

Nuts and Bolts: Stories from New Britain Manufacturing  
Connecticut Humanities CT at Work Project  
CCSU Students: Emily Oparowski and Kasie Marchini (Vignette by David Rodriguez)  
Interview Subject: Phil Pearson  
Factory subject worked at: Fafnir  
Date of Interview: February 8, 2014  
Location: New Britain Industrial Museum

### Craftsmen Behind the Bearing

Farm Equipment. Jet Engines. Lunar Modules. All of this is possible due to the ball bearing. Phil Pearson a graduate from MIT in Metallurgy was apart of a team that produced these small magnificent objects. Does someone like this work in a top-secret facility underground, no just the hot laboratory rooms in the Fafnir factory.

Talking with Phil and you can feel the love he shared for Fafnir. “The company was very much a family. There were probably nine or ten of us engineers that came from out of town or out of college. We used to have lunch together. We would babysit each other’s kids and go to their weddings, “. In an era where many businesses cared more for productivity and money, Phil stated Fafnir tried to make the workplace safe. They built a happy environment, through social events like a Foreman’s Outing. “Somehow you just got to know people” he went on.

What stood out to me most about Phil was his intelligence in the field of bearings, as well as his adaptability. He could talk your ear off on all the inner workings of a bearing, and then move on to how he worked supplying Pratt and Whitney with bearings for propellers and then jet engines, to helping make needle bearings for General Motors Transmission.

True craftsmen of a trade can apply his skill-set to all facets of the job. No one embodies that ideal more then Phil Pearson. So sit him down and talk about the bearing and you might be surprised at the insight you would find.