

July 3rd/85

(Q) Who and what was here when you arrived?

(F) Well, we came over in 1926, in April, and across the river on the old ferry road, was probably six inches of ice still on the road, was prpbably six inches of ice still on the road. So that's how cold the winters were.

Dr.Wrinch was still in the ho-pital, one of his son was a doctor in the hospital also, His second son was the druggist downtown, with his own drugstore.

The Omineca hotel was there, run by Bud Dawson. And Myros & Smith had a grocery store in town. There was a Watchmaker, he had a theater there where Neil Sterrit lives now. Where Rosey Morrison lives in the same lot, the school was there. Well the Essay office was down there where the library is now.

(Q) What was the Essay office?

(F) Well the mines. Mining was there. Dr.Slay was the Essayer.

Then across from the hotel, going down river, was Cunlifts, they had a store. Dick Sargent had a store there, right where the hotel is.

(Q) That was just the store then? Not the Inlander?

(F) No, no, just the store. A big ware house.

Where are we at? Do you want me to go around the town?

(Q) If you could.

(F) Oh, okay.

Where the Beertemas old building is, was Teddy the blacksmith. Pat Benson had a barbershop, in that building across from the hotel. Where the Sunrise Cafe is.

Turning to the right, going up river, there was the Anglican Church manse. Still there. Next to that, was the Hudson Bay lot, and then the theater across the street of course. Where Neil Sterrit's house is now, was the old Hudson Bay house. Across from there, was the old picture house. And then, let's see, the other side of there, by the river... I forget who used to live there. Of course on the other side of that was the church. Then they had a school next to there. And that's the end of that block.

Then, crossing the road, you had all the old timers coming down, and the Chinese laundry. All those buildings were washed away in the flood.

Coming down further, was the chinese laundry, Jim Hutter's pool hall, Neil Sargent's town house, and right down at the end of the street, Sterrits had a barn. And of course if you went down further, you went to the ferry house. Across the river on the ferry.

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(Q) What was the bit about the ferry? What's the story behind that? When was it taken out?

(F) Well, I can't remember years. I know my brother in-law ran it for quite a few years, the only means of getting over to those farms over there, unless you went down to... well there was a ferry there, there was one at Kitwanga, another one at Usk so you had to go to Terrace if you wanted to get across the river outside on Beaumont bridge. A long way around.

So of course there were old bachelors' houses all around there. By the old Police building. But that wasn't there all the time, that was bachelors' cabins, all along there, right past the Beertema's hall, facing the street. They were all Sourdough's along there.

Then the police barracks, was right next to Sargent's store. There was a open lot, right down to the library, where they kept all the packhorses for the police patrol. They used to go way up the Kispiox, and way up beyond there, they'd be gone 7-10 days.

And, uh, of course we had the telegraph office, right across from Beertema's there, that was the telegraph office. Lots of people worked there. Perry York's people, his wives people lived right next door there. And of course Pat Dawsons' hotel, and there was a barber shop in there as well, and a little gambling back room, and all the rooms up above, I could tell you quite a few stories about them.

Anyway, going along further, there was a restaurant where it is now. And there's Cox's house, Mrs. Cox, she was part native, and she done all the interpreting in the police reports for the natives when they got in trouble.

One thing that I want to point out, is that in the early days, you didn't see any native children downtown. They were all kept up on the benches, on the reserve. The old folks saw to that.

Then there was Johann's Restaurant down there again. And there were two restaurants down there. Like I said, there, across the street there, was a school with a play ground across the way.

If you went up to Myros & Smith, there was one house between there and the boarding house. It belonged to the head \_\_\_\_\_ operator at the telegraph office.

Mrs. Muick ran the boarding house, right on the corner, do you know where that is? Right across from there was Matt Myros's big house. There was nothing any further.

(Q) What about the triangle? Was there anything in the middle of it?

(F) In the triangle, when Dr. Wrinch was there, there was nothing but sunflowers. Then, Al Benson's family, bought it from Dr. Wrinch and put up a garage and taxi service.

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(Q) When would that have been?

(F) Well it was there when we came over in '26, so prior to that.

Now that's just about all the town, 'cause the road into town wasn't where it is now, it was behind Ben Mackensie, so they've moved it over towards the school.

(Q) Why did you come to Hazelton?

(F) Uh, I had relatives here. And in Enland at that time, they were having problems with drop-outs, they tried to set up trade schools for them, but they just wrecked the schools. I went to one of the schools, 'cause I was taking up radio and television. I was there for three months, and I couldn't stand it no longer. They just wrecked the schools and looted the teachers, so my dad said "well I have sisters over in Canada, so let's all go to Canada ". So that's how we ended up here.

(Q) So you came here with your dad?

(F) Yeah, my dad and mother.

(Q) And how old would you have been?

(F) Seventeen, sixteen or seventeen. And I was so amazed to see the cows on the sidewalks. All wooden sidewalks, and there were a lot more people around then, than there are now.

(Q) Really?

(F) Yeah, well a lot more whites anyhow. Well you had all your trade from Hazelton out. Like a wagon wheel.

(Q) That's been spoke of before as that.

(F) Yeah, well the riverboat came up, and dumped the freight, then it was taken from there up to different camps.

(Q) What changes have you seen in Hazelton?

(F) Well, its been improved anyway. As a matter of fact. Well, we have the big schools there, there's more police than what there were, there's more logging, very little mining, but there used to be very little, and the roads are better than what they were. And certainly more children around the country than there used to be.

(Q) Do you find much of a change in the overall attitude of the people?

(F) That's a hard question. Like, I don't know as many now, as I did then. So it has changed in that respect. Well I knew all the old bachelors, and I'd go around and talk to them. They would try and interest me with their stories that they told me. Of the early days.

Scotty Beaucannon came down from the telegraph line, and you always knew he was coming, 'cause you'd hear his high tenor coming up over the hill above the graveyard. He'd be walking down into town, he'd have a big stake, he'd wait until all his friends gathered around, and blow the whole works, and back out again.

Another oldtimer there is Gold Tooth Charlie, and Sourdough McKay of course, he'd come from the telegraph line, Jim Mailin was up the telegraph line, Matt McDougal was up the telegraph line. All oldtimers, ~~were~~ all good people.

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(Q) This is for the Overlander telegraph?

(F) Yah, out the Kispiox.

(Q) That ran from 1936?

(F) Yah.

(Q) Do you know anything about that?

(F) No, I was never up there, only the second cabin. You know Bernie Hindle, the old postmaster? Him and I, we hiked from town, up to the first cabin to a dance.

(Q) A dance?

(F) To a dnace, yes. In these fellows cabin. We danced all night, and hiked back at 7:00 in the morning. Now that would be... Marty Allen's is twenty-one miles, so the first cabin would be thirty miles. We hiked up, had a kick sleigh too.

(Q) A kick sleigh? One of those old kick sleighs? Mom and Dad were talking about one of those the other day, and there was one in the basement of the highschool for the longest time. It was there 'till about five years after Dad left there. And he doesn't know what happened to it. It's just not around anymore.

(F) I wonder why he didn't take it?

(Q) Yeah, I wondered that too.

(F) I mean, they are a most wonderful thing to get around in the wintertime with. You really picked up speed with those things. They're old Swedish skis, and the runners might be seven or eight feet long. Very flexible. And there's little iron plates right behind the chair, there's the chair in front, something to sit on, but the plates, you could stand on those, and turn on a dime. You'd put one foot on, and then you'd kick.

(Q) There was somebody who brought those in, wasn't there?

(F) Yes, yah, Mrs. Dawson was the first to have one at that time.

(Q) What was the economic base?

(F) Otis Hanson came in here, he saw his opportunity and applied for the timber rights on all the cedar between Prince George and Terrace. He was an MP for the government, he just took all the trees. So there was logging and mining. That was all.

(Q) Who would have run mills at that time?

(F) No mills. Strictly cut the poles, for telephone poles, bridge pilings. People would take out a contract for them, they would skid them down out of the bush to the river banks, then at high water, they'd dump them in, then they'd pick them up in Terrace. They'd have a crew on the river drive. I was on the river drive one summer. I was also at the bottom of the flume at Hindle's creek, out by Forsyths. You know Forsyth's out Kitwanga road. Then you turned left by the creek... you can see it from the four-mile bridge down river. High bank, had a flume running down it. At the top was a big wire, which turned them around, then they'd shoot down the stream. I was on the bottom on a little boom, a two log boom, and I'd have to guide them as they were coming down, 'cause they were just smoking down. But

(F) sometimes they were too long, they wouldn't get off. They'd hang on the end of the flume. And you'd have to have your peavy, and try and shake them to try to move them before the next one came down. So I think I ended up in the stream three or four times. So that's the extent of the economy at that time. But there was trapping of course.

(Q) When did the first mills start to come in?

(F) Well the first mill was here before I came, in Glenvowell.

(Q) Who ran that?

(F) Indians. They utilized that creek there.

(Q) That's where they got their power?

(F) That's where they got it, yes. To build a chute on the floor, four feet square, which would drop down fifty or sixty feet on to the turbines at the bottom that went to the saw. They had real good lumber. Otherwise, these late mills, I don't know who was the first.

(Q) How were the winters when you first came?

(F) Very, very cold, very cold. I remember one time we froze up at the hospital between the powerhouse and the nurses residence in the room, the pipe was frozen six feet under the road. I don't know how long we worked there, but we put wood on there, put fuel on there, and lit it. Blow it up a bit, then we'd chip tha out, and that's the way we hot down to the pipe, and we bypassed the pipe. That's when it was 55 degrees below.

(Q) For how long?

(F) Might have been a week. Then it came back up to normal. about 30 degrees which is about normal.

(Q) Yeah, so they were alot more severe then, than they are now?

(F) Oh, yeah, but the summers were better, much better, really hot summers.

(Q) You knew summer was coming?

(F) Knew it was coming, yeah.

(Q) How much snow did you get in the winter?

(F) Not a great deal, no, not a great deal. OH, I can't hardly tell you. Not like we do here, you wouldn't get four feet up where we were, you see we had a farm up above Four-mile creek. Where Forsyth's is kind of.

(Q) When did you live in this area, right here?

(F) We've been here 32 years. See, I lived over at the hospital. Went to work there in 1938, and I worked there for 35 years. So they asked me if I'd like to have a piece of land, and build my own house on it. I said sure, so that's what I did.

(Q) So was it given to you?

(F) No, I paid for it. Two acres.

(Q) What activities took place in the community hall?



(F) Oh, you know how women are. They had the W.A. and all the other organizations. Tea parties and dances. More frequent than what they do now. Maybe every month they'd have a dance or a tea party, and then the hospital would have a flower show, 'cause the hospital had their own garden. They had big fields of turnips and potatoes behind the shop. You know where the tennis court is now? Well that was a turnip field there. And they had their own cows, and dairy there. Well, not a dairy, but for their own use.

(Q) What type of schooling was available?

(F) Just public school that's all.

(Q) Did you go to school here at all?

(F) No, but I was chaperone one time, for a school dance, I'll never do it again.

(Q) So you received most of your education in England?

(F) That's right.

(Q) How far would you have gone in education?

(F) Grade eight. See it's not like it is now, John, if you were good, after grade eight you went to a small college. But if you weren't, and fooled around, you were out, had to go to work. That was it. You couldn't repeat.

(Q) What effect did churches have in the community?

(F) The church? Well that was... each Sunday was quite an event. Because the Anglican church had their own group, and the United church and the Hospital made the United Church. When Dr. Wrinch went to church, everybody else went or else. There was regular Sunday School, and they had picnics, and took part in the community. There were no Lions or Kinsmens and all that sort of thing.

(Q) When did that start up?

(F) On, I have no idea.

(Q) What kind of health services were available?

(F) Well, the hospital, that's all. We paid a dollar a month for a room in the hospital. That was put on the Blue Cross Medical Services.

(Q) Was the hospital's nurses school still in operation when you arrived?

(F) Yes, yes it sure was. I was a patient there and I heard some nurse getting bawled out.

(Q) You were a patient in the hospital. What was it like in there?

(F) Very good, very good, very strict.

(Q) Neat? Tidy? Everything in it's place?

(F) Yes, the authority was a lot stronger, like in the dining rooms, when the Matron walked in the dining rooms, all the nurses stood up until she sat down. And the same with the doctors. Even in the hospital prior to that, they done the same thing. Everybody stood up when the Matron came in. If they broke anything, they'd pay for it. Doesn't matter who's to blame. Chinese cooks, their food was really good. Not like it is now, plastic.

(Q) What do you know about Sargent's store?

(F) Sargent's Store?

(Q) There is a good history on Sargent's store.

(F) There isn't too much. Old Dick Sargent worked for Matt Myres at one time, and he branched off for himself and opened up a store in Telkwa. And he done it on fur buying, and when the natives wanted to bank their money, they went to old Dick Sargent and if they wanted some they would go to his office, and draw some out. There was a bank here alright.

(Q) That was in NT though wasn't it?

(F) Well, that was before my time. Oh, there was another bank right by the hotel, on the river that was the Royal Bank. Of course, Dick, done very good in his store. Very trusting man. He would forget you there as a customer. And somebody a traveller for instance came in, people would start to talk to him and you would wait and wait and wait. Oh, you're still here, that sort of thing. Nobody was in a hurry. The natives would come in and sit on a bench or a chair there and maybe sit all day before they got up and buy what they want. Everybody knew what everybody else was doing. They'd pass the time of day, you'd roll into town your farm on a horse the would be tied up outside. Sargent had a big lot there, where the store is now. A big open lot. And you'd go in and talk to old Burt Lachapell he was the manager there or what's that other chaps name? He was a big native man. Very easy going. Talk to him. And of course Dick had the post office there in the store. And the meat counter was right at the back we had an old fellow called Butch. He was the butcher there, and he would make these little meat pies. Some of the Marshalls would come in there you see and one would get up to the counter and reach up for these meat pies. By the time they caught on. they were gone.

(Q) How did police deal with crime like that?

(F) That wasn't crime, that was fun. He knew they were doing it. And then they would stand up and pay for it.

(Q) Was there much of a crime problem back then?

(F) No. A few intoxicated people, but mostly the police would throw them in there cars and take them home. And sleep it off. The only big crimes that went on in NT in the bank over there was the shootout over there. That was the only one.

(Q) What kind of entertainment was available? Like a show hall?

(F) Again that's all. A show once a week.

(Q) What kind of show would you have?

(F) Comedy ones, Abbot and Costello, Charlie Chaplin. All those other old time comedians.

(Q) What about a newspaper?

(F) Yes, over in New Hazelton, Chuck Sol was the editor and it ran for a very long time.

(Q) Was it a good newspaper?

(F) Yes, a good newspaper, I have one still 1932. I think.

(Q) Did they have dancing girls?

(F) Not here. That was before we come. That was entertainment in two-mile. Dancing girls. That was quite a community at one time, in the early, early days before we come.

(Q) How about Sports?

(F) Yeah, a very good ball team, very good runners, very good hockey team, lots of good sports like that. Horse racing in the summer time up and down Harry Websters road. Government street.

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(Q) Where did they play Hockey?

(F) Well let me see. Where were the Hockey rinks? It was, open air of course. Right across from the Library.

(Q) Only in the winter?

(F) Neil Sterrit used to flood that lot for skating.

(Q) Was there a lot of changes with the coming of the railroad?

(F) I don't know that. That was before my time.

(Q) Were there alot of vehicles around?

(F) No. The bank had one, the taxi had two I believe. George Benson had a car. Louie Myro had an old car. One or two in New Town. There weren't many because of the dirt road along here. Very dusty.

(Q) Did you get to New Town much?

(F) We'd go to dances over there. There wasn't much dancing in the summertime.

(Q) What was family life like?

(F) Very close. On Sundays we'd throw a picnic together. We'd get all the kids, take the buggy, put two in the buggy, carry one and go downtown, across the ferry, and push the buggy up to Seeley Creek, and spend all day there. Have our lunch and lots of families did that. Down at Mission Point; Ksan point. They spend time down t there. It was a nice place.

(Q) No radios or t.v.'s?

(F) No t.v.'s, we had a radio?

(Q) How was you reception?

(F) Good. Very, very good. Mostly Vancouver stations.

(Q) What kind of music did they play?

(F) Well, early forties. Old Jack Benny, Guy Lombardo, very good music.

(Q) What kind of food was available then but not available now?

(F) Well, all farm products. No packing houses here that you could buy from Old Dick Sargent. Use to get all the beef from local farmers.

(Q) What kind of packaged goods would come in?

(F) Tea, coffee was ground right in the store. Canned jam, canned milk, of course flour, sugar, all in big bags.

(Q) Candy? What did they have for Candy?

(F) I don't know, I didn't eat it. Hard sweets as they called them.

(Q) How much was your salary?

(F) I worked for the highway department and I was paid \$1.25 a day. A ten hour day. And you rode around in an open truck to the job site and then home again at night.



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(Q) What kind of things would you do?

(F) Shovel and wheelbarrow. Hard work.

(Q) Pushing dirt around.

(F) That's right. Then I went working in a logging camp. That was hard work too, you know. Get up in the dark in the wintertime. Take a lantern out into the bush and back home when it was dark. Worked about 12 hours.

(Q) How was your salary divided up? Did you have to pay hydro, telephone?

(F) No power at all. Taxes were only \$4 something. Jeans were \$1.75. Runners \$1.25. Jeans lasted a long, long time. A good piece of material and good piece of jean.

(Q) Now you pay \$30.00, and they only last half the time.

(F) That's right.

(Q) Was there one experience in your life around here that you find really interesting?

(F) Myself, or with other people?

(Q) Yourself.

(F) Interesting, scary?

(Q) Whatever.

(F) I remember one time I was going fishing in the winter on the Bulkley at Mud Creek. I left my rig at the top of the hill on the main road because the road below wasn't plowed. And I hiked down, and one of the ~~William~~ boys went fishing down below on the ice, so I went down on the ice. It was pretty solid, I walked right across. I had a pole with me, a ten foot pole under my arm with me just in case. I got to the other side and all that I could see was snow. What I thought was on top of the ice. So I stepped down on the snow and I went down in the water. And the ice hadn't got to the rocks. One thing in my mind was I had to save my fishing rod. So I threw it. And it landed on the other side and I had to hike all the way back through deep snow. Back to the bridge and back to my rig.

And when I hiked back, my clothes got pretty stiff and when I got home, I didn't want Lou to know, so I snuck in and put my clothes in the laundry, but she found them. The ~~William~~ boy who was fishing down below said to me "Where did you disappear to? We saw you walking across, and then you disappeared."

"I fell through to the water" So that really stuck in my mind quite a long time. Outside of that, there hasn't been nothing really exciting downtown. No murders or anything like that.

(Q) How many people lived here approximately?

(F) Oh, that would be a hard one to figure out because they were spread out so far.

(Q) A lot of families or bachelors?

(F) Families were out on the farm. There is a lot more natives on the farm now than there was before. I would say around town, strictly around town, about 300 people. When the river flooded, I went down to the ferry house where my brother-in-law worked and we both waded out into the river and put into the river and put a

cable around the houses and tied it to trees and tightened it up and that saved the houses.

(Q) How about education and schooling?

(F) Very good, mind you, you're cutting down the student pop. by one tenth of what it is now. So the teachers probably would have 30 kids in one class. The two schools, the junior and the high, they didn't bus in, they hiked in from wherever they lived.

(Q) What about the amalgamation of the schools?

(F) Well, it just happened. No celebration.

(Q) What can you tell us about mining? The old mines? Who and what was mined?

(F) The Harry boys from New Town, they mined up here in Nine Mile. There is a couple of mines up here. I worked up there for a short period. The Duke Mine up in Two-mile. I don't know who ran that. Then there was Red Rose and Western Uranium up in Roché de Boule. There wasn't a great volume of business after the trappers left.

(Q) Did you do any work for the Railroad?

(F) No.

(Q) Tell us about you work in the hospital.

(F) I went to work at the hospital in 1938. The way it happened is you couldn't get work in town in the 1930's and you'd go hungry. And you tried to get work for one meal a day and that would be all right. And so a friend of mine said to go to the United Church to a cook out, so I went and Al Benson hired me to work at the shop there for \$40 a month plus board. Then I was really well off. I enjoyed it very much from day to day. The food was very good. We had picnics like one big happy family.

(Q) Did you start at the old hospital?

(F) No the second one.

(Q) It must have been brand new then?

(F) Just about. I was in the hospital as a patient they were building around the old wooden one. I got hurt in a forest fire. I was on Night patrol and everything was dark and smoky and I couldn't see a thing until I saw all these fellows standing around me they were trying to put me on a stretcher. A line pole had come down and hit me on the head and cut me on the arm. The thing that stuck in my mind was there was no first aid. They cut a couple little poles and wrapped a piece of canvas around them. And they picked the canvas up and started off and I was still lying on the ground.

Old Shepherd, and oldtimer was out there fighting fires and he offered to come in with me, so we came in to Dr. Wrinch here and he said to me, "Well, we don't have anesthetic. Well, we have this 30 6.p. rum."

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(F) "Well, I don't drink" I said.

"Well, okay" he said.

Old Shepherd said "I drink!"

"No, that's not for you" Wrinch said.

Wrinch went ahead and sewed me up. And I was in there for three weeks and came out with one ear. I lost my ear when the tree hit me on my head. It crushed it so they cleaned it right out. There was no compensation.

(Q) What do you remember about doctor Wrinch? What kind of man was he?

(F) Very stern, very strict. A good doctor. He looked after his patients well. If he was called, he would go. Very good.

(Q) Tell us about the elevator in the old hospital?

(F) That old elevator was in there for years. Over the years the cables stretch. So the inspector was in there one day and told us we had to get new cables. I said where can we buy new cables? He said he would send someone up to install some. So time went by, and we found 2 big rolls of cable so we decided to cut the cable ourselves the right size. We waited, no one came, so we installed them ourselves. Three months later, the inspector came back. So he said they were alright and he was on his way. We didn't tell him who installed them though. At that time, they were all R.N.'s no nurses aids or practicals or anything like that.

(Q) What about the X-ray machine? Was it there in 1933?

(F) Yeah. It was there, but it wasn't like it is now, John. In fact, I had part of it here. Mostly all of it was wood, Birdseye Maple. That's all they had. It was quite an event when they first got the X-ray.

(Q) When did they get it?

(F) Well, before I went to work there.

(Q) Was there an X-ray technician?

(F) When we used the X-ray, we would have to shut most of the hospital off. The elevator off and any other electrical appliance off. All the power went to the use of the X-ray. They were only two line circuits. All the fuses were 15 amp. I did all the drywalling in the second hospital.

One thing that stood out in my mind was an indian lady had twins and we only had one incubator, so they asked me to make another one. I said sure, I'd make one, so I scrounged around, got a box, I lined it, got a 150 watt bulb and put in a socket. Put a thermostat on the side, a dish of water for the humidity. That was controlled by a thermometer. Three holes on the side putting a sliding window in setting the thermostat on 72 degrees, the bulb would come on, warm it up, and then turn off and come on when it cooled off. We had this for a great number of years.

(Q) Which lady would that have been?

(F) Oh, that was 60 years ago. I don't know.

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(Q) Do you have anything you would like to mention?

(F) The only thing is: I have enjoyed all the years I have been here I wouldn't have wished for anywhere else. I have no desire to go back to England. I have had a good life, but it is too bad Lou is on the Kidney machine. But I'm glad for all the years that I have worked on the machines. I know how to care for them, and work them.