great group of people.

**TEM:** Yeah, I've heard that about the people, other people that I've talked to in the brewing industry really speak highly of...

**JE:** They knew what they were doing. They were a very well-trained people and they, a lot of them had been to the Siebel Institute in Chicago and taken brewing classes and things. So they were at—they were from the old school of brewing, that's what that is, a different world back then. It wasn't the craft brewing, but it was kind of the precursor to craft brewing to some extent. We started using a lot of hops; I mean, we were one of the first breweries that started using a lot of hops in beers and using them for flavor and aroma.



**TEM:** What do you consider that difference between old school brewing and craft? Like what would be the defining difference, or differences?

**JE:** You know, I think the old school brewery to some extent, like I said, it's, we brewed with adjunct for one thing. So in addition to malt and hops you also use some other source of sugar, which could be corn syrup, it could be corn grits, there's other ways; I mean, you can use potatoes if you want to. I mean that, for us, that was the convenient things to use. So you're trying to maximize what you're doing but you're also brewing a high gravity, which is another thing to do as a way of increasing the capacity of a brewery. So you brew, basically, concentrated beer and then you dilute to gravity.

You know, it's really hard, especially between Blitz and the craft brewers, because Blitz was kind of almost in-between in a sense. You know, the old school brewers, they wanted, you know, they weren't necessarily making the absolute hoppiest beer on the planet; that wasn't necessarily their goal. It was to make really good, drinkable, everyday kinds of beers, more than anything. And the Henry's family kind of was outside of that a little bit; it kind of got in a little bit more of that, where there's a lot more flavors going on. But you know, that crisp, light, easy-drinking lager-style beer was really the goal for so many years, really.

**TEM:** Was there talk about developing new styles or changing recipes at all? Or was that sort of set because of what the company did and what the consumer expected?

[0:30:09]

**JE:** Yeah, it's—I wasn't really involved in that part of it. It was a much, I mean, it was a definitely much bigger structure versus where I'm at right now in terms of, the people that were developing the recipes weren't even in Portland so much, the people that wanted to do any kind of development. So if they came to us with a new recipe or a new idea for a recipe or something like that, it was—it had already been all pre-worked out and everything else, it was like, "here's your recipe, brew this beer" kind of thing, and make it the way we want it to be. So that's kind of really the difference.

**TEM:** What about relationships with hop growers? Did you—

**JE:** I didn't know any at the time, because I worked in the laboratory. So I knew what hops were, I knew we used them, I analyzed for bittering units and stuff, but I didn't have anything to do with the supply chain at that time. I was just laboratory. So I analyzed the beer, I made sure it was clean; I took care of the lab. When I worked in the micro department - I moved, basically, to be the company microbiologist, after about five years there. I was appointed to microbiology and I didn't move from that part of the department. And I basically did yeast culture maintenance and bacteriology for a long time. So as far as the hanging out with the hop growers and people like that, didn't happen really, so.

**TEM:** But did you—would it be fair to say that you were hanging out with the brewers, though?

**JE:** Yeah, I mean basically it was—it really was a big family, there's no doubt about it. It was kind of a—I guess what's kind of interesting is the fact that since it was such a big company it was, we had the packaging side, we had the brewing side, and I swear to God there's people from the packaging side that had never even been in the brewery, even though it's five blocks. I mean, they may have walked through it to get to the offices at one time or another to do some kind of personnel there. They didn't know what was going on, on this side of the building. And the people in the brewing didn't know what was going on in the packaging side of the building. They didn't really go from one side to the other. So it was a bit of a divided society in a way.

And then the maintenance guys, they were kind of their own guys entirely. And if you've ever worked in a brewery, you know that maintenance is a huge part of a brewery. It's a massive part because there's so many moving pieces, especially on the packaging side. There's so many moving pieces and pumps and heaters and coolers, you know, all that kind of stuff that has to happen. But as far as getting to know the brewers, I mean, I got to know a lot of them pretty well. I mean, I got to know the guys that I spent the most time with, like the guys in the filter cellars, because as a QA guy I'm the guy that analyzes the beer when it's finished. The brewers are responsible for the beer until it gets finished and then I would go down and analyze it when it was finished. And I would trek to the cellars every day and pull samples and things.

**TEM:** What's a filter cellar?

**JE:** Filter cellars is where you filter the beer to the finished state so it's ready to package. So, you know, a beer is fermented, it's stored, but it's still hazy as it's—through this part of the process. And then when you're done with storage, then you filter it and you get it ready for packaging.

**TEM:** Okay.

**JE:** You filter it and you make sure the carbonation level is correct for packaging.

**TEM:** Was that the point—so...

**JE:** That's where they required QA release. So if I went down there and I said "this tank does not meet specification, I will not release it," then they could not package it. As a QA guy that's where my authority was basically, was "you cannot package this beer regardless of how much you want to put it in the bottle, it's not ready to package yet because you have to..." And a lot of times that involved, like, it would be off on alcohol or off on gravity. And sometimes it would just be a water adjustment or something like that; they'd have to adjust the water and then mix it together and make sure everything's correct.

**TEM:** What was the point where you thought, "you know, actually I want to become a brewer?"

**JE:** You know what's really funny is I've never really actually become a brewer. I really haven't. I mean, never entirely. I never spent a lot of time brewing, *per se*. I went from the laboratory when I came to BridgePort - so I came here in 1998, I came to BridgePort, and I came here as a QA manager, so I never brewed. I couldn't brew at Blitz, for one thing, because I wasn't in the union, so I couldn't touch anything in the brewery. I could talk to the guys, I could ask them questions, I could look at stuff, and certainly I did that all the time. If I had time to do that, I'd go out there and "well, what process is going on here? What are you doing here?" and learn the process almost osmotically in a sense, you know, from these guys. And just going out there and just absorbing the information and watching the process, walking the process from one end of the brewery to the other. There's a lot of walking to be done. And I was on the sixth floor where I was - and there's five floors of cellars underneath me and there's like three floors up above of different operations up above and then the packaging. So the department had its own intricacies as well.

So I spent a lot of time, like I said, osmotically getting the brewing process. But I never actually—and I did take, I was kind of proactive and I talked to my boss and asked him about taking the brewing courses, and so learning more about the process that way, so I was able to take some, a couple brewing courses. I took a Master Brewers course, I took a couple Siebel courses. And any chance I had to learn about brewing. One thing that happened is right after I started at Blitz—so this is backing up again a little bit—

**TEM:** That's okay.

[0:35:35]

**JE:** Right after I started at Blitz, I actually—is when there's a lot of stuff going on with the company trying to figure out how to survive, is what it amounted to. So they had a lot of stuff going on up in Rainier and they were not very happy with the structure that was going on with it at the time. There were some people that were leaving that they—not of their own accord. So they had basically emptied out this place and they went up there and they did some audits and they discovered that there's a lot of data being falsified and all kinds of this other stuff going on. A lot of just bad stuff. So they basically came to me and said "hey listen, we know you're new at the company, but do you want to go up and help set up the laboratory up in Rainier and spend some time up there?" "Sure."

So they sent me up there. I ended up spending seven weeks living in a hotel up there and basically assembling the laboratory up at Rainer and going through that process. And so that was, you know, that was kind of my—I got these brewing classes, I got some of this under my belt, and I was able to kind of assemble the pieces, you know. Like I said, I never really had a brewing, a full-scale, start to finish, you know, two-year brewing course. I never got a diploma in brewing, *per se*. But you know, I learned from a lot of people that really knew what they were talking about, so that helped me a lot. Just that hands-on, going up there, spending time at their breweries, finding out how that brewery operated as well. Putting that laboratory together helped me a ton in learning how to brew. But I never really got hands-on

brewing experience until I got to BridgePort, and that's when I really got hands-on. I could walk down there and I could actually make a brew, kind of thing.

**TEM:** So you moved, what is it, five blocks, essentially?

**JE:** Eh, a little bit more.

**TEM:** Maybe a little bit more than that?

**JE:** It's almost ten blocks I think actually, yeah. Down the street, yep.

**TEM:** So down the street, and you started as the quality assurance manager here in '98.

**JE:** Right.

**TEM:** What was the difference? What are some of the differences between something that is definitely a much larger brewery?

**JE:** Yeah, so at that time I think Blitz was putting about 1.4 million barrels a year out the door; BridgePort was putting 2,500 barrels a year out the door. So I walked in here very first day, Monday, and nothing was happening. It was quiet. Packing department was dead cold, nothing happening. Lights were out. It was like, "my God, what do I do?" You know, because I knew Blitz was failing, I knew the parent company was failing, and I knew they were in trouble. And I had talked to our plant manager over there and I said—because I was really struggling with the decision to move, because, I mean, I was in a big company with a lot of people around me and a corporate structure and all this kind of stuff. And I get this offer to come be the community manager here and it's like, wow, it's a little dinky craft brewery, you know. It was like, really?

And so I talked to our plant manager and he said "listen," he said, "if I were you," he said, "I don't see anything good financially happening with this company. If I were you, I'd go." So I did, I came over here. But it was like, the first day I walked in, I just went "oh my God, what did I do?" because it just seemed so quiet. There was just nothing going on. It was very relaxed and very quiet, I could go out in the brewery anyplace I wanted to, I could touch anything, I could help with anything I wanted to do. Whereas at Blitz, you know, like I said, it was a union environment over there. I couldn't brew, I couldn't, you know, I wasn't allowed to do this, wasn't allowed to do that, so basically I had to watch most of the time. Out here, it's all hands-on, it's all, it's a completely hands-on place. The structure was much, much smaller. You're talking about basically a three-level structure. At the time, Karl was my boss, so I had Karl Ockert as the plant manager here. We had a row of managers, five of us I guess, and then the rest of the crew. That was it, that's the whole staff.

So, much more accessible. I mean, we're talking about three-quarters of a city block versus five city blocks, a huge difference. I mean, they made 20,000 barrels in about a week and a half there, you know. We made it in a year here, so it was a big difference. Over there, five barrels of beer goes down the drain, it's not a big deal. Over here, big deal. You don't want to lose five barrels of beer. Somebody's got to answer for that. But at the same time, it was kind of the same situation when I went to Rainier, is that they—the laboratory needed to be upgraded, we needed to put in structured processes for how we did things.

[0:40:18]

And so basically, I kind of developed a philosophy when I walked in the door. I said "listen," I said, "I want to have a basic goal in mind when I walk in the door here, so the goal is"—and what I had heard from people about craft brewers, when I talked to people about craft brewers, basically is they said, "craft breweries are great except that I could buy one one day and it tastes like one thing, and I can buy it a couple weeks later and it tastes different. Not necessarily bad, just different." It's not the same thing anymore. And so I figured, you know, consistency is the thing. We need to be consistent with what we do here. We need to be clean and we need to make good product. We have a good reputation in the city of Portland, so I said, "we want to try to keep that reputation by not putting any kind of spoiled beer out the door." You can destroy a brewery pretty fast in the city of Portland with spoiled beer, because we don't pasteurize or do any kind of sterile filtration of any sort.

So I said, "here's the deal: we want to be consistent." I have a guy walk up to the bar here and say "I just had the best beer I've ever had, it's a BridgePort IPA," and then two weeks later he brings six of his friends and they come in and it's not the same beer, you've got a problem. You've lost seven people basically at that point, you know. So I said, "we've got to be consistent. We have to be consistently good. That's what we have to do. So once we have something people really love, we are going to keep it as-is, and if they want something else we'll make a new brand out of it. But we want to make sure that we hold the customers and keep loyal customers as they buy our beer." And that's what we do, you know. And I've known so many people over the years that say "hey, my go-to beer, because it's always consistent, always really good, is BridgePort IPA. I always have that in my fridge. If I never know what to buy on the shelf, I'll buy BridgePort IPA." And that's what I like to hear from people.

**TEM:** And that's a point; so you come in '98, was that a—did it feel like a point of exponential growth for BridgePort?

**JE:** It wasn't exponential. It was a ton of growth. It was one thing—Gambrinus did own the company, they bought the company in 1995. And they had done quite a bit, which is one of the reasons I wanted to come here, because it didn't look like it had been assembled by, you know, garage mechanics. We had a brand new filler, a relatively new filler, a new labeler; the packaging line looked pretty good. It had a ways to go yet. The brew house itself had been upgraded a little bit and they had—Gambrinus had committed money to making the brewery better. It brought in some people to develop the IPA recipe. Our owner brought in a guy from Australia whose name is Phil Sexton, a very, very intelligent guy that is an entrepreneur in Australia, and he's the guy that actually developed our IPA recipe and he made this recipe. It was supposed to be a niche beer originally; it turned out to be a real big selling force.

**TEM:** How long was he here?

**JE:** He was here for—I'm not exactly sure because he went—the chronological, I know the chronological events were, is that Karl was the original brewmaster here and then he left. And it might have been right before Carlos Alvarez bought the company before Gambrinus bought the company. And then—so they had an interim brewmaster who was replaced by Phil, and Phil was a brewmaster, I think he was here for about a year. And then he was—and then they brought Karl back, and Karl was brewmaster when I took over the QA department.

**TEM:** So at that point there's growth and definitely a need for consistency, because more people are buying the beer.

**JE:** Right, exactly. Well, and I think it was one of the things that the craft brew industry was getting to that point: the Widmer brothers were in business, at that time Portland Brewing was going strong, Deschutes was in business, Full Sail was in business. We're all making beers and we're starting to realize that this was a business. It wasn't just some guys in a brewpub making a little bit of beer; this is a real business and we're going to make some beer and we're bottling the product, we're sending it out, it's being shipped away from here. We have to be consistent, we're going to get the attention of alcohol authorities at the size we are now, so we have to make sure that our alcohols are what we say they are and we have to make sure the analysis is correct. We had to have people that know what they're doing. So like in any organized process of a business that wants to make money, you have to be consistent, you have to put good product out the door all the time. So it has to look good.

**TEM:** When do you feel like—so you were saying, you know, attracting the attention, not that alcohol authorities weren't paying attention before, but at what point do you feel like craft brewers started to really attract attention? That it's, this is a thing, this is an industry that's not flash in the pan?

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**JE:** I don't know, maybe it was just by our stick-to-itiveness and the fact that we were around a long time and we started basically really started catching fire about the time that BridgePort, in 1984, so you know, within five years people knew that we weren't going to go away. It was growing and not collapsing; it wasn't stagnant, it was going strong, people loved it. I know it got the attention of the large brewers because we're stealing tap handles around the city, of course, and around the state. You know, exporting the beer out of the state to surrounding states, and it was, you just started hearing more about breweries cropping up all over the place. Colorado, Washington, Oregon, California, you know. It's like "wow, there's breweries everywhere," you know. All the sudden there—you just keep hearing about them.

And then also we had the - where we became a legitimate part of the Master Brewers Association, which is kind of interesting too because it was one of those things; I was never even really allowed to be a part of the Master Brewers until like my last couple years at Blitz. What you would see is craft brewers coming and they were not like the large brewers. I mean, large brewers would come and they'd be wearing shirts and ties and slacks, and craft brewers would come and they would have—they'd be carrying their skateboard and they had tats and they had the, you know, they were not like me. I'm not that kind of a craft brewer. But at the same time they were just a different group of people. They were all—it felt different. It just had a real different feel to it. It was like, these guys are, they're cool, they're creative, they're doing some interesting things, and the large brewers are kind of going like, "hmm, you know, what's this, what's going on here?"

And for a while I think they just kind of dismissed them as "eh, it's just a bunch of garage brewers," and, you know, "they're going to get tired after a while. They're not going to make any money, they're going to find out how expensive it is to make beer and they're going to go away." It's like, [tsks] actually didn't happen there. A lot of really, really smart people in this industry. Really smart people. I know guys that are aerospace engineers, electrical engineers, and biochemists and PhDs. I mean, they're out there, decided they didn't want to do research and biochemistry, and they want to make beer. So it's a lifestyle, it becomes a lifestyle with people. That's the whole thing is, people don't grasp, it's not like going to work at a cement factory or something like that. If you go to work at a cement factory, you go to work every day and you do your job, you go home. Being in brewing is a—people that I know that are in brewing, they live it. It's what you do in the evening and weekends and vacations, you know. It's part of your life.

**TEM:** Do you think that it—did it feel part of the life at Blitz or with other macrobrewers?

**JE:** Yeah, it did. It really, it still was. I mean, brewing was still a lot more of a lifestyle career—I call it a lifestyle career—than just a job. It was definitely something that became part of you after a while. Especially because you realized that your friends knew that you were doing something that was not being an accountant or being, you know, or working in a store somewhere. It was something pretty different really, and it was not your average job. It was not your average industry.

**TEM:** So you're running the Quality Assurance Department program here until 2004.

**JE:** Okay, if you say so. I can't remember the dates myself. It sounds right.

**TEM:** According to the official historical record on the notecard.

**JE:** Okay, alright. Well it must be right, then.

**TEM:** It must be right.

**JE:** Right.

**TEM:** So what was the neighborhood like?

**JE:** Oh, yeah.

**TEM:** You know, those kind of early, when you were first here...

**JE:** Nothing like this. Yeah, it was really different. So this was an industrial neighborhood, so that way, which is south, would be Wilbur-Ellis, so we called it the powdered roadkill factory. So basically it's, they did, like, animal feed supplements and things like that, and they would do things like blood meal and all kinds of stuff. So to that way, which is east toward the river here, this side of the building, 13th street was gravel and there was railroad tracks that ran up here. So we could sit out on the dock after work and have a beer because the dock was part of the pub, and they would run railroad cars up to empty the blood meal and all that kind of stuff. And once they got them up there they'd turn on these boxcar shakers, which would be ugly; it would be loud and noisy and then create this cloud of red dust that would come floating across the—floating down the street. So basically you take a coaster and you set it over the top of your beer, and then when you want a drink you just have a drink and then put the coaster back on. And it was a different, you know, it was kind of a funky thing.

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But you know, the gravel street, like I said, and the building across the way was like a tile, storage or something like, I don't know what it was exactly. So it was an industrial building, it was a brick building. Like I said, we've got Wilbur-Ellis over there, which is—I mean it's a great business and everything else, but it was, it kind of gives you a feel for how the neighborhood was. It was much more industrial feeling at the time. There was Jackson Machine Works across the street over here, which is a big machine shop, very industrial. I don't remember what this building was over here. I think it looked the same but they kind of, they re-did it. Right now it's like a—it's full of computers and electronics and stuff. Up there does some kind of a, I don't know, switching station or something like that, or some kind of big computer firm or something like that. But it was all more like those kinds of old type of industries here before. This was a place where people didn't come too much unless you wanted to come down and have a beer and a slice of pizza at BridgePort.

**TEM:** When did that creeping change start to happen? When did you really start noticing that the character of the neighborhood was changing?

**JE:** Well, I guess we kind of initiated it. I think it was; I mean, at least right here. But I know that the owners realized that there was, because of the urban growth boundary of Portland, they wanted the center of the city to grow and to be revitalized. So you started seeing stuff coming this direction. And it started at Blitz because when I left Blitz - I left Blitz in 1998 - they shut down in 1999, they were purchased by Gerding and Edlen who turned it into the Brewery Blocks. So a big shopping mall, restaurants and office space, you know, a multi-use kind of a thing; very, very expensive property. And our armory, which we used to use to store beer in, is now the, it's the performing arts center. So that was kind of when you saw that happening. And I mean, from our perspective, you saw that happening probably like four years, five years after I started it. That was really moving forward, was moving this direction from Burnside this way.

And so the owner took notice of this and thought, well, you know, sooner or later, selling pizza by the slice and pints of beer out of this place is not going to make it in terms of being a restaurant in this area. So we sort of then—so that was over our fifteenth anniversary, so '84, '94, '99—or '99, 2000 is when we actually started doing the pub remodel. We did a huge pub remodel. And during our fifteenth birthday party—oh, I'm sorry, that wasn't our fifteenth birthday, it was the twenty-first birthday I guess, when we did our full pub remodel. So I haven't gotten that...yeah, so '84, '94, 2005 we did a pub remodel. We did a brewery expansion in 2000 actually, but we did the pub remodel in 2005. And basically the idea was, it's a bowl away from just being a—we had beer and wine but a limited liquor license, very limited kitchen. We could do pizza, we could do soups and salads, and that was pretty much it. They turned it into a—they expanded the liquor license to include spirits, they went full kitchen, full gourmet kitchen back there, and now they make incredible food. But much more in the tradition of the new Pearl District, I guess, as more upscale. So definitely not the pizza parlor, pizza by the slice on a tan basket kind of thing. They serve different things.

**TEM:** And do you...well, I'll get away from neighborhood character.

**JE:** Yeah.

**TEM:** I love to reflect on how it's changed though. Like it is a...

**JE:** So think about it this way; it's like now it's really a—we've gone from being the kind of cool little quaint antique building or historical building with a bunch of kind of ratty industrial buildings around us, to being kind of the ratty historical building with a bunch of really cool new rebuilt buildings all around us that are full of people now. And there didn't used to be people down here. So people and dogs, you know, lots of dogs in the Pearl District, always being walked. And you have to be careful on the sidewalks sometimes in the morning, because people aren't always, don't always clean up after their dog.

But so it's - there's a lot of dogs, a lot more people - and so what comes with people? There come other problems. There's a lot more traffic, a lot more pedestrian traffic, and there's people, since we do have people living across the street from it now, living across the street from the brewery, living across the street from our loading dock. Specifically, we have people that are concerned about noise and things like that. And I understand that, I get that, and I can't sit here and say "well, we were here first." That doesn't work. That's not nice, you can't do that anyway. So I try to do my best. We've done a lot of things to try to abate the noise and we put restrictions on ourself and say, "well, we can't make noise until this certain time

of day." We've done some other things to try to, you know, make equipment as quiet as we possibly can and just try to sneak in and out as much as possible first thing in the morning for the people that don't get up as early as we do. So the character of the neighborhood has changed immensely in that respect. When I started here, the only people who lived here were people that actually lived on the street, and those are the people that were here.

[0:55:22]

**TEM:** Yeah, it seems like it's been a pretty fast change too.

**JE:** Well yeah, it always seems fast. I mean, at that time it was like we had just constant construction going around us for a long time. It was like, "God, is this ever going to be over?" We had pile drivers working out here, and that makes it, that makes your life nice. It was like [imitates jolting of a pile driver].

**TEM:** Oh yeah, dig a hole to pound a hole.

**JE:** All day long, yeah.

**TEM:** So you switched to being brewmaster, assistant brewmaster, in 2004. How did that happen? What was the transition? What was the impetus for that?

**JE:** Well part of it was - there was a couple different things that happened, actually. So I had been doing the QA thing for a while, I'd been running the QA department, and we had hired another guy, a guy in brewing that had a pretty good QA background as well, but he was a brewer. He was working as a brewer for us. And so we had a guy that was running the department over here that eventually ended up going to our Trumer Brauerei, which is in Berkeley. He was running the brewing department at the time; he was assistant brewmaster. He ended up going to be brewmaster at our brewery in Trumer, and so that slot was open. And so I said "hey listen, I'm interested in advancing my career and I've been interested in doing something different; I'd really like to try this out." And Karl said, "okay that's fine, you can try that out and see what happens."

And so I tried it out, and so I went from a crew of one to a crew of seven, learned a lot more about brewing, and that's when I really spent some time on the floor actually brewing. At that time, I went down and said, "I've got to know this process. If I'm going to be leading this group of guys down here, I have to know this process really well, inside and out." And every brewery's different in how you do that. So, learned the brewing process. At the same time, I was working with Karl doing a lot of recipe development stuff too, which is, you know, it's helped me a ton actually, in the process here as well. So that was kind of the transition for me.

**TEM:** Did you love it? I mean was it something that—did it catch you, then?

**JE:** Yeah absolutely, because it was something new and cool. And at that time, I was also getting much more involved with Master Brewers as well too, so I ended up going through the hierarchy of Master Brewers and becoming president of Master Brewers in the area too. So that was, you know, and I got to know a lot more people, I got to be much more involved with, like, when you talk about getting to know the hop growers and the malt people and all that kind of stuff; got to know a lot more of those people now. So, so many great people. I mean, all the hop growers in Oregon, some of the hop growers up in Washington as well, I know really well too in Yakima, and just all the people we were involved with. So it seemed like, for me, the higher up I got, or the better position I got, it just seemed like I just got that many more people that I got to be friends with and enjoy and be around. So it was a great experience for me.

**TEM:** So at that point, what's the point then where you kind of return to OSU and start working with the students?

**JE:** You know, I'm not sure what year I met Tom Shellhammer actually, but I think that a lot of that had to do with the fact that we wanted to start a—we developed this relationship of doing test brews, of being able to do test brews down there. So we knew that they had a test brewery down there, we didn't really have access to another test brewery, and so we got to know Tom and Jeff Clawson down there. And we started to - because of the test brewing program, we need a way to try out techniques, to try out new hops, to try out new brews without brewing. You know, our system makes a minimum of about fifty barrels at a time, so it's a hundred kegs of beer, essentially. Pretty hard to flush that down the

sewer if you're not happy with it. So if you make it down there, make 1.7 barrels at a time, that's when we really said, "hey, this would be great, we could make 1.7 barrels at a time, we could test our techniques, we can do this."

And that's when Tom kind of walked into the picture. I started getting to know Tom a little bit and we started getting the students involved in Master Brewers as well, so our Master Brewers section was growing exponentially. So what's kind of interesting about the Master Brewers section in this area is the fact that there's a national Master Brewers, which is basically just a headquarters kind of thing, but there's also different sections of it around the country, and we're the only section that does not have a large brewer in it. There's no Miller, there's no Coors, there's no Bud in our section, which is basically Oregon and Washington, Idaho, Montana. Geographically it's one of the largest sections as well; it's huge. We even have Alaskan brewers that come into our section as well, which I'm not really sure why they don't go to District Western Canada, but they can do that. But we're District Northwest.

[1:00:09]

But what's interesting about the fact that there's no large brewer here is we're also the largest district by number of members. And we were growing massively at the time. And when I first started in Master Brewers we got sixty, seventy people in a meeting; now we have close to four hundred at a meeting. Huge. And there'll be as many as twenty to twenty-five students, because we've gotten the students involved and it's their chance to meet people that are in brewing. It's their chance to meet vendors, people that grow hops, people that grow malt, all interacting together at the same time and all sharing information very well, too. This is one of those industries where we don't keep a ton of secrets from each other except maybe our recipes, specifically, but we do trade information a lot. We talk about things a lot. "How do you do this?" "Oh, we do this," you know. It's that kind of a thing. We talk about the processes that we do because we just, we like to learn, you know. We just really like making beer and the things that are involved with it and figuring out a new way of doing something. That's always kind of cool.

So the students get to be a part of that, because it's like, "you've got a growing Fermentation Science program, what can we do to help your Fermentation Science program?" We'll get down there and we talk to the students, we spend time working with them in the brewery, we go down for the career fair that they have once a year and we talk to them down there about becoming brewers. And we usually hire a few people that come up here every year in the summertime, two kids, two students; they come up here and they work all summer long in a brewery, in a practical brewery. So they go out there and we pay them. So we feel like we can abuse them and we got a—[chuckles], we work them on the packaging line, we work them on the brewing side, and the two people will flip during the middle of the summer someplace where one will go from packaging to brewing, and brewing to packaging, and the laboratory. And they learn a ton about the practical side of brewing rather than just the academics of it.

And so that's kind of, you know, some of those things I think Tom was intrigued to begin with. Because I would say, we would talk about things and he would use some terminology that's really much more laboratory kind of terminology versus what you use in a brewery. There's a lot of very esoteric terminology that's used in a brewery and it's like, I said, "I think it would behoove these kids to learn a little bit more about how things are done on the practical side rather than just the academic side; what beer looks like on paper versus what it looks like in an actual brewery." And it developed into a friendship and a mutual respect kind of thing, and Tom's always been a great guy to work with, very open. You forget he's a PhD, you think, "here's a guy that knows so much" [intercom message interrupts]. I'm sorry. But he's been great to work with. I mean Jeff Clawson's great to work with down there, super knowledgeable guys, and they're open to everything that we want to do down there.

**TEM:** So you brewed with the students your Trilog 3 beer.

**JE:** We did, yeah.

**TEM:** Which was a pretty big deal.

**JE:** It was fun, yeah. It wasn't so much that we—we did brew it with them, but the design process, I think, was kind of the cool part for me, because I've designed some beers before. I've designed a few things, but I wanted to kind of see what they would do. So basically we came in with a whiteboard, we brought them into the Old Knucklehead room down in the pub and said "okay, we want to make a beer." And I had Tom basically hand-select five students for us to bring up, and



we brought them up - we had Tom and Jeff and the five students and we had some people from our marketing company. And I said - and they're kind of sitting there - and I go, "I'm not going to give you any ideas." I said, "you give me ideas, you tell me what you want to make, and also I'll tell you if it's possible." I said, "I have veto power, by the way, so don't say anything totally crazy."

So anyway, they came up with a really good beer. They came up with a brown ale, a dry-hopped brown ale that—and they didn't do what you might expect from a group of relatively young people, you might expect something really crazy and wild and off the wall, which is okay, it would have been okay maybe, depending on what it was. But they came up with something very practical and very—they understood. Because I walked them through the process as we were doing it; we basically designed a beer on a whiteboard, put it up there, said "so this is what we want to do: we want these specifications, we want these hops, we want these qualities to be a part of this beer." And they suggested a few things and I said, "okay." I said, "well, maybe that will work, maybe it won't, we may be able to get that ingredient, we might not, we may have to come up with a substitute."

And so they kind of learned that practical side of designing a recipe. It's like, "okay, this is the beer I'd love to see, this a beer I'd love to make, but can't make." And from a production standpoint - from a one-off kind of a standpoint, you can usually make almost anything you want. From a production standpoint, a beer that maybe we might be selling thousands and thousands of barrels of this beer; maybe not. So I had to bring them back down to Earth on a couple things in a couple places, but it was okay. It worked out really good and they understood. I said "well, instead of this we may have to do this, because I know we're not going to be able to get that ingredient," or "that's not really practical from a standpoint," or "we want to balance this beer, we have to balance it, so you have to balance malt and alcohol and IBUs." It's kind of the three things that you really want to balance in a beer. And so maybe it would be more balanced if we did this or adjusted this specification."

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So it was kind of a herding process. I always tell people it's a herding process. It sounds kind of funny, but you're always herding. You're herding natural ingredients, for one thing, which is always this kind of thing, because they're always going from one side to the other. But then making a recipe sometimes is a herding process too, because you have to kind of rein in your own expectations and what you think you can do and what's actually possible and financially viable to do as well.

**TEM:** Well, and I think that that opportunity for students to have the practical experience is...BridgePort seems to be supporting that in many different ways, including the new brewing facility. [Intercom interrupts].

**JE:** I'm sorry. One second. [Dials phone]. Hey Chris?

**Chris:** Yeah.

**JE:** Can I have you guys hold off for about fifteen minutes, please?

**Chris:** Okay.

**JE:** Thank you. Is that about right, you think?

**TEM:** Yeah.

**JE:** Okay.

**TEM:** Yeah, so supporting facility development too.

**JE:** The whole thing is such a win-win-win for me because it's like, yeah, our company has decided, you know, has given a gift, a monetary gift to the brewing department to allow them to build a new brewery, which to me was just like, "my God," it's just staggering when I just heard. It's fantastic, this is unbelievable, this is great. In my alma mater, I've got to work with these people, I get to tell them that they get all this money. So it was a cool thing, it was great for me. So yeah, I mean, definitely got to be supportive of it, especially at this point in my career.

It's kind of to that point now where it's like well, maybe I'll never go anything past brewing a brewmaster, which is okay with me, that's fine. I've been very, very fortunate in the brewing industry to get where I'm at. I feel like I'm a very, extremely fortunate person in that respect, so I want to be able to give back, I really do, because I like these kids, I like this program. Tom and those guys, they do a great job in there. I want to see it flourish. And when I went to Oregon State there was, enrollment was less than fifteen thousand, and now it's twenty-eight thousand I guess. So it's a—I love it, it's fantastic. All the new facilities are down there. My son's seventeen, he's probably going to be going to Oregon State either next year or the year after, and we went down there and took a campus tour and I couldn't believe all the things that have happened down there. So it's great.

**TEM:** Yes, it is amazing.

**JE:** Yeah.

**TEM:** It's changed a lot.

**JE:** Yeah, very proud to see that.

**TEM:** What is the thing that, when you reflect either on your upbringing, your education, your work time, what's something that now makes you feel really proud about the work that you're doing, or where you are?

**JE:** I think it's just what we just talked about, is being able to give back now, being able to pass along information. I mean, I'm at a point now, like I said, where I'm running the brewery, but I've learned over the years that I need to delegate and I need to have people around me that know what they're doing as well. So I try every chance I get to - without trying to be like the big overload guy - is to pass along that information as much as I can, pass along what I've learned and hopefully not repeat historical mistakes. You know, things like that, as much as possible. It does happen no matter what. In a production facility you're going to repeat mistakes and things, but at the same time, if I can pass along things - like we just had a situation where my production manager is leaving to go to another job, which is great for him, it's a good growth opportunity for him. It gave me an opportunity to promote a couple people through the system. And at the same time that's happening, I get to do some more mentoring for him to some extent and help them move through the system as well, and help them learn more. And then at the same time, I still get to work with the Oregon State kids, which are just starting in their careers and be able to tell them a few things.

I can stand there at Master Brewers meetings sometimes with a beer in my hand talking to some student from Oregon State University and say "listen," and they'll ask me a question and I'll be able to explain in great detail. And you know, like this, talking on camera for an hour with you about different things, and seemingly never going to stop, right? I'm not going to stop talking. But being able to pass along that information to other people, I really enjoy that part of it.

**TEM:** Are there any other closing thoughts you might want to add? That seems like a very nice...

**JE:** I guess it's a good place to stop, isn't it?

**TEM:** That's a nice little bow.

**JE:** Right. No, I mean honestly, that really is, a lot of people think "well, you're in it for"—people don't get into brewing for money. And it's like when people walk in the door here, and maybe when I was twenty years old or twenty-five years old I thought "well, I'm going to be rich, I'm going to do all this kind of stuff, I'm going to do all of it. How can I drive a super nice car and live in a huge mansion kind of a house?" You might think those kinds of things when you're a kid. But as you get older, of course, things come into perspective a lot. And then now, I'm just kind of at that point where I wouldn't even want that to some extent. I'm not brewing because I want to be rich or because I want to be famous or anything like that; I'm brewing because I really like it. It's just good people, we enjoy what we're doing. They're creative, artistic people that blend art and science together to do something. It's just, you know, how much better can life get than that? So that's what it's about for me.

[1:10:53]