

Charlie Olson

(Q) What is your name?

Charles Olson.

(Q) Do you have a middle name?

No.

(Q) When were you born?

September 11, 1911.

(Q) Were born here?

Yeah I was born somewhere around here either at the hospital or over across Allen Benson there.

(Q) Oh yeah, was there a hospital there?

There was where the hospital is now. You can see the old hospital here see.

(Q) Have you lived here all your life? This place?

Yeah

(Q) Did you build this place?

Yeah I Patsey finished it up. You know.

(Q) Ron?

No Charlie Patsey. Real good carpenter.

(Q) Where did you live when you were small?

I was all over, bounced all over the place. When I was nine years old I went up to Beirnes' I milked four cows twice a day and until I was eighteen I was on my own. I went out and started work.

(Q) So you stayed in Burns? What else did you do in Burns Lake?

Beirnes' ranch? Oh haying and so forth.

(Q) How much money did you make?

Nothing them days. Fifteen dollars in the winter time and forty dollars in the summer time.

(Q) Was that good?

Well enough to buy my clothes. Them days everything was cheap. Overalls were \$1.75

(Q) Do you have any relatives? Who are your relatives?

Bud Matthews is the only one cousin.

(Q) How did you get your water, how was your house before, did you have running water?

Right now? Oh yes I connect up to the main water line, down in Old Town.

(Q) How did you get your water before then?

Two Mile creek.

(Q) Over there?

Uhuh.

(Q) What about lighting, electricity?

Oh we used a mantel. I don't know if it was coal oil or, it was a standing night light it was old fashioned in them days you know.

(Q) Expensive oil?

Just coal, you've heard of coal oil. That's all we had in them days.

(Q) Where did you get your coal oil?

Any place Old Town, get a gallon. You can get coal oil any place.

Charlie Olson

(Q) What did your parents do?

My mother died in 1918, I remeber it well, I was 7½ years old. My dad worked here and there, it was either pole making and tie making in those days. I was too small to remember but the ties and poles were for everything, telegraph poles.

(Q) Have you ever been on the telegraph trail?

Oh yes, lots of times, I've been up to seventh cabin. 1939 was my last trip up there. "Did you look after the cabins?" No, we went up there for trapping I used to go with old James May and my aunt, Emma. I used to go on the skeena, with Walter Sterritt, 1935 was the last time I was with him, I made three trips with him.

(Q) What else did you do on the telegraph trail?

We used to go up on the ground hog, you turn off, leave the Telegraph at Black boy, you leave the trail. It's a 10 mile drive. I used to go up when I was with Beirne's. He had a pack train and he'd take the hunters up the trail. Simon Gunanoot, Peter "Haimadem", Dave Wiggins.

Simon Gunanoot, he was outlawed for 13 years. Dave Wiggins he was a packer he stayed up at Beirne's in the winter time to look after the cattle. He'd have to have the hay stack high for the cattle

(Q) What kind of person was Dave Wiggins?

He was a coloured person, I don't know exactly what nationality. He used to talk about the Kootenay's, down south. He wasn't a pure coloured man, he was a half breed of something. He wasn't any bigger than I am, about 5'8", He was kind of stout. He dropped out at 4-mile bridge, I knew he lived out there somewhere, he passed away. He was getting very old.

(Q) Did you hunt or fish on the telegraph trail?

Well no, I went up with the hunters, but I was just a flunkie. Put up tents, make a table, I'd put a table cloth on a lathe.

(Q) I guess Dave Wiggins talked about Cateline?

Oh yes, he talked about him alot "Did you see him?" Oh, I saw him quite a few times, I was pretty young. He used to go around with a cane, a big over-coat and a broad rimmed hat, tamarack, brown and fancy.

(Q) You mentioned Beirne's, is that George Beirne's?

Yah, that's the one. "He must have known Cateline?" Oh yes, I don't know if Beirne's worked for him or if he worked for Beirne's. Cateline had a pack train too, I think that's where Beirne's took over. He had a pack train, and he used to pack supplies up the Telegraph trail, and distribute to the cabins during the fall. George Beirne's bought the pack train off Cateline and Wiggins stayed in this area.

The telegraph line was in operation for a long time, for as long as I can remember, I don't remember when or what year it shut down. I was still working when it shut down and was replaced by another method of communication.

(Q) Why was Two-Mile set up?

Well, just like Hazelton there wasn't too much at the time a few cabins here and there "Were there any buildings?" I remember seeing a picture of a horse parked outside this building-saloon. A cabin with a counter-if you wanted rum it was a dollar and a half a bottle. That's where the murder took place. The murder happened from the here over to the arena (is now) Somewhere on this side of the arena along that road. "On the road?" That's where old Alfred Shanoss used to show me. What was his name now, Alec McIntosh. That's where he got shot, Simon Gunanoot shot him. Then I guess Simon went out and got a gun at Anlaw, and he rode a horse. So he came back in and I guess that's where he met him, and shot him. He came to Anlaw down that hill where the graves are. He met this other guy, this guy said something, he didn't know about this murder, so Simon, he turned around and shot him too. Then pulled out into the wilderness. He was outlawed for 13 years.

(Q) Until he gave himself up?

Well, I don't know that he gave himself up, he came out on his own, I think. He served his time pretty well. He used to go with these guys, the ones searching for him.

(Q) So he was just playing with them then?

Uh-humm

(Q) He used to follow them?

Yah, he used to go right in their tent and take their ammunition

(Q) I heard there were some stories about him warming up at their fire?

Yah, it's possible, I've heard lots of things about him. He'd go in their tents and go through their stuff...take ammunition.

(Q) Do you remember the people that were on the...that were  
also looking for Simon?

No, this was a long time ago.

(Q) There was one guy down in Hazelton, he was a scout for the police?

Johnny Moore, sounds right, he's old.

(Q) You went out with Simon Gunanoot after it happened? You went out to check the telegraph line?

Oh yah, just lately, I was 18 when I left Beirne's. I was 14, 15, 16, when I made 3 trips up the Ground Hog with the hunters.

(Q) Ground Hog Summit?

Yah, it was only 11 miles from Blackwater. We'd leave the telegraph trail and branch off.

(Q) Where is Blackwater?

It's just beyond 5th cabin.

(Q) Was the hunting good on the Ground Hog?

Oh yah, there was caribou, goat, and wild sheep, and bears and grizzly bears.

(Q) You said you worked for Beirne's what kind of person was he?

He was nice. Well, I more or less stayed there and helped out. I was able to milk 4 cows twice a day, in the summer time you had to go and hustle them out of the bush, on a horse. Some days I'd be 2 days before I'd find one.

(Q) Whereabouts? Like where did you work for Beirne's?

Right up at Marty Allen's now. They used to have a log house, out from Marty Allen's on the bank there. They had a little cabin where I stayed right next to it.

I used to churn butter and look after the chickens and pigs.

(Q) Did he have any stories about cateline or any stories about what he used to do?

He never used to, you know sit down and talk to me.

(Q) He was quiet?

Yes, he was quiet and busy all the time.

(Q) Did Wiggins have any good stories about Cateline?

He used to tell me stories but that was a long time ago.  
(My memory is poor, I can't remember too good)

(Q) How did you get out to Beirne's place? Where were you living before you went out there?

I was left here and there, when I was a kid. I was at Metlikatla reform school for awhile. That's when my mother died in 1918, my sister was two years younger than I am she was only 5.

(Q) In Metlikatla?

Yeah, you know just beyond Port Simpson.

(Q) Did you go to school yourself?

Yeah, I was pretty small. I didn't learn too much.

(Q) Did you get into any trouble that you might find funny today?

"What do you mean?"

Like, something that you might find funny when you look back on your life.

No, I was never up to much. I was pretty quiet when I was young.

"Shy?"

Yes.

(Q) How would you describe yourself now?

Good for nothing I guess.

I used to be all over the place. I built cabins, sawmills I was involved in falling.

(Q) You were pretty busy back then eh?

Yes, talk about timber...you know lots of poles, pole making, tie making, I used to buck ties for old Frank Harris.

(Q) Whereabouts?

Up Beyond Roberston Lake.

(Q) What other jobs did you do?

Them days I'd do anything, pole making. Although I never

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tried ties, I just bucked for old Frank Harris. I used to stay with my aunt.

(Q) I was wondering if you went on the pack trains with Beirne's too?

Well, that's where I went for picking up the hunters in the fall. But not during the summer when they were distributing their grub up the telegraph trail.

Yeah, it took them all of July and August, up there and back to eighth cabin.

(Q) Do you remember the steamboats that went up the river?

No, that was before my time. Old Austin Matthews used to tell me.

(Q) Did he have any good stories (Austin)?

Yeah he used to tell me they cut the cord wood to fire up the boat. They anchored it here and there, and eased it down.

(Q) Did he tell you how long it took to come up the river?

I forgot.

It was tight over there when Doc Wrinch came up...it took 6 months.

(Q) Was there still a ferry across from Hazelton to Kitwanga?

Oh yah, that ferry was just taken out recently. That was running in '39, taken out around '40 or something.

(Q) Did you go to Hagwigan often?

I used to go to school over there, I used to stay where Artie Sterritt had his house there, where Stéger's live now. I used to go up and across the bridge and go to school. We used to have soup for dinner. I went there for quite awhile.

(Q) Do you know the teacher?

No, I don't remember

(Q) Do you know who went to school with you?

Yes, Old Johnny Mack, he's in Morrice town NOW and the Georges Joe George, Sylvester, and some sisters.

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(Q) What kind of bridge was across there when you went to school?

It was a narrow one, they put in this bridge and they tore it, the other one down.

(Q) The Indian Bridge or the old suspension?

The Indian Bridge collapsed a long time ago.

(Q) Where was your school?

Oh, let's see now, you know where the first turn in Hagwilgyat then to the left, you go in a ways and then turn left, straight in this way there was a good log building there was a close by Joe George's.

(Q) Where is it compared to the big old Church on the hill?

Oh, it's right below and beyond this way a bit.

(Q) How big was the log house?

Oh, a pretty good size.

(Q) Did you go down to the river?

Not too much, not when I was a kid.

(Q) Were there smokehouses down there?

Yah, they were down in the canyon. I stayed on this side WITH MY ant and Johnny Patsey, I used to beat the telegraph line, from here to Morrricetown. We used to camp at Abraham Wilson's in Hagwilgyat. Then we used to down across the ferry and go down towards Kitwanga, to check the Telegraph Line.

(Q) Who were you working with or for when you were ?

Old man Patsey, Johnny Patsey, My Aunts' Husband.

(Q) DID they still have a sports day on July 1st, where they played ball down in Hazelton?

July 1st, well you see I was up at the ranch, most of the time. I went up to the ranch when I 9, and stayed up



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til I was 19 then i just took off.

(Q) Where did you go?

I went up, to the bush help falling poles at 17 mile.

(Q) Did you play ball?

No, not til I left home when I was 19. I didn' t have much time to play ball.

(Q) What kind of sports did you play ~~did~~ in the wintertime? did you skate on the river?

Well I wasn' t around here at the time. I was at Telkwa for quite some time, 7 miles out of Telkwa

(Q) Did you know some of the buildings and stores, that were down town?

Yes, I know where Sargent's store used to be, right in the middle of the Inlander. The store was where the Bank is now.

(Q) Do you remember the "BC Jimmy" ?

Oh yes, is he dead now? I saw him just before he left. I was talking to him , he said he was 60 years old in Hazelton, he was only 20 when he first came to Hazelton. I never saw him after that and I heard he was dead,

(Q) Was the Bay still along the river?

Yes, the Bay was later moved up.

(Q) What about the old RCMP building?

Let's see now , They used to have it up by , in between Alice Maitland Store and Smiths.

(Q) Was that Dawson's Store?

Yes, that's the one that burned down at Dawsons.

(Q) Do you remember the big fight that happened after the ~~figh~~ fire?

No I wasn't in Hazelton then.

(Q) Do you remember C V Smith?

Oh yes ( what kind of person is he ? ) Oh he was a tall person he dug his own road out.

(Q) Did he speak the Native tongue?

He could understand a few language. He used to say Umihlahaxw

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means good day in Gitskan. I c n tell you c n talk, Dick Sargeant, he can talk in Chinook, he can talk Hagwilget, anything.

(Q) Did he have any stories to tell you?

I didn't talk to Dick much.

(Q) What did he say in Indian, that surprised you?

I used to walk into his store and other people would walk in and he would just talk away.

(Q) What happened to the Native costumes, some people said C V Smith had bought them?

He could of, I was pretty young back then, I couldn't tell you, too much.

(Q) Where was the community hall? Was it where Beertema's is now?

No there was nothing there, til Sargent had his store where the bank is now. had a storage warehouse where Beertema's is now.

(Q) Where did you go to dances? Did you go to dances?

Yes, I used to go, I was just a kid, I used to go and watch.

(Q) About how old were you then?

Oh heck, not too old maybe about 10 and the ladies dress up nice, long dresses and up have to hold the dress up when you walk in. well dressed up.

(Q) What kind of music?

Oh they had accordian, Ernest Harris, He was the conductor.

(Q) Who was the Wildwood Orchestra

I don't think they had a name in them days.

(Q) Did you go to dances when you were older?

Yes, just lately after Kitwanga hall was built.

(Q) Did you pick up any girls?

Oh yeah, sure

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(Q) Did you know there names?

Well, there was Mary McKenzie, before she was married. That was ~~afte~~ over 50 yrs ago.

(Q) Do you remember the Cunningham Store?

Down by the bank ( river ) ? where the Hotel was, Yes.

(Q) Hotel Calidonia?

I couldn't tell you the name of it.

(Q) Was the post office there?

I don't know, it might have been.

(Q) What about a jewellery store?

I can't remember.

(Q) Where was the bank?

where the library is now. It burnt down in '55, it was  
~~a-~~  
a hotel then.

(Q) Where was the Ominica Hotel?

By Blackstocks.

(Q) Was that after Dawson's ? Yes after him.

(Q) What kind of liquor? Beer?

~~I wasn't old enough. I was too young.~~

(Q) What about dandelion wine?

I don't think anybody made wine back then.

(Q) Do you know to make it?

No not then, never cared for it. I stayed away from it.  
I've tasted it.

(Q) How did it taste? Does it taste good or bad?

It taste good, get you pretty drunk too.

(Q) They didn't drink that at dances, did they?

No there wasn't too much drinking there.

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(Q) Just a little? Yes , NO , there wasn't too much

(Q) Was it too hard to ask a girl to dance?

I wasn' t dancing too much.

(Q)What doctors were at the Hospital?

Dr. Wrinch.

(Q) What kind of person was he?

Good ... he started with a buggy and horse.

(Q) Was his son a doctor too?

Yes, Doctor Lenard, L B Wrinch.. I think he is dead too. Yes

I think one of his sons were up here for the opening of the new hospital.

(Q) Where was the school in Hazelton?

Beside the church ( Anglican )

(Q) Was Mackenzie and Jackson store there? in Hazelton?

I don't remember him. I know William Hall had a store right where the Union Office right on the corner.

(Q) Did you know any more about the saloon? Was there any girls there?

You mean the one in Two Mile? I heard they were pretty chippys there

(Q) What are they Chippies?

Chippies... if you wanted women, you go there.

(Q) How much? I wouldn't know

(Q) Do you remember anything about New Hazelton?

I remember the bank got robbed.

(Q) Were you ever in New Hazelton?

Yes, there was a hotel there, and Gus Christian owned a bar down by the railroad where Simpson Sears is now.

(Q) Was there a boardwalk along the tracks?

No, just where you crossed. It had some planks there.

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(Q) What was the hotel like?

It wasn't much, I was out most of the time up at Red Rose. When I came down I got a job the same day and went up Telkwa mine. I was up there for 3 years.

(Q) Was there any Cafe's in New Hazelton by the hotel?

Yes, the cafe' used to be the building by the hotel, this side of it. It was Harold Christian.

(Q) Was there garage in New Town?

Yes.

(Q) Were there many cars back then?

I don't know.

(Q) We would like to know more about the Saloon and Girls? How would it work? What was the building like? Was it big or small?

Oh it was pretty fair sized. The saloon wasn't very big. Just big enough that you had a counter and one door, little shelves.

(Q) How would you get a girl?

Just say.... Walk in and pay for her.

(Q) Did you pay the guy downstairs? Then go up?

I don't know if they had a stairway, but I heard about them.

(Q) Was that over when you were grown up?

No it last too long after that.

(Q) Not enough money ( continue the business ) ?

I guess so.

(Q) Not enough girls?

Ran out of business. It's hard to say. I used to see a big pile of empty bottles laying around. There used to be a trail over to Williams place. There was no roads all over the place.

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(Q) Do you remember the store in New town?

Yes, used to be Larkworthy's. I used.. I forget if the store is still up. I just remeber where that hall is.

(Q) The old community hall?

Yes, I go on next street.

(Q) Where Steve Juhasz has got his forplex?

You know where Laurie Willan, he turn in down that way that's where the store used to be.

(Q) A big store?

Yes, it's a big building.

(Q) That's Willan's old store?

Yes, that's the one, I guess he took over after Art.

(Q) Art Worthy?

I guess so . That's a long time ago. I wouldn't know too much about this and that because I was out most of the time When I was 14,15,16 when i took 3 trips up the valley.

(Q) Where most of the Totem Poles?

I think they were down in Hazelton by Gitanmaax Hall. You know where the old hall was over the river bank ( beside ) They moved some to the ballpark.

(Q) Who's Bob Lason?

That's my wife's sister's husband. He lives down Vancouver.

(Q) When did they put that bridge up between Old town and South town?

At the Bulkley? I couldn't tell you. I think the old bridge went out in 1940.

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(Q) Did it last very long?

Yes, My dad was blasting a whole bunch of logs against the peir. That was a bad flood. 1936 a bad one too.

(Q) Can you describe the flood?

You see Sunrise Cafe now, That was an old pool room. The cafe had fallen over the bank. Then they move it up to where it is now, Sun rise.

(Q) That was tipping over, so they had to move it?

Yes, it was just sitting over the bank

(Q) Did B C Jimmy make that or did somebody else?

Jim Huter he's the one that had the poolroom. He had about two tables.

(Q) Did you play pool there?

Yes, I used to play there.

(Q) Who did you play against?

No, I don't.

(Q) How many Chinese lived in Hazelton?

Well, the best way I can describe it is, in the early days there was GOLD rush. Ingenika, they called it, and James May and I were out Trapping back of Kisagas. He showed me this trail where we used to hold things in. The China man used to go out there and dig for gold. I seen them with chains with big nuggets on them.

(Q) So that was the last Gold rush?

Yes, gold rush was what they called it.

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(Q) Did you go to Sweet in river?

Oh you mean Sweet In? yes I was a couple roads in. When they were logging. Camped out there.

(Q) Did you explore the lakes out there?

I don't know too much about them. There is some lakes out there. I know Stevens lake is out there around Cranberry. Good trout fishing there.

(Q) Did you used to sell furs too?

No, I used to trap some when I was bucking logs. When we had lunch, an old Marten would come by, and I would set a trap.

(Q) How would you set a trap?

Oh, they had one of those single leg trap, 1 1/2 ones. You find one of those places under a tree.

(Q) No snares?

No just traps.

(Q) How did you get your Essington Flag?

That was given to me to use a long time ago.

(Q) Did you go down there?

Yes, I used to fish down there.

(Q) During the flood did you go to Vancouver and come back on the boat too or did you... ?

Yes, we went around the flood in 1936, to go fishing. On train the transferred to the boat. to Rupert.

(Q) Any good stories?

You know how old people went down the coast, and have their luggage. by a lot of fish, good fish down there.

(Q) Do you remember the Kispiox people camping on the flats?

No they didn't.



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(Q) They never camped out?

No, load up a truck and get on a train, I remember going around in 1936.

(Q) Was it all ng journey?

Yes

(Q) About how long did take?

Let's see now about 3 or 2 days

(Q) To get to Vancouver? No to get to Rupert.

(Q) Oh from here to Rupert, straight? Yup

(Q) Who would be left in Hazelton, after everybody went to Rupert  
Just the young peoppe?

Not too many, just , well it would be old people left. We do our canning, and come back home or the train.

(Q) The Cannery seemed to employ a lot of people from here?

Oh yes, it did.

(Q) Was logging going on at the same time?

Well in the winter time we would go out pole making.

(Q) In the summer time you would go out fishing?

Go fishing mostly, pole making. They had cabins all the way out there, there was a lot of timber in them days.

(Q) Where would the town be situated, like in every town?

Well like the village, tyeey have their houses then in the summer time they move up to the canyon, there they have smoke houses.