

Name of Interviewees: Corkie Odell, Doug Odell, Wynne Odell
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Name of Interviewer: Theresa McCulla, Steve Velasquez
Length of Interview: 61:43 minutes

SV: OK.

TM: It's May 4, 2017. [This is Theresa McCulla of the National Museum of American History. I'm here with Steve Velasquez and] we are interviewing Wynne, Doug, and Corkie Odell of Odell Brewing Company. We're meeting at the brewery in Fort Collins, Colorado and this interview is part of the American Brewing History Initiative, which is a project to document and collect the history of beer and brewing in America. So, we'll start with Wynne. Wynne, where and when were you born?

WO: I was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1958.

TM: And who were your parents?

WO: My parents were Warren Dusenbury, my maiden name, Dusenbury, and Zoanne Little Dusenbury, and...

TM: What did they do?

WO: What did they do? My father was an entrepreneur. He started his own business that manufactured and distributed industrial cleaning chemicals. He had worked for Diamond Shamrock for most of his early career and when his division was being closed out, they offered him the customer list to do with what he wanted. So, he started up a b-, started up a business along the lake in, outside of Cleveland and ran that successfully until he became ill later in life. And my mother was an English teacher. She started out actually as a kindergarten teacher. I was the youngest of three children. And she went back to get her master's in English when I was put in nursery school. And then when I came out and started in kindergarten, she started teaching kindergarten, so she could match my half day. And then she moved to fifth grade, which she taught for ten years. And then, went to high school teaching, as an English teacher and retired from that.

TM: So did you grow up in Cleveland?

WO: I grew up in Cleveland.

TM: What was it like growing up in Cleveland?

WO: It was great growing up in Cleveland. No one can believe that coming from Cleveland. [Laughter] But it actually was really nice. It's, we were in an eastern suburb and I went to a private school that was excellent, and had lots of friends, and at that time, you, as a child, were free to roam a lot more than I think you are now. So, I scoured that

neighborhood over the years and made some great friends who I still have at this time, so I thought it was wonderful.

TM: Do you remember much about the food culture growing up, what you ate at home?

WO: Oh, dear. The food culture, so we give, me and my siblings, give my mother great credit for both working and putting food on the table every night. A cook she was not. So, it's, when I think of Cleveland food culture, excitement was getting a steak on my father's birthday and otherwise, it was definitely a square meal, but nothing to celebrate.

TM: And so, where did you go to school?

WO: After...

TM: High school, college?

WO: High school I went to, I was at an all-girls school named Laurel School. And then, its brother school went co-ed when I was in eleventh grade, so I switched to that school, and was part of the inaugural class of women. I think there were eight of us, in an all-boys school, so that was an interesting adventure for two years. And then, I moved out to Walla Walla, Washington to go to Whitman College and I stayed there for four years. When I graduated from Whitman, I went up to Seattle and a couple years later, got an MBA at the University of Washington.

TM: Okay, so you studied business eventually?

WO: Yes, I did.

TM: Okay, alright. So, I'll move right a bit. Doug, where and when were you born?

DO: Los Angeles, 1952.

TM: Okay. And who were your parents?

DO: Morgan Odell and Betty Fletcher Odell. And, let's see what was your next question?
[Laughter]

TM: What did they do for work?

DO: My mother was a homemaker, and my father was in public education, kind of educational administration, so first with the Los Angeles City School Districts. And then, he worked in the Chancellor's office for the California State Universities-, State University system. And then, he headed up a, an organization of independent California colleges and universities until he retired.

TM: And what was it like growing up where you did?

- DO: Fantastic. Yeah, it's a, once again, like what Wynne said, just, I mean, you could go anywhere and it was, you know, almost always great weather in Los Angeles and a number of vacant lots still and some vacant hillsides. So, at least as far a boy goes, it was just, there was a lot of adventure. And we were out so much that the way that my mother called us to dinner was with, like, a 12-inch triangle, steel triangle, with a big banger that she would just ring outside [Laughter], and we could hear it at least, you know, more than a block away, so.
- TM: And can you speak a bit to the food culture, what did you eat when you were called home to dinner?
- DO: Well, my mother, in my opinion, was a very good cook and that's where we ate. We ate at home versus-, all the time, because going out to restaurants just wasn't what we did anyway. And, you know, on occasion, we'd go to a local Italian place, but really not very often. And, and I used to watch my mother cook a lot because I was really interested in it. I learned quite a, quite a few things of that from her. And so, to this day, I still really like to cook and I think, I attribute that, at least experience or-, and interest, combination to finding brewing and recipe development quite interesting because there, there's some similarities.
- TM: What interested you about cooking initially? Do you remember?
- DO: Making something from scratch that tasted good. And maybe my hopes that someday I could make dinners that, that I liked all the time rather than some of the choices my mother had like tongue. [Laughter] So, I don't, I don't know, I think I just like the process of, of putting ingredients together and, and, you know, just taking ingredients and coming up with different combinations, which is essentially what you do with brewing a lot. There's a lot less variety of ingredients, there's essentially just malt, hops, yeast, and, and water, but water doesn't change. But it's just the proportions and the types and the varieties that you use to come up with a huge variety of beer.
- TM: And so, what did you study in college and where did you go?
- DO: I went to Occidental College in Los Angeles and graduated with a degree in psychology. I wasn't much of a student. I remember, academics I always said was about fourth on my list why I was at school. The other three were some combination of, of wanting to run college track, the social aspect of being in college, and staying out of the Vietnam draft. So, between those three I stayed in school, got a degree. But then, I was never terribly interested in psychology, so I went back to school a couple years later to California State University Sonoma. And got a, a BS in geology. And I always say, "Well, rocks doesn't have much to do, don't have much to do with, with brewing but the support classes—chemistry, biology, physics especially—really do."

TM: Great, okay. And I'll ask the last set of introduction questions to Corkie. Corkie, where and when were you born?

CO: I was born in Los Angeles California in 1950, so I'm Doug's older sister. And we lived in a, a suburb of Los Angeles called Eagle Rock, which is up against the foothills in northeast Los Angeles, and as Doug mentioned, it was a lot of vacant lots and for girls too it was a lot of fun to be out and playing and having a good time.

TM: And do you have other memories of, of growing up in the home, or you know, the food culture there or, were they similar to Doug's?

CO: Absolutely my mom was a great cook, and she, I remember she would make lamb a lot, which I still really like. And I think that's an acquired taste. And I think it's probably because we ate it from a young age. The tongue I was not a fan of. [Chuckles] Doug's right about that. But she, we had a lot of fresh vegetables and so that was really a great part of growing up in Los Angeles too, is it wasn't canned food. And so, she did cook a lot from scratch. I'm not nearly as good a cook as Doug is, nor as interested in it, but certainly I appreciated the way that we were raised. And she was a stay-at-home mom. And I, the thing that I remember, sort of the most fondly, is coming home from school, we had a lot of stairs, we lived on a-, in a hilly area and we, I'd walk up the stairs or through the back lot to get to our house, and I'd look in the win-, big window, kitchen window, and I'd see either angel food cake, upside down on a Coke bottle, cooling, or butterscotch brownies. And I recently found her recipe for butterscotch brownies and it's wonderful. So, she was a good dessert cook too.

DO: Do you remember the name of a, of the green grocer she went to?

CO: I don't.

DO: Mr. Casella.

CO: Oh, that's right! Mr. Casella. Yep.

DO: And, yeah, I remember going shopping with her, and, you know, you'd go to the meat market for meat because there was one just down the street. Then, she'd go over to Burbank, I think it was, which is probably 8 miles away, to go to this green grocer at this kind of vegetable wholesale market. And so, she always got really fresh, good stuff, so.

TM: So what did you study in school?

CO: We both went to Eagle Rock High School. And then, I went to college in Portland, Oregon, Lewis and Clark College, and studied sociology. And then I went on when I moved to Denver and went to grad school in urban and regional planning. I never, I

completed all my coursework, but never my thesis, so I don't have a master's, but it was of interest to me.

TM: Okay. And so this is, this is really a question for everybody. How, how did you first become interested in beer? Was there a formative moment that you remember encountering beer or brewing for the first time?

WO: Well, well, I'll go first. So, when I moved to Seattle after graduating from college I met Doug within the first year, I believe. And he was living with someone else, but we became best friends really quickly and that's how we interacted a lot. We went around to the newly opening craft beer bars there and started drinking beer. So, before that, I mean, I drank my share of beer but I never really paid that much attention to it. So, it was discovering it with Doug in the early, that would've been the early '80s, right? Yeah.

DO: Because, you know, I, I really say that although Sierra Nevada and Anchor Brewing were much earlier, well, a little earlier, I, I really think craft brewing got its start in the Pacific Northwest in Seattle and, and Portland area. And so, living in Seattle, it was, it was great because we had, you know, BridgePort and Portland Brewing and Widmer and Red Hook.

WO: And Grant's.

DO: Hale's, Grant's, Bain-, Bainbridge, Thomas Kemper. Oh, and, and Hart, which became Pyramid. And so, there was a, a lot of new beers and new flavors to try out. And, so all these ale houses had popped up. So it was a great thing to go out and experiment, learn about beer more. And I had, I had first homebrewed with an old high school friend of mine in 1975. And I don't know what it is, but for some reason I was just always interested about, in the brewing history and beer labels—I have, have a beer can collection—and, and all the varieties, different beers of different brewing companies. And so, we wanted to try homebrewing and I remember the first batch we made, we used a book called *A Treatise on Lager Beers* by Fred Eckhardt, still have the book by the way. And I, I did get to meet Fred in the last few months of his life at a tribute festival at Hair of the Dog in Portland a couple years back, so that was, that was really memorable. But anyway, so we made this beer and it looked great, nice and yellow and clear and fizzy, but it tasted really bad, like cross between apple cider and cheap champagne [Chuckles], so fortunately I've learned more since then and, and evolved into being able to brew things and other people here as well, that have a lot more variety and a lot more quality, frankly.

TM: So, this early homebrewing—what was your first homebrew kit set-up like?

DO: We had a just a big, like, kettle, aluminum enamel kettle on the stove, and so we boiled, and we used hop extract and hops that were just labeled hops, we had no idea what the

alpha acids were, or what kind they were. Or, this was in 1975, three years before homebrewing became legal, so ingredients was the toughest thing to come by. So, it was, it was really basic. And I remember we fermented in a plastic bag in a wood barrel, with a top off of it.

CO: Yum. [Laughter]

TM: It was outside?

DO: Oh, in his back porch in, at his house. And so, but yeah, we never got very far but fortunately when I moved to Seattle, I started hanging out with local homebrew shop owner and he taught me how to grain brew with all-grain, and, and by then, liquid yeast was now becoming available for, for homebrewers, so it just made all the difference in the world.

TM: So, did you feel at that point that most people, if they wanted to homebrew they learned with these first books or just communicating with others who were brewing?

DO: Yeah, I'm pretty sure that was it. And you know, I know *The Joy of Homebrewing* by Charlie Papazian has been instrumental in a lot of homebrewers' development and success. So, yeah, just over time, the, the interest has exploded and thus the resources available.

TM: I wanted to ask one more question about, so when you did go to Seattle and started to try these, find these new brewers, what, what was it like finding them? Where were they in the city? What were their breweries like?

DO: Very basic. For the most part, old dairy equipment or hand-built stuff. And yeah, I remember Kurt Widmer was especially helpful to me, when I was investigating opening this up, I went and toured around different breweries and, and I went to visit the Widmers, and Rob was there, but he was kind of, he was actually brewing, I don't know what Kurt was doing, but he showed me around and talked to me for a long time. And I had just remembered that all their equipment was all dairy stuff. And of course they moved on to become who they are today. So, but everybody starts somewhere I guess.

WO: Are you going to share the Easy Street Wheat story? Relative to Widmer.

DO: Sure. So, Widmer's first beer was called Widmer Alt, and then their, they really took off when they came out with their Hefeweizen, it was their, their unfiltered wheat beer, which they still make today, and so, when, and then Pyramid, or Hart Brewing at the time, had a filtered wheat. And they both seemed to do pretty well, and so when we got here, one of the beers I wanted to do was a wheat beer. And so, I'd figured well, people here don't really know what craft beer is, so maybe they're not quite ready for an unfiltered beer, so we did a filtered version of a wheat beer. And then, after a while, I

guess, I got up enough gumption to try it, leave it, unfiltered. And changed the recipe just slightly. But I was, I was inspired by Widmer Hefeweizen, and so as soon as we started putting that out, it just, within six months we'd pretty much taken all the filtered wheat handles in, and one point, Easy Street for a few years was our best-selling beer. Not, not any longer, 90 Shilling is. But I remember that when we, we have gotten two Gold medals for, in the Great American Beer Festival, for the Easy Street Wheat. And at the time we got our second one, the only two brewers who had won two Gold medals in the American Wheat category were Widmer and us. So, I guess I copied well. No, I was inspired well. [Laughter]

WO: He copied. [Laughter]

DO: I did not copy. I didn't know, I didn't know what kind of yeast they use, I didn't know what their brewing methods were, so anyway.

TM: And Corkie, I wanted to ask about your early experiences with beer or brewing.

CO: I would say it was college and I drank a lot Rainier Beer, which was made in Olympia, Washington, being in Portland. And then, there was a brewery in Portland called Henry Weinhard's, so once I got, be, legal drinking age, we would occasionally go there and splurge on that. And I think our dad probably drank Hamm's or...

DO: Hamm's, Falstaff, Busch.

CO: Busch. Yeah. That's a big one.

DO: Any one of the lower price brands. That's what he drank. [Chuckles]

CO: So, I really didn't have much exposure to craft beer until Doug started making it and visiting him and drinking his beer was obviously very good, so, but I've always liked beer. It's, it's a good drink.

TM: And so, what prompted the move to Fort Collins?

CO: I was living here.

DO: Corkie was living here.

CO: And Doug and Wynne were, were in Seattle. And as they mentioned, there were a lot of breweries there and they felt like Seattle was maybe oversaturated. And so, I, they had visited me here. They wanted to go somewhere between the West Coast and Cleveland. And we're sort of right in the middle and I convinced them that it was a growing town. We had the university, there was a lot of people that were interested in being outside and I felt like it was, people would be up for it. And so, fortunately, they came here and it worked out.

DO: She was right.

TM: So, when you arrived and you had this idea of starting a business, what, the kind of nuts and bolts process of actually beginning it, what was that like?

DO: Well, you could talk about the business plan.

WO: I created a business plan. Very exciting. But it was based on data that Doug had picked up by traveling around and visiting a number of Northwest breweries, so I based it on...well, I'll tell you what I didn't base it on, was anything relevant to the state of Colorado. We didn't know you could self-distribute. We didn't know there was some of the lowest franchise-, there, there were no franchise laws. Some of the lowest state excise taxes. That our water came directly from the head waters in the Rocky Mountains. We didn't know any of this when we started, so, we, did I say we, we didn't know you could self-distribute?

DO: Yeah.

CO: Yeah.

WO: Yeah, said it again. So, we got lucky.

CO: We did.

DO: Well, I always find it funny that when I, I say really the reason that we, we wanted to do it in western Washington, but even in 1988, we thought it was too saturated with 8 or 9 breweries. And now between the two states, what is there? 500 or more? [Laughs] So, when, when I thought 8 was a lot, how things change.

CO: Absolutely, and when they came here, I really didn't have any intention of helping. I had three little, four kids at home. And, but Doug and Wynne asked me and my then husband for a loan. And we said, "No, we'll just invest and if it goes great, and if not, we're okay. We can lose this money." Fortunately, it went well, and then I started helping Doug just one day a week, brewing and mostly cleaning, cleaning the kettle, cleaning the mash tun, mopping the floor, things like that.

TM: And so, I'm curious about how you, how you envisioned each of your roles in the business in the early years?

CO: Well, Wynne was definitely the business brains behind it.

WO: Right, since that was my background.

CO: She did the licensing and payroll once we started, we actually hired someone and paid them.

WO: Yeah, right. So, it was essentially just running the business side of the business. I was working full time at HP [Hewlett-Packard]. I was pregnant. We had a one-year old and was pregnant with our second child when we opened the brewery. So I was so busy, I can't really remember what I did. But we obviously got it, put in place and ran on that for quite a while.

DO: Yeah, the fact that she had that, got that job when we got here really made it, so, you know, I could work for no pay and Corkie was volunteering, so that was one of our big benefits early on is no labor costs.

TM: And so, what was the first recipe you brewed professionally?

DO: It's called Golden Ale, Odell Golden Ale. It's long gone, but.

WO: You've resurrected it a couple times.

DO: We've resurrected it a few times on our pilot system. But, I, I remember thinking, I didn't know, you know, kind of the same deal with that, is this market ready for an unfiltered wheat beer? I didn't know just how far people were willing to step away from Michelob and, and Bud Light and beers like that, so.

TM: And how did consumers respond?

DO: Well, so I, I wanted this beer to be all-malt and I wanted to have it hoppier and fuller bodied than, than what was out there. But I didn't know how far I could go, and it turns out that people were looking for something a bit more interesting than that one. So, so it worked out.

TM: And so then, where did customers push you after that?

DO: 90 Shilling and then the Easy Street Wheat, and then a hoppier beer with Riley's Red, so.

CO: Named after their son, Riley.

DO: Yeah. And that one gets resurrected on occasion as well.

CO: And I, when we originally, this is Corkie. When we originally brewed the 90 Shilling, I, we didn't think it would be a year-round beer because it was very dark and relatively hoppy for that time of craft brewing, but it was so well received that we just decided to brew it all year-round. And it's still one of our best sellers.

TM: So, it sounds like beer drinkers in, in Colorado were ready for newer things compared to other markets, maybe?

CO: I think, I think they really were.

DO: Yeah.

CO: And it, you know what really helped too is that CooperSmith's, which is a brewpub in Fort Collins, opened up right down the street about-, within weeks of us opening, right before us.

DO: They were 2 weeks before us.

CO: Two weeks before. And so, Brad Page who was their, one of the owners and brewers -?

DO: Yeah, he was the head brewer.

CO: Would, hung out at our brewery a lot, and Doug hung out at their brew, brewpub a lot. And I think it helped with people understanding what it was all about, saying, "Well, you know how CooperSmith's makes their own beer, *we* can make a special beer for you to serve that's not, you know, a commercial, sort of large brewery-made beer." So, I think it did help, that sort of understanding that things were evolving in term-, and there could be different flavors of beer that people could enjoy.

DO: And you talked about, you know, early camaraderie and, like, that's, there's a very good example with CooperSmith and Odell's in that, when, when we got here, or just after we got here, we read in the paper that the general manager at Old Chicago, it's a pizza place downtown, was going to start this brewpub and so, I went over to Old Chicago and introduced myself. And immediately, Scott was kind of, "Really? You're starting a brewery here?" I'm like, "Uh oh!" And I said, "What? Don't worry, it's not going to be a restaurant." And, you know, I think he was still a little wary, but over the course of the summer, we helped each other out with construction. I remember being down in their basement hauling concrete chunks out of there because they needed to lower it. And they were jackhammering and, and Brad and Scott would come over and, like, help frame or put up drywall or something like that. And then early on, we split containers of imported malt from England, so the, the container would go over there and we'd unload half of it at their place and then we'd all come over here and unload the other half here. Well, not here, up the street. So, we, we realized that, you know, we were much stronger working together than, than fighting each other or ignoring each other. And so Brad Page, that Corkie, Corkie mentioned, was their head brewer. And I decided, while we were talking, he said, "How can we promote craft beer in Colorado in, in Fort Collins?" So we just started, decided to start this Colorado Brewers' Festival based on the Oregon Brewers' Festival. And so, I remember we went to the Downtown Business Association and proposed this idea because in Colorado and in most states, a brewery can't hold a special events day permit. So, we had to get a non-profit organization to hold the permit. So, we went to the Business Association and the director at the time was interested in the idea, but she was still quite wary, so she said, "If you give us each \$500 dollars, we'll help put it on." And, you know, it, they made so much money over the years on that thing.

[Chuckles] But the first year we had all eleven breweries that were in Colorado, including Anheuser-Busch and Coors, and it was a real success.

CO: And that was in 1991?

DO: 1990.

CO: 1990?

WO: Yeah, the year after we opened.

CO: So it was within...yeah. That's amazing.

TM: And so, over time, then, you clearly had great success. I'm wondering also about early challenges or hardships, things that were tough, especially in the early years?

DO: You want to speak from a business standpoint?

WO: Well, yeah. I mean, the business perspective, this is Wynne, is never particularly interesting, but one of our really tough times was we, we have always bootstrapped this organization and used some bank financing. But in, when we were buying our new bottling-, our first bottling line in 1995, we were working with a leasing firm out of California. And they said, "Yes, we can do down payments for you. Yes, we will deliver the payment for the bottling line before they deliver it." And in fact, they couldn't do any of that. So, we get to, we ended up having to put the down payment down ourselves with cash we essentially didn't have. And then, the, they wouldn't deliver, the manufacturer wouldn't deliver the bottling line without final payment and the leasing company wasn't going to give it to us until it was already in place and they'd come and inspected it. So, it was, I remember I was screaming on the phone at this fellow who had promised me this and Doug comes and takes the phone away from me, and says, "It's alright. We'll get through this." But that was the one and only time we were ever in the position of thinking, "Oh my God, this isn't going to work. We don't have it together." And fortunately, we did manage to get through that. And we have never had any issue, anything like that since. So, I guess we learned our lesson.

DO: Really the biggest challenge, and when I think back on it, it wasn't that much, I mean, today's biggest challenge is the competition, every other brewery in operation. But back then, it was people who didn't know what craft beer was. So the challenge was to educate people. So, that's, that's what we did everyday, just talk to whoever we could and explain why we were different and why we're, the beer we were making was worth paying more for. And, and it came around pretty quickly.

TM: And how, did you do that primarily in places like the nearby brewpub or customer...

DO: Just at the,

TM: Bars and restaurants?

DO: Well, initially it started where, when we opened, we had three accounts. And I would go to each one of them each week, and just sit at the bar and buy somebody beer and talk to whoever would listen to me. And, and then, we got, you know, another one, another one, and I think within about three or four months we had about eight. And that's when the kind of threshold was crossed where bar owners and managers started calling *us*, saying, "Hey, Joe's got-, down the street's got your beer. They're, they're doing really well with it. I need to put it on." So, that was a turning point.

TM: And so, over time, how would you say you feel the Odell brand has developed? Or how is Odell's different from other breweries?

DO: You know, we all make beer. And there are some unique processes that we use, but I think in general it's a lot more about how you develop your coworkers, how you treat your coworkers, how you interact with your community. And so, I think that's really kind of how you, you separate out yourself and just always do everything possible you can to improve the quality of your beer. And so, I, I think Corkie and Wynne can speak to those outside issues a bit more, well, more in, more in depth than I can. But, yeah, I, I just think that we really have distinguished ourselves through a combination of all those efforts.

CO: I agree. This is Corkie. And I would say one of our early and ongoing sort of challenges was trying to figure out who did what and who was in charge of what and how do we not step on each other's toes or get in each other's spaces, and so that certainly was a, a source of some anxiety over the years. I think that what Doug mentioned is we share, we all sort of shared the value of contribution to our community. We definitely were a family and we were very loyal to each other. And our focus on quality was huge from the beginning. And I think as we've added people, they all embrace that and that it's such a strong part of who we are now is the quality of our beer and our contribution and our commitment to sustainability and then, being a family. And I sort of hesitate to say we're one big family, but if you ask most of our coworkers they would say, "Yes, we're a family." And I had lunch with one of our coworkers recently and she said, "A hundred and thirty people have your back." And that's exactly what it's like. It's, you know, we, we all care very much about each other and for each other and we'll do pretty much anything for each other. So, it's a, it's a really nice thing that we've been able to build and it's been wonderful.

TM: How do you think that you've been able to develop that kind of work culture here?

CO: I think it's focusing on people and making sure that they're, they have an opportunity to be heard. Certainly, paying them well, probably not at first, it probably wasn't very well,

but providing good benefits. Certainly, having people have an opportunity to brew with Doug. I think us three being here most of the time has been pretty powerful and people know us and talk with us. And so, it's not an outside owner who rarely appears. It is something that we all care about very deeply and I think that shows to the people we work with.

WO: You know, this is when, I, I would add to that, that, I sort of forget the question, but going along, I think the underpinnings of our original success were the fact that we invested in quality for our beer right from the start and really focused on that and never got carried away with moving into areas that we didn't feel as competent in or trying to catch the latest fad. And I think sort of that steadiness has been helpful to us. And I think in terms of the culture that Corkie is sharing, it, it helps that we were related, so we did share values right from the start. I don't think there was any intention to build what we have built when we started. But I think our commitment to quality and to each other and our sort of steady growth pattern just has allowed us to evolve into this very—I hate using the word mellow—we're a very well-centered organization. And I think that is just the result of focusing on what's important, the quality and as Corkie said, the people, and we just don't get distracted by what else is going on around us.

TM: I want to ask about a couple of things. One of the things you mentioned is the opportunity to brew with Doug. And so, the process of recipe formulation in brewing here, what is that like day to day?

DO: Well, it, it used to be just me. And then, it was one of the brewers I had hired and me on a couple of recipes. But it evolved into more of a kind of a team effort among a few brewers because, you know, I certainly believe that a few voices coming together on our recipe ideas is, is stronger than a single voice. And so, that's pretty much how it's done now, but the process kind of remains the same that if, if we want to put out a new beer, we'll start with the kind of conceptual discussions. And then, we'll, our, our pilot system manager will take that discussion and turn it into a, a trial recipe and so, we will brew on our pilot system and then we, we bring it to whoever wants to taste it, and say, "Take this beer apart. Tell us the parts you like. Tell us the parts you don't like. What would you like to see? What, what in there is, is already good?" And we'll do a few of those, four, even, and kind of tweak it and getting people's input as time goes on. And then we come out with the beer that we think is representative of, of us and what we're looking for and what we think people want.

TM: Do you have a particular...do you have a customer in mind as you brew or is it really your concept?

- DO: Just, I mean, the customer who drinks craft beer, but I think that if we get a large enough input here, we are covering a, a pretty good spectrum of who might be drinking our beer out in the public.
- WO: This is Wynne. We do now and have for years have a cross-departmental team of sales and marketing and production that meet monthly to talk about what we're seeing in the market, what the customer wants, what production, what our brewing team wants to brew and how we can bring those two together. So, we're, we're absolutely looking now to see what people are looking for in addition to making the beers we want to make on our pilot system.
- TM: So, over time, certainly your brewery has expanded very much. How has that changed your, your process in terms of making beer, formulating recipes?
- DO: Well, recipes, there's a lot more input, like, than before, like I said. But as far as process, I mean, we have so many, we've added so many pieces of equipment and, and process changes over the years to really try and maximize quality and repeatability, consistency, and because I really think that unless your, your intention is to put out a, like, change hops in beer on occasion and make that known, I think people, when they've had our 90 Shilling, for instance, the next time they have it, they want to know what they're getting. And so, I think all of the, all the things that we've put in place to, to achieve that has really been helpful.
- TM: Would you say you feel like there's an ideal size for a craft brewery or not necessarily?
- DO: I think not necessarily as long as they're able to retain their soul and able to retain their quality efforts and improve on their quality efforts as time goes on and maintain, I mean, if, if culture and people are important to you, then grow at a rate where you can maintain that or enhance it. Or if it's not so important to you, maybe you just want to get as big as fast, as fast as you possibly can. But that's just not our recipe for where we've gotten today, today.
- CO: This is Corkie. I think that people have asked us, you know, why is this brewery bigger than you are and they started after you did, and what I say is we, partly it's the quality, but it's partly we didn't have the stomach for that. We didn't want to work 110 hours a week on something and grow it as quickly as possible. And partly it's because beer is perishable and if you send it to an outer state and no one's really paying attention to it, likelihood is the customer is going to get a bad beer or an old beer or an oxidized beer. And so, we've, that's been a really important thing to us. And one of the thing about us, we've been really very fortunate in some of the people that we've hired, and two in particular, Eric Smith, who's now our Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, and Brendan McGivney, who is our Chief Operating Officer, started with us when they were both in their early twenties, and they've just seized opportunities. They've seen where we need

help. They've moved into those areas. They've had a vision probably beyond what our vision maybe was and they are still with us now, obviously, and are part owners of the company. And it's been a really great thing to sort of grow up or have them grow up with us, and I, I thank them so much for, and there are several other people who've been with us more than twenty years, who've just been instrumental in helping us get to be where we are, and also keeping us on track with what our roots are.

DO: I'll add that Brendan and Eric both started out cleaning and filling kegs. [Chuckles] And I also want to clarify that, you know, we don't think shipping beer from Colorado to New York, that beer doesn't get old in the truck, even though we don't, we don't send beer to New York, we do go to Illinois, that's as far east as we go. But where beer gets old, is if you send beer to a market and don't support it and don't have a person there, or you're not visiting all the time. And you're not working with your distributor to, to promote the beer and to, and support their efforts. That's where it gets old because it gets ignored and it sits in the warehouse, so when, we're, I think we're very deliberate when we open up a new market in that we do our very extensive homework to find the best distributor for us and then make sure that we have a plan to support our brands once we get there.

WO: You know, I'd answer, this is Wynne, that question about the ideal brewery size saying that I think if you're in a position where you feel confident about what you're doing a size, that you feel confident about what you're doing, you're still enjoying new challenges and you don't feel overwhelmed, you are where you need to be, and so that can be 650 barrels or a million barrels from my perspective, but you have to be comfortable in your own skin.

TM: I'd love to hear a bit more about how your community involvement, your philanthropic efforts, because it's such a key component of your business.

WO: This is Wynne. We, we do invest a lot of time and energy into our community involvement and it's both because we feel, just from a values perspective, that this is what you do when you're running a successful business, but we also do it because it, it's very meaningful to all the coworkers who have joined us over the years, so we have a number of programs going, but in general, we have a full-time community outreach coordinator who coordinates both our charitable giving. She has a coworker committee that she manages and they meet frequently to decide where to give dollar grants. We give beer to any event that wants it just to support what's going on in the community.

DO: Non-profit events.

WO: Non-, yeah, right. [Chuckles] But we also try to get connected in a service sense in the community, so our coworkers are invited to do hands-on team building days that are out in the community, Habitat for Humanity is an organization we've partnered with a lot, and we encourage our customers to join us in those events as well. We have an

organization called Odell Outreach that reaches out to customers saying, “We’re going to be involved in this. We’d loved to have you join us.” And they get a t-shirt and a beer afterward. So the combination of working it significantly in the brewery and then encouraging our customers to join us, pretty much sums it.

DO: I would add that, I mean, I, I feel to, a, a give-and-take in the sense that the, the people of Fort Collins have been very, very loyal to us and so, it’s just something to even that out, I guess, to thank, thank our community.

TM: And related to this is the idea of sustainability and how you run your business to be kind to the environment around you. Could you describe briefly some of your efforts in that regard?

DO: Sure, our approach is that no matter how you look at it, we’re a manufacturing company, and we do have an environmental footprint to some extent and so, I think it’s just our commitment and our responsibility to try and minimize that, that footprint as much as possible. And so, we do a lot of things internally and externally, but as far as internally, we have programs and incentives in place to work to, to try and identify places where we can use less water and achieve the same or better results. We participate in renewable energy through solar panels on our warehouse roof and also through the city of Fort Collins wind generation program, kind of a green energy surcharge that we pay on our bills to help support development of wind energy. And then, we have a sustain-, full-time sustainability coordinator and one of her jobs is to, well, our ultimate goal is to be a zero waste, zero landfill brewery and so that involves just identifying and developing just as many possible sources for our waste materials. And in many cases, waste materials is somebody else-, somebody else’s valuable asset. And so, one of the things that I’m very excited about is being able to use, like, our high-strength wastewater and our spent grain to, to produce something of value, and so the spent grain, I mean, that’s an easy one, you can always, at least where we live, and if you’re not in the middle of Chicago or somewhere it’s pretty easy find so-, a beef farmer or a dairy farmer who, who wants your spent grain because it’s, we take the carbohydrates out, but the protein is still in there. But then our high-strength wastewater, which we remove and pump to a tank outside, that’s yeast from tanks, that’s old beer, other things that, that have high-strength waste. And we’re currently involved in a pilot program, which we hope will pan out with the city of Fort Collins, where the, they need to, well, all wastewater treatment plants in the United States need to meet more strict guidelines on phosphorus and nitrogen effluent release, and so, there’s, there’s the expensive ways to do that through adding methanol is one of the ways to the waste stream to add a carbon source for the bugs to feast on more, and, and then they’ll reduce that if, if the bugs are, are more active and, and live better lives and are more, more productive, I guess, they, they kind of naturally low-, lower those, those compounds. But they’ve found that any carbon source is good and so it’s, it just turns out that yeast and waste beer is a great carbon source, soluble carbon. And so,

we truck our high-strength waste over to the waste water treatment plant over here at Mulberry, and they've built a system, we're still in the pilot phases now, but they've built a system to dose our high-strength in, wastewater in, at a, at a given rate and they're testing different rates. And it's really kind of a natural and low-cost way to achieve the same thing. That, that, there's other methods that cost more. And so, to me, that's putting something that's just waste to us to very good use.

WO: Doug missed one salient point, our sustainability coordinator is our daughter Corey, so. [Chuckles]

DO: Yes.

TM: In the family still.

WO: Yep.

TM: One last question specific to the brewery and then the last few will be related to the brewing industry. Could you talk a bit about the look of your labeling, your packaging? What's the history behind that? What kind of images are you trying to convey?

WO: So, this is Wynne. Did you want to talk, Corkie?

CO: No, go ahead.

WO: Our original label, since we didn't start bottling till '96, after we've been in year-, in business for six years, our original bottle labels were done by our taproom manager. At the time, we didn't really have a taproom manager, but that was his role. And he was an artist. And it was when you still used the amberlith where you had to cut the pieces and layer them. So, those were our first, and they were awful. Our first labels, they were truly awful, but at the time, they were new to us. And it wasn't until 2005 that we readdressed the labels. We'd realized we'd hit for a first time in our career, we had stopped growing for two years. And we realized that branding was a big piece of our problem. The quality of the beer was great, but it didn't speak to people, the bottles. So, we brought in a firm from Bend, Oregon, an advertising firm, and they did interviews with focus groups throughout the state, Denver and Fort Collins. And then, interviewed all the people in the company to help us understand what we were trying to communicate in our beer, and they offered us a couple of selections of what we might go to, ideas of directions we might take. And Doug and I were laughing about this the other day. The one we really liked was the one they said, "This is the worst option for you. [Laughter] This will not move your beer forward." So, they came up with a different concept and it actually is a concept we're still building on now, twelve years later. And it's morphed over time, certainly the colors have morphed. But it came up with something that we felt represented the quality of the beer in the bottle. We invest very, heavily in our graphics

now, moving forward. And it's a big piece of, I think, how we're perceived in the market. It's, it's aesthetically beautiful as well as the beer being totally delicious.

CO: Our original logo, you saw the sign in the back, Odell's Ales. A friend of mine who's a graphic designer designed that for us with the Aspen leaf in the logo, and we still use the Aspen leaf as our, our leaf logo as we call it. However, we evolved from that at the same time that we evolved from, it may have been before that, did we change our logo before that? Or is it, was that at the same time?

WO: We just made it smaller, so it was just the mountains and, yeah.

CO: Right. So, we switched from Odell's Ales to Odell Brewing Company, and more of a, at the, below the top of the bottle and, and focused more on the beer and the beer name.

WO: And we changed the name because Anheuser-Busch made us change it.

CO: Yes.

WO: So, that, that was not necessarily voluntary. [Laughter]

DO: But we're thankful they did make us do that.

CO: Yeah, it's been good.

WO: Yeah, it's worked well for us.

TM: Okay, so just to wrap up a few kind of big picture questions. Why, and for anybody, why do you think Colorado has had such a rich culture of beer and brewing?

CO: I would say, this is Corkie. One reason is the water is so incredibly good. Another one is that we're not a chain state. That means that independent liquor stores are the place that most beer is sold. And so, when we first started, Doug or I or anyone could develop a relationship with the, a bar, a restaurant, or liquor store, independent liquor store, and get our beer on the shelves once we started bottling. Whereas if you're in a chain state, you've got to get authorization from the entire, you know, Albertson's, going to Boise, Idaho, to meet with their buyer, and so it was very, that would be such a, would be very challenging for a small brewery to be able to do that. So, I, I really think those two things, plus Wynne mentioned the excise tax amounts are fairly low and there's other things that are really very helpful to small breweries. That is changing in Colorado, and I'll let you guys talk about that.

DO: Oh, yeah, they, the legislature finally passed a law after about six attempts to phase in grocery chain, chain grocery stores sales of beer. It won't-, it's gradually taking effect, it'll take effect in 2019. But I think the same thing will happen. All these guys who can

just go in and meet the beer buyer at the store and sell their beer on quality of service and beer are not going to be able to do that. So, we'll see how it goes for the smallest guys.

WO: Yeah, this is Wynne. The quality of life in Colorado, also you can't deny that the-, there's a reason people want to move here, and not only the brewers want to move here, but the consumers want to move here. And so, we sort of lucked out in picking a beautiful state.

DO: Yeah, I say that, you know, people are very proud to live here. And consequently, they are proud of stuff that's produced here.

TM: How, how would you all describe the state of craft brewing today and if you think ten years in the future? What do you see?

WO: [Laughs] They're both looking at me. This is Wynne. I would say the current state is uncertain. It's, there's just a lack of consensus on where the industry is headed. And there are different signals being sent from different parts of the industry, and so, I think everyone is sort of stepping back and looking at their models to see if they feel they're going to be able to successfully navigate whatever direction the business goes, and I don't have any doomsday sense, whatsoever. I love Bart Watson saying that the growth has slowed, it's not declining. And I think that's an important message for all of us to understand. There are lots of different models that breweries can take. I think a number of the small breweries, who are more, have opened more recently have taken a step back to reassess their original business plan and decide, "Is this the way I still want to go?" And if not, there are plenty of other opportunities they can take. So, I feel, I feel very optimistic about where we are. I think it's sort of a restructuring time period, where we all just need to do what we do best and see where it takes us. In terms of where we're going to be in ten years, I still see the industry growing. I can't imagine craft ever becoming irrelevant. It will be interesting to see how the definition of craft evolves with the purchase of independent craft breweries by Anheuser-Busch and MillerCoors, and hopefully there will be room for everyone moving forward. But perhaps that'll change the definition of the industry. I'm not certain.

CO: This is Corkie. A couple years ago, we made, it was a very long planning process, but we did some transition planning over the last, probably, ten years. And two years ago, we decided that our best model, the best thing for us and for carrying our business forward in the way that, and, and keeping our legacy I guess, is that we sold to an employee stock ownership plan as well as our three main managers, and then we each retain some percentage of the ownership. So, remaining independent is really important to us and we found a really great way to be able to do that and be able to take some money off the table. We're all getting a little bit older based on the years we were born, but it was, it felt really good. We probably could have made a lot more money selling to a big brewery, but

it felt like it was the right thing for us to do and who better to carry it on than our people who've been with us so incredibly faithfully and, over the last number of years?

TM: In terms of the future, how, where do you see consumer tastes going?

WO: Well, right now, they're moving toward lighter, more sessionable beers, toward lagers, pilsners, in part, but IPA is still the fastest growing style. I think there, there truly is infinite variety in what you can brew. You can come up with just about anything. And I think consumer taste will evolve over time. I don't know what direction I see it going in, I can tell you what the trends are now, but that doesn't mean what they'll be in five years. But if the industry does, or if the consumer preference, say, moves away from hoppy beers, the craft brewer industry will have no problem responding to whatever the new taste profile is, so I, I view it actually as a, a fun challenge, as opposed to a concerning challenge. We, we will continue to make beers *we* love. We will continue to make sure our beers speak to the consumers. And I think there's a lot of opportunity.

DO: So, we have a, a sour beer program, and a barrel-aging program. And I know that there's been some people who've said, "Oh, sour, they're the next big thing that's going to really take off." And while I find them very refreshing and very unique and complex, distinctive, I think as far as being on par with a session IPA, or a craft lager, 5% craft lager, it's really hard to drink very much of it because it is an acidic drink. [Chuckles] So, I, I, there's great interest and I think there's a lot of people who like *some*, but to like a *lot*, I don't know.

TM: What, are you most excited about brewing particular styles going forward in the next year or two? From a brewing perspective?

DO: You know, I really liked that we've, we've always been an ale brewery with, dabbling in lagers, and, and I'd like to try and, more, master in a better way to do that than we have to this point. So I, from a, just a personal standpoint and I think, a, a drinkability standpoint, and something that's different than what all, all these ale brewers have been doing forever is interesting. And barrel-aging and combinations of different bacteria and wild yeast will always be fascinating because there's, it just adds so much more layer of ingredients and process to, to add to a beer.

TM: Great. Alright. And one last question for each of you, a big question. What do you value most about what you do?

WO: I'll start. Corkie, this is Wynne, Corkie touched on it when she talked about our legacy and so, when we started this brewery we had no idea where we were headed with it. I'd make the joke, and Doug hates this but I'm going to make it anyway, that it was just to get Doug a job because he, he's the kind who can do anything. And so, we sort of built it around our love of beer and grew it to where it is, and we, it wasn't entirely intentional

that we ended up where we did. But we're very happy about it. And the legacy that we feel we've created in terms of the organism that is our business is what is most important to me and I believe to my partners and was in selling the business. The, just the, being able to create a business model that is sustainable and enduring—we refer to ourselves as an evergreen company, I don't know if you're familiar with that term—but that idea of it being a healthy work environment, meaningful to the people who work here, allow them connection with each other and the community and to the beer that we make and sell. That to me is by far the most important thing and we are fortunate that beer is the vehicle that allowed us to get here. And, I mean, it's a very important vehicle. I don't think if we were making mop heads or something we'd feel quite strongly about it as we do. But that combination of just the living, breathing entity is what's most important to me.

CO: This is Corkie. It's sort of an emotional question for me because I think that one of the most important things is we've had the ability to create something that was different. As Doug mentioned, our dad was not in business. Wynne had that background, but it was sort of like, well, we don't have to do it the way other businesses have traditionally built themselves. And so, it was a great opportunity to do something different. And I love what Wynne said about providing meaningful work for people. And even the people who work, you know, start out in our taproom or work on our bottling line, they do know how they fit in and they know how they contribute. And it's so rewarding to see how much they care. It's amazing, very humbling.

DO: And it, it took me a while to realize we were in this position. But to, the fact that as we've grown, becoming more well known, and, and that we do make beer and beer is interesting to people, that we really have quite a strong voice in which to use to however we see it best used. And so, I think that when, you know, when we support something or take part in something, or are able to promote sustainability, a sustainable operation in a manufacturing company, or any kind of company, that we can make a difference that way. And I think the other, the other thing that I've always been proud of is we actually produce something. We take raw materials and turn them into something that's better. And so I've always liked the fact that, that we have a physical product that people enjoy.

CO: Plus, holy cow, we've arrived. The Smithsonian is here interviewing us. [Laughter]

DO: There we go.

WO: There we go.

CO: That's pretty amazing.

TM: Well, thank you so much for your time.

CO: Thank you.

WO: Oh, thank you. That was fun.

[END OF AUDIO]