

Tape Interview-Mr. Martian Starrett

WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT YOUR GRANDFATHER?

Well I don't know what year it was. But after coming here he served years company on a toe-boat in towing logs into mill.

WHO WAS THIS?

Henerry Smith.

AND HE WAS WHAT?

He was my grandfather. And he must of lived in Seattle, cause my mother was born there, that was the oldest child of the family. And my grandmother like my mothers mother name was Stevens. And she came to Whit River and she taught school there.

Where's White River?

Well White River is some where near *Rugent* Sound, I don't know where exaclley where it is, but I heard of it since. From different people it's there somewhere, I can't tell you. And my mother had a brother that has whole lot to do with this Hazelton-He counts a lot on this Hazelton History too. Then he took the same job as his father, he even drove the same captian of the same boat for years, till his eye sight failed him.

WAS HE C.B. SMITH?

He was C.B. Smith. And he almost-for some reason rather he was Captian of the ^{ow} toe-boat *Estelle*. That was blown up some where near Nanimo, with a load of powder on. But somehow rather he wasn't char^dger with that trip wether and he just missed that. And another thing that same C.B. Smith, he witness^d the wreck of the old Beaver. I saw it in the newspaper in Hazelton that's count of it. When he died that was brought in on it that he witness the Old Beaver, the Old Boat of Hudson Bay Boat that came *around the Horn*

NOW HE WAS YOUR UNCLE?

That was my uncl^e, that's how I came to go from ~~here~~ *in* the fall of 1909 to go to Hazelton to learn the fur trade. I was trapping here in the *Skatich* the same darn country.

There twenty-one, and my mother was teaching school at *metlakatla* the Ridely Home. Old *metlakatla*, a lot of the children from

Prince Rupert at that time, there be no school in Prince Rupert they went over there, white children. You know went over there to have some kind of an education. And then later we took the steam boat from Prince Rupert up to Hazelton. I remember it took us five days to make that 191 miles or whatever it is, and I know it was 75¢ a meal on the boat. We pulled out late in the afternoon I remember. And I remember the dock that day, before we pulled out I see an old grey haired man standing on the dock and a lot of people talking to him. Deck hands and one thing and another. My mother was with me and said who's that old gentleman taking all that attention? Well, that's old Captian John Erving. Well gee-wez I said I never saw him before. but I remember the house in Victoria, but I never seen-but that was the only time I saw him. And I was too young to go and talk to that group of men, they were all elderly men.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THIS FIRST TRIP UP THE SKEENA, HOW DID IT IMPRESS YOU? CAN YOU REMEMBER ANY DETAILS ABOUT IT?

Well I remember we left late in the afternoon from Prince Rupert, and we tied up about 20 miles to Port . We tied up at the dock there overnight. Know why? I guess they were taking on cargo, I don't know.

THIS WAS AT PORT ?

At Port . But to make a long story short. I better not mention the captions name it wouldn't be well. But the steamers name was a Port Simpson. And it had 70 tones of booze aboard for Black-Jack McDonalld in Hazelton. Black-Jack McDonalld was an old timer from the Dawson. And I go to school with Billy Mc Donalld, and I think another one his sons in Victoria, and I didn't know at the time they were his sons, but they were. I went to the South part school in Victoria. My early days. And it was the last trip in October, they thought it might be the last trip on account the water falling, and the nitroe getting frosty. And they wanted supplies of course to Hazelton, bacon and one thing or another. But Blackjack Mc Donalld went to this captian, say forget about that stuff. He got him half

lit up I suppose. I'll give you \$1.50 if you take carge
 booze up for me, the heck with that other stuff you
 could come back and get that next time. So there were 70
 tones of booze went to Hazelton, for BlackJack McDonalld,
 nothing for the Hudson Bay company. Although it was the
 Hudson Bay's boat. And the only thing to the load
 was a few pieces of farm stuck out in the dock behind
 where the capsine was, and that's a fact.

ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THAT TRIP?

Yes, Where we got up to just about where Tide Water was
 I remember seeing seals that you see. And I don't wether
 it was the next day or what day it was, but we passed what
 was called the Little Cayon, all it was, was just a little
 bit of rocks on each side of the river. And then soon after
 that we passed the Lawarn Creek. I know one of the watires
 that's Lawarn Creek were passed. It's isn't worth while
 going out to see though. So we kept on eating supper.
 Then look back on it into the mountain a few buildings
 at a mouth of a Creek there. So there been a plastic Creek
 I think. And then one night we turned-if forget which night
 it was. We tied up below the Cayon. And the idea was to
 get it earley in the still of the morning when there was
 no wind. Because there been recks in there the Old Mount
 Royal steam boat had been wreck there only a few years
 before she turned-the wind had turned her sideways and
 she broken in two over rock and they lost an awful lot.
 I guess there lives too. But at night they tire to tie
 up at a wood yard or a wood pilled wood lot on the banks
 of the river to take on after dark where they put on kind
 of a search light, and the deck hands would load this
 quardom on and pack on stick at time. Just like ants one
 would go and get on stick of wood and then another felow
 would get another stick of wood. And they be passing and
 re-passing like the . Phile Macasel, biggest
 mountain years ago. And I remember getting pretty close
 up up Hazelton, we were down somewhere somewhere around
 Skeena Crossing is now. Where the railway-bridge Canadian
 National bridge crosses the Skeena. Above that somewhere
 on the left bank, the right side going up. I noticed a

cross, and it was quite new. And I said to somebody-you been up here before? Oh yes. what's this cross for? Well in that there was a Indian drown there it seemed like there was a canon load of furs went down the spring. That Indians name was Auther Nelson his wife had that-he was the boat money he was the captian of this boat-or canon, captian of this canon going down and she was wreck there and lots of lives lost. And after wards I remember seeing the women in Hazelton, she had the house just up on the hill. I'M SORRY GO HEAD, YOU WERE GOING TO SAY SOMETHING MORE ABOUT THE RIVER.

Anybody hear a steam boat, which sometimes they wouldn't hear it they imagin they would all those tows along the river. And somebody would haller STEAMBOAT!! And then they would all come flawking down-and then there wouldn't be any steamboat at all. Lots of the old timers that knew about this-these falls alarms. They wouldn't pay any attention, they wouldn't be there. But then there was a second or third call, and then they would be all down there. Every man in town, even it was just before time to open the bank the man would be down there, I don't know maybe he would lock up and be down there anyway cause there's nothing going on when the steamboat would land, there be lined up to get the gain plank out as full as a walker ashoe. Then the most excitment would be over. The line of the people would disperts and go and eat there brekfast. Such as in that case it was in the morning, just about brekfast time when we landed in.

THIS WAS HAZELTON?

This was Hazelton yes the old town of Hazelton. And I remember the manager of Cuningham Store in Hazelton. R. Cuningham in son that-a man named of Morison. And he came down to the Hudson Bay. Just then he said my bacon come? No! Well we ordered some bacon it was supposed to be here on this boat. Well it isn't here Mr. Morrison, sorry. So he went back he was shaking his head

he had this bacon order and it didn't come. And of coures, he didn't know there was all booze on board then he hadn't got that far. Bet he knew later though. And this Mr. Morrison

had a nice family. His wife I think belonged to that country somewhere down there and then he had a girl named Victori Vicky as we called her. She was about 17 or 19 at the time. She after wards married a man named of I believe and moved away from there. And Jonny Morrison, was younger than she was again I remember him. And he was on the old Inlander when she was build the new Inlander rather the big boat that was build a year or two after.

GOING UP THE RIVER THIS WAS IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR WASN'T IT?

Yes in the fall, one of the last trips.

WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESIONS OF THE MOUSE OF THE RIVER GOING UP FROM PORT , HOW DID IT LOOK TO YOU THE RIVER COMING UP IN THAT PART?

Well the piolet stood on the--stood forward and he had a pole with these marks on it different there be orange colored or white or something rather on it, pole he put it down once in awhile. I'm trying to explane that the river was very shalow when there was only chanel's certian chanales that you could get up. Although the boat never touch or backed-up any she kept going. Still that piolet was there forward that was when he got into the shalows. They pulled up earley in the morning, I t was dawn I wasn't up when they first pulled out from , but after they got up I noticed he was there. I forget his name, but I think it was Gardner though.

JOE GARDNER?

I think he was captian after wards wouldn't he?

THAT WAS JOW GARDNER FATHER?

Who's this Bill Gardner?

JOE GARDNER IS HIS SON, HE LIVES DOWN IN MISSHION KNOW HES . HE WAS ON THE YUKON .

There was a Bill Gardner here you know I was wondering.

WAS CAPTIAN ON THAT BOAT?

No.

OUR WAS THAT CAPTIAN?

No there was another captian. I'm not supposed to tell you the name of this captian on the account of been brived.

ACCOUNT OF WHO? OH I SEE PROBABLY JOHNSON.

Captian , Joe was on the Hazelton and they left later than we did down at-left Rupert after we did. And pulled into the same morning that we left, and they caught up to us and passed us once on the river.

DO YOU REMEMBER THAT HAPPENING?

Yes.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

Well he thought it was exciting we were loading at the time, it was no race at all we were loading wood. And the captian came out and shock his head and he said-Dame that Hazelton boat anyway it's going to beat us to it I guess. But they got something way up to hold on and let this other boat get in first, that I was on. What's the name again? Port Simpson, that's right. No there's something else know if I could just think about it. Oh yes they had this steam capson. And when we come to very strong water coming over a bar there be one part of it course, it wouldn't be all the same depts of water maybe be over to one side. It be a deeper chanale and sometimes in the center. And they have what you call a dead man way up. It was a piece of log I guess buried. Broud sided and a river with a piece of cable sticking out, to hock on to what they called a dead man. And these deck hands would run forward and wave way out somewhere be around you know. And get the hock of this or line into this cable or strape as a logger would call it. And then they get that old going around, that steam caps and it just right up over that . And after they get up above and get that old stiringwheel going and then they drift in the shore and they run and pull that line off and

up front and go on again. That was the most interisting part of it. It did make any difference wether if it was part gravel or not she go through and the wheel, the paddle wheel was getting broken, they were reparing it every night, putting in new pieces of board in it where she been hiten at the bottom on the rocks and breaking. As I explained before it was low water one of the last trips.

DO YOU REMEMBER GOING THROUGH THE CAYON THE CAYON?

Yes.

WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

It was in the morning, a lot of them weren't out of bed yet. And I open the window the state room and looked out and Blackjack McDonalld was right beside me, and he said my boy went a shore last night and we should come on we got to get going here pretty soon, we got to get in through before the wind. And she started up and he stayed there, he wasn't dressed yet he just had his pajamas on, and he was leaning out and he pointed out the rock where the old favorite Mount Royal steam boat had been wreck, he pointed that out to me. I remember that. And the piolet you bet your life he was right out in front there no fooling about it and he was attending his business, and every once in awhile he glance back at the captian, but he spent his time reading that water. And he made a good job of it to he got right through and just block a margine. There was nyolin near the top you know.

RAINBOAT ISLAND?

I guess that's it.

YOU REMEMBER, WAS IT QUITE IMPRESSAVE GOING THROUGH THE CAYON? DID IT SEAM VERY STEEP?

Well on each side, you could see to the top before you start and after you get in a piece you couldn't see so plan.

But it was rock walls and not so very high. And a lot of the frate in high water was taken off below the cayon

over by horse and wagons. And sargent the Hazelton he had an outfit there to do his own .

DO YOU REMEMBER THE SCINERY AND THE RIVER HOW DID IT IMPRESS YOU, KNOW THIS WAS AROUND PORT IN THE BEGING PART THERE, CAUSE IT WAS EARLY MORNING MAYBE YOU DID SEE IT. HOW DID IT STRIKE YOU THOSE'S MOUNTAINS DOWN BELOW THERE? HOW ABOUT IF YOU DESCRIBE THEM.

Well, there was snow on top or the high mountains, that is over back in Kittamat like way over to the east I would say. And then lower down there wasn't any snow, and the timber with cotoon wood and sprues, there wasn't a fur timber in that Skeena that I know of anyway where, never heard of any. Big timber. And there were a lot of islands in the mouth. And that's where the piolet I guess would

come in very useful. The piolet he have to know his business, I guess he studied around there with a row boat. They didn't have any motors those days they have to around those place or pull around. He must of had this all studied out before-I mean when the spring started then kept right along all summer, and this was the fall and he knew where he was at all right.

WHAT DID THE ISLANDS LOOK LIKE?

Well, you could see it was built up by from the river. And the edges of them toward the river had been cotton trees that had fallen into the river, and then be swept down paralle like-the island or the curent would carry them so that the tops would be close to the island. And the rest of them would be standing all natural. The leafs were falling at that time. The leaves were all yellow, it was October.

WAS IT A NICE SUNNY DAY?

It was after wards, yes nice bright day. It looked nice, the sincery was fine then.

WAS IT CLOUDY AROUND THE MOUTH AT ALL?

Yes it was in the morning, misty. Didn't see much in the morning I remember, but it was nice in the afternoon.

THEN AS YOU WENT UP THE SINERY CHANGED?

Yes gradually, the trees get smaller, and when you get up-I would say around Tearrace-where Terrace is know you see Jack Pine once in awhile. And the Sprouce trees were smaller. I didn't see much different in the size of the cotton wood, so. And there was ceader all the way up you know.

DID IT SEEM TO CHANGE ABOVE THE CAYON AT ALL?

Well, it looked like more of a dry bealt yes. You come into the popular. And Hazel bushes, I understand that's how Hazelton got it's name. Mr. when he first went up there Mrs. father he named the town Hazelton on count of the growth of hazel bushes on the bench lands, of the river. DID YOU PASS ANY INDIANS GOING DOWN ON CANOES?

Yes, but not many. There were some.

CAN YOU REMEMBER THOSE AT ALL?

No I can't not on that trip. I have seen the canoes later thought.

WHAT ABOUT THEM?

After the steam boat went out of commishion, they applied between Skeena Crossing and Hazelton. For the was quite layed into Hazelton he used canes. For male.

was in charge of them apparently on account of having the mail, he handdled the mail and pasangers, and express. But he didn't go on the river of course he just stayed- he had an Indian-he knew the Indians of course really good. They had big ceader canoes, I remember my sister went down one time she been up visiting. She went down canoes wobbalay don't make any difference, you go and sit down and it was all right once you get going, nothing wrong at all.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OTHER STORIES ABOUT THE SKEENA RIVER?

I can't recall all the name of the Indian villages above the cayon. But I remember the and and and then the next was Hazelton. And then above Hazelton Glen Vowell. I think the steam boats has been that far, perhapse right to Kispiox.

DID YOU EVER GO TO KITWANCOOL?

Yes I've been to Kitwancool buying fur and over the top and down on the cranberrie but I never went all the way down that's a tributary of the Nass.

WHAT KIND OF RECEPTION DID YOU GET AT KITWANCOOL?

That was good when I told the Indians who was. If I hadn't told them that they might of thought was going or go prospecting, maybe put in post in state land, but when I told them I was a nefue C.B. Smith Hazelton well that was all right. Another felow came out, Oh I know you, I see you in Smiths store before I know Then he fixed it up with the other felows then it was all right.

Typed By
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