

Kevin

The Flooring Mill

After 34 years at the Flooring Mill Paul T. Moffatt reflects back on some of his past years.

There were two major disasters at the Flooring Mill. In 1978 the warehouse, which houses millions of dollars worth of flooring, caved in from six feet of wet snow on top of it. The workers were out of work for about only one week because the company improvised warehousing facilities inside the mill itself. No one was killed or injured when the warehouse, 200 by 100 feet square caved in. Another disaster was in 1982 when the woodhouse caught on fire due to a piece of machinery, my Grandfather who is often a spokesman for the company, explained what happened to the media.

The workers had benefits if they got hurt or for the family if they were killed. If a worker at the Mill was hurt they got workman's compen-

sation. The worker didn't get as much money as if they were working but they were well taken care of. If a worker died the family would get some benefits because the worker was covered by insurance.

There was a union at the Mill for 20 years. Evidently the union was not very successful because when the Mill closed up in 1977 by the owners, the Cook Industry the union was disbanded by a lopsided vote by the men returning from a five month layoff. The union has had several strikes over the past years. One even mounted into a three month strike. When the workers finally decided to come back from the strike they were worse off than they were before the strike.

The mill uses steam machinery. They have steam machines which in turn is generated by steam

and the steam comes from big boilers, they got this steam engine, or alternator. They also have lots of other machines inside the mill which makes the flooring.

On the average the mill produces about 100,000 board feet per week. Some weeks they put out about 150,000 to 200,000 board feet per week, but those were the good selling days. Now if the mill could run 60,000 board feet per week they are doing very well.

The major buyer of the wood is Japan. The Japanese would buy up every piece of flooring that the mill puts out if they would let them. Wood is also exported to Germany and England.

About 75% of the colleges and universities in the United States have Robbins Floors in their gyms. Flooring for gyms is the main product of the mill. The mill calls them

port-a-courts. They get there name because the floor can be picked up in about 2 hours and then people could be playing hockey. The court has lots of uses.

The mill has sold millions of board feet around the world. The most famous purchaser my Grandfather remembers is to Jackie Gleason back in 1950. They sold him 10 thousand feet of African Mahogany, a black brown wood. They put this in his home in New York. Three months later it burned down!

The Flooring Mill has gone through tragedies, bad weather, strikes, lay-offs, and fluctuating economies over the past years. Now they have to deal with our present economic "depression." The Mill is hopefully looking forward to a bright future and even better years ahead!