

Nuts and Bolts: Stories from New Britain Manufacturing
Connecticut Humanities CT at Work Project
CCSU Students: Carmen Rodriguez
Interview Subject: Stuart Jaeger
Factory subject worked at: Reflexite
Date Interview: February 15, 2014
Location: NBIM

The Big Room

Surrounded by pieces of different colors and shapes of reflective plastics used all over the world, Stuart Jaeger tells us the story of his working days at the Reflexite Manufacturing Plant in New Britain. He speaks with pride about working alongside his co-workers in a big room as an hourly employee despite his engineering degree. “We were all in one big giant room. It was really a funny working situation. This was the corner of an old factory. To have offices they brought in construction trailers. We had seven construction trailers, six inside the building and one outside. This was my office.” There were injuries that occurred with the big machines, but that was minimized compared to the joy and pride working with the Rowland Brothers, the inventors and founders of the company. Mr. Jaeger smiled and raised head higher as he spoke about Bill Rowland the inventor of the plastics. He called him a genius.

In the four and half years that Mr. Jaeger worked for Reflexite, he does not remember having a union, laid-offs or much socializing between the employees. He does, however remembers everyone being paid with a paid check, particularly for the 1970s.

