

(Q) Where were you born?

(L) I was born in Merrit B.C. on the 21st of November, 1923.

(Q) And when did you first come to Hazelton?

(L) I came to Hazelton in 1946.

(Q) Where did you live when you first came to Hazelton?

(L) I first of all stayed with my Grandfather at the hospital, we had a little cabin at the hospital.

(Q) What occupation did you do? What job did you have?

(L) First of all I worked for the department of highways, for the last part of the summer. Then I worked for Mr. Halverson for... no, let's see now, first of all I worked for... Liked the highways, they laid all the men off except for the grater man and what not for the winter, so then I went to work for the Elliots, looking after the farm, up until January, then I went to work for Mr. Halverson until spring, then I got a job at the hospital, maintenance. I worked there for two years.

(Q) What kind of things did you have to do? For maintenance?

(L) Oh, at the Hospital? Oh, ah, keep the furnace going, and look after the diesel engines, and general maintenance.

(Q) Which doctor was there? Was doctor Whiting there?

(L) Uh, no, doctor... there were several doctors. The first one was Dr. Murphy, then Dr. Kraus came, then Dr. Green. I guess Dr. Green and Dr. Kraus were there at the same time, and then there was Dr. Lim, then Dr. Lee. Dr. Whiting wasn't there when I was working there. Dr. Lee was, Mr. Simon was the Administrator.

(Q) Was there a doctor in Hazelton, where the building beside B.C. Cafe is? It's being renovated right now. There was a doctor that nobody liked. He had a private office there.

(L) Oh, I don't know, I don't remember any doctor that... Oh, I know who you're thinking of. That was Dr. Young. It wasn't that nobody liked him, he was a pretty good doctor in lots of respects. Lathnerchuck had that office to begin with, the two Lathnerchucks. Dr. Young, he got in dutch with the B.C. Med., he billed a lot of us fellows up at Silver Standard through B.C. Med for a lot of calls we didn't make. He used to come up to Silver Standard once a week, and so he sent our names in, and I never saw him once all the times he came up Silver Standard. He billed B.C. Med for quite a few visits that I never made at all. Eventually it all caught up to him.

He was in dutch with B.C. Med., so he took off and went back to Edmonton. But it wasn't that people didn't like him, he did a very good job. I lost a finger while working up there, he did a very good job of sewing it up, very neat job. Can't say that isn't a neat job, eh? He's still back in Edmonton. I guess he's retired now, getting pretty well on in years.

(Q) What was the reason you moved here? Was it for work?

(L) No, I came here looking for a farm.

(Q) For a farm. Was there a lot of land around?

(L) Oh yes. Land was very easy to get in those days. Nobody

wanted to farm up here in those days. Not very many. So I found myself a very nice farm. The one that Ernie Bergman has right now.

(Q) How many years did you have that farm?

(L) Oh, pretty near thirty years, something like that.

(Q) What did you farm there? Did you just hay?

(L) Well, I did potatoes, and carrots, and I had a number of Apple trees. Quite a few apple trees to start with, but nobody wanted to pay any kind of a price for apples. They expected you to sell them for less than half of what they'd pay in the stores for them. It wasn't worth my while to even bother and pick them. So eventually I tore the apple trees out and just planted hay where the apple trees were.

(Q) Did you have any animals?

(L) Just a team of horses/ A beautiful team of Belgians, black Belgians. Eventually I sold those to John Smith.

(Q) Did you notice any changes in the farming techniques over the years when you had your farm?

(L) Oh, yes, oh, yes. Definitely changes, always changes. Whether they're for the better or not is another thing. The tractor is a great thing to have on the farm, but the tractor can cause the farmer an awful lot of problems too. Now a days, the price of tractors is so high that when a farmer buys a tractor, he has to mortgage his life away to buy it. Then he owes the bank money for years. And if he's not very careful, the bank can take his farm away. That's what is happening right now to a lot of farmers, especially the prairie farmers. They have such huge tractors, and they cost about \$200 000. a piece. And fuel is so expensive.

(Q) What businesses were here when you came?

(L) Well, not an awful of lot difference to what it is now. There was Myros & Smith. Mr. Myros had a store over the building that's being renovated and converted into an office building right now. Then there was Sargents store. Sargent's stor used to where the bank is now. Eventually they built a new store and hotel, and tore the old building down. Then also there was the Bay. Of course the old store still standing there, and then they built the new store. Of course we had a few cafes that we haven't got now. Jim Ham's cafe was a very colorful place you might say. It was the choice of most folk around. Lot of us folks from the Hospital used to go there at times. Old Joe was quite a colorful character. Missed old Joe when he left.

(Q) What was your first impression of Hazelton when you got here?

(L) Oh, I liked Hazelton when I first got here. Mich more than I do now. It's a very beautiful spot. You can't help but like it. The weather's nice, but it rains so much I'm getting tired of it. But my first two summers here were real wet one's too. Well it was quite nice when I came in August. About the first of August, something like that. And we had quite nice weather that summer. But the next summer was really wet. And the next one after that was wet again.

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(Q) Do you recall the summer of '58?

(L) I came the summer of '46 and then the summer of '47 and '48 were pretty wet.

(Q) I hear the summer of '58 was rather warm.

(L) We might have had one warm summer.

(Q) How many people were here when you came?

(L) How many people? Oh, I haven't got any idea, but there sure weren't as many as there are now. I knew everybody here at the time. Well there was the odd one that I missed, but not very many. Like, I never knew John... an old fellow who died last fall. The old fellow who used to go around on an electric wheelchair. He lived in South Town. Evidently he was here all the time, and I never knew him. He used to come up all the way from South Town to New Town in that electric wheel chair.

(Q) Did you have electricity when you first came here?

(L) No, Old Hazelton had electricity, and the Hospital, and that's all. We didn't have electricity in Two-mile.

(Q) So when did you get it?

(L) Oh, '50, yes I think it was '50. '50 or '51. I know were living in the house where Gloria Benson is living, in '49, and Alan had his own little plant, that's all he had. Then the next year, hydro came in.

(Q) Did you go to New Town very often?

(L) Not too often, I did most business in Old Hazelton at that time.

(Q) Do you remember the old post office and the store that used to be in New Town? Where Willans live now?

(L) Oh, yeah.

(Q) They had a laundromat in New Town I believe.

(L) I don't remember that. The first laundromat that I can remember was the one the Kornelson's put in. When Gordie took it over, he put in quite a few more machines. They started off in a house, the basement of their office, and what not. They put up a bunch of cabins, and they started the laundromat for their customers. Then they found that there was quite a bit of time that was open, so they let other people come in and do their laundry. So they just had one machine to start with, one washer and two dryers, or something like that. Or vica versa, I'm not sure now.

(Q) So the RCMP was in Old Town, by where the pizza place is.

(L) Yes that's right.

(Q) John Field School wasn't there, was it?

(L) No, neither was the high school.

(Q) Where was the school?

(L) It was right where the liquor store is now. No, behind the liquor store. I don't know whether there's a building there or not. Then they had so many children that they couldn't accomodate in the school, so they had to use the Pentecostal church for the school, and the Anglican hall. They also used the church army hall for the native children. It was quite a conjestive set up when they built the school that they have now.

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(Q) So there was no Liquor store?

(L) No, no liquor store.

(Q) They had to go to Smithers?

(L) I suppose.

(Q) The roads were pretty bad I assume.

(L) Oh, yeah. Pretty rough at times.

(Q) Did you own a car when you got here?

(L) Oh yes, but we didn't go to Smithers any more than we had to. Crooked, dusty roads. And chuckholes. Washboard and chuckholes.

(Q) Were you into fishing, or hunting, or trappin, or anything while you live here?

(L) Oh no, I've never trapped. I've done a little hunting, but no great amount. I've never shot a moose yet.

(Q) Was there any specific regulations? Like did you have to have a licence, or could you just...

(L) Oh yes, licence and tags too. Big game licences were \$5, then they were raised to \$7, now they're \$13.

(Q) Did you take part in the Mayday, on the 24th of May, at the Totem park?

(L) No, I didn't.

(Q) That was quit a community affair wasn't it?

(L) Oh, I don't know, I'm sure.

(Q) For your very first job in Hazelton, do you remember how much you were paid?

(L) 75¢ an hour. That was at the Hospital.

(Q) How was your salary divided up? Bills and stuff?

(L) I was buying my farm. That is, I saved my money to buy my farm. I paid for it in cash. I had my mother to keep, and what not.

(Q) Have you ever moved away from Hazelton at all?

(L) Well not a great deal since I've lived here. I lived in Vancouver. I worked for Boeing aircraft before I came up here.

(Q) What sort of things did you do for recreation?

(L) Oh, hiking, a little bit of hunting, fishing.

(Q) Were you here when the bridge at Hagwilget was built?

(L) No, that was before my time. That was built in '36 as far as I know. Ten years before I came.

(Q) That was after the flood, then they built the bridge. Because the old bridge was washed out.

(L) No, they had both bridges at the same time. I don't know when that bridge went out down town, but it was the ice that weighed that bridge down, the Old Town bridge. It rained and froze and rained and froze. There was a tremendous weight of ice on the bridge. Then, I guess the river came up pretty high and the combination took part of it out. But it was only one span as far as I know.

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They moved the rest of it to Smithers.

(Q) How much did you have to pay for your farm when you were buying it?

(L) Oh, I can't remember. It was a long time ago.

(Q) Did you know many people in the area? Did you know people like Beth David, or some of the...

(L) Well, I knew pretty near everybody here at the time. When you're working at the hospital you get to know a lot of people.

(Q) Did any dentists come to the hospital?

(L) Not very often. Dr. Murphy used to pull quite a few teeth. Generally it was left up to the doctors to do the tooth pulling. Dr. McPhearson used to come in a couple of times a year from Terrace.

(Q) Would they freeze your mouth at all, or would they just pull it out?

(L) Oh yes, yes. Dr. McPhearson, he used to take a little fortification when he was pulling teeth. I guess he felt it as much as the patient did. I had two teeth pulled, and he was pretty high. He broke them both off, and he had one awful time getting the roots out. Three great big roots on each one of them, I guess. They all had to be drilled and taked out with a skewer, you know.

(Q) What kind of anesthetic would they use? Just a needle?

(L) Yes, just a needle. Cocaine I guess. Or Novacaine.

(Q) What brought the mail into Old Town?

(L) Oh, let's see now. It came by train in those days. And I think the Marshalls used to pick it up. As far as I know. Ward Marshalls and... they had a one-ton truck.

(Q) Did they just pick up the mail, or did they pick up groceries and all the supplies?

(L) Yeah, anything like that, that came on the train. They'd take it over.

(Q) I guess it was important to have a couple of cows on the farm, wouldn't it be? Because you couldn't get fresh milk in the store.

(L) Sendens had a dairy. He had the dairy when I came here. He supplied the whole area. Well the Gilmores had a dairy there too. But you couldn't buy milk at the store, it was all delivered right to your door.

(Q) What about fresh vegetables?

(L) Oh, fresh vegetables were no problem. Most of the farmers grew a certain amount of fresh vegetables to sell. The Loves used to grow quit a few vegetables.

(Q) But they wouldn't sell them in the stores?

(L) Well any vegetables that you got in the stores were locally grown in those days. They wouldn't ship any vegetables in.

(Q) Do you remember any wedding ceremonies or anything that was really different from what they are now?

(L) No, I don't think so. They didn't get into any spectacular weddings. Like jumping from an airplane and parachuting down.

(Q) What people had a major influence on the community before Hazelton was incorporated?

(L) No one to a great extent. Dr. Wrinch was quite an outstanding person. But of course he was before my time. He left shortly before I came up here.

(Q) So Hazelton was incorporated shortly after you came up here wasn't it?

(L) No, it was quite a long time after. I don't know just when it was incorporated.

(Q) Who was the first mayor?

(L) Polly Sargent.

(Q) Did you play any sports, like baseball, or on any teams?

(L) No, I was too busy with my farm.

(Q) Do you have any interesting stories that would be useful to us?

(L) Well the first summer I was here in the fall after the highways laid everybody off. Mr. Benson asked me if I'd like to go to Fort Babine for Labor day. Tony West had to go there to keep law and order, because they didn't want any one to get hurt or killed on Labor day. He didn't like the idea of having to go into Fort Babine, but just the same he had to go there because that was his orders. So he got Allan Benson to take him in there. It's a long distance to go with just one horse you know, so we had to take some supplies. Allan asked me if I'd like to go along, and he had another fellow helping him, Percy Foster, and then Tony of course. So Allan supplied a pack horse, a horse for himself and a horse for Percy. Of course I rented a horse through Mr. Halverson. It took us three days to get to Fort Babine over the trail.

The first day we were there, we got talking to the fish warden there. He offered to take us to the counting gate which was seven or eight miles down the river. So just before we got to the counting gate, we saw three native fellows. They had just caught a huge spring salmon. It was over six feet long. I have never ever seen a fish any where near that size, since of before. In order to get that fish in their dugout canoe, they had to all get out into the river in order to get it into the canoe. The sad thing about it was the fish warden never asked these fellows to come in and weigh it. It would go all of 130 pounds. It was a tremendous size.

I was talking to a biologist afterwards, and he said that for a spring salmon to get to that size, it would have to be a male.

And it would have to go back to the ocean three times, or twice at least, for it to get that size. See, a male salmon will sometimes survive if they are spawned close to the ocean and they get washed back again. This was his third trip in, and they'll survive. Salt water brings them back again. This was his third trip in and he might have survived again if they hadn't caught him, because he showed no signs of deterioration. It was just like a steelhead. That was the sad thing about it though, that it wasn't weighed, so we didn't know how heavy it was. But I would estimate it at about 130 pounds. So we went down to the counting gate then, and they showed us how they count the salmon. Then we went back to Fort Babine, I guess we were there for only a day, I'm not just sure now. Then we headed back.

It rained all the way home. So we were like a bunch of drenched rats. We got to Pete Ober's cabin, that's only six miles out, but it was 12:00 at night when we got there, and we were just soaked to the skin, so we decided to stay at Pete's cabin for the night, put on a fire and dried out. Then we came in the rest of the way in the morning. That was quite an experience for me.

(Q) Did you have any relatives come and visit you?

(L) What do you mean?

(Q) Like from a bigger city, that have never been up North.

(L) Oh yes, most of my relatives. My Grandfather was the only one of my relatives, that was living here when I came up. My brother then came up first in 1948, I think... Then my Mother came shortly after, and my sister. Of course they all stayed here. Most of the relatives have been up to visit at times.

(Q) What did they think of Hazelton?

(L) Oh, they like it as far as scenery goes, but they think it's a little out in the sticks.

(Q) Did you go to any of the dances that were in the halls?

(L) No, I never bothered to dance myself.

(Q) So do you like the way Hazelton has changed over the years? Or did you like it the way it was?

(L) I guess its for the better. I guess it's an improvement.

(Q) When did you first get sewer?

(L) Oh, I don't know what year it was. New Hazelton had it first. Well you must remember, you were here at the time. You were just about this high, when it came in. You remember Lawrence Dubnick don't you? He didn't stay here much after they got the sewer. Maybe a couple of years at the most. So it hasn't been here that long.

(Q) Was mining going well in the fifties?

(L) Oh yes, Silver Standard was operating in the '50's, and the Red Rose part of the time, and there was a lot of exploration going on. But a lot of mining came and went before I got here. I don't know what years the Silver cup was operating, and the Red Rose operated before too. Then there was the Roche de Boulé mine operating too.

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(Q) Who started the logging after mining petered out?

(L) Well when I came up here, there were quite a few little mills in the bush. Small operation. The first large mill was when Siglett moved in.

(Q) Where was that one?

(L) Over in South Town same place as Rim is now.

(Q) Did you know of a mill out in Glenvowell?

(L) No, that was before my time. That was run by... I think Mr. Tomlinson started that, but that was just for local use. They didn't ship lumber out at all. Just for local use. That's where all the old houses in Glenvowell came from, they cut their own ~~X~~ lumber right there. That was a water powered saw mill.

(Q) Is it still there now? Or was it torn down?

(L) Well there's nothing much left of it I guess. Maybe the turbine are there somewhere, I don't know. They cut the lumber there for the town of Kitseegas. The people of Kitseegas hauled it up the ice on the Skeena in the winter time.

(Q) Wouldn't it have been easier to just put it in the water during the summer?

(L) Well, it's no very navigable, I don't think. The river is a pretty rushing river up there.

(Q) If you can remember anything which we've left out, that would be helpful.

(L) Well, I don't remember what year it was, I went up the Kispiox with the Hagen boys. Way up as far as Sweetin. There was no road in those days. Only to the Janze farm. The boys had never seen the upper Kispiox, neither had I, so we decided to take a trip up there. They supplied the horses and I supplied the grub. So we took off and went up as far as Sweetin, but the river was too high, so we couldn't ford the Sweetin (river), so that's as far as we went. That took us three days to get to Sweetin.

Then we came back, we camped for the night at Corral Creek. Before we camped for the night, we went up Corral Creek. always to see what it was like up the creek. We saw a grizzly track eighteen inches long. We didn't feel too secure with him around. We had a drink in the creek, Henry dropped his cigarettes, and didn't realize he'd lost them when he was bending down to have a drink from the creek. So when we got to where we were going to camp for the night, he wanted to have a smoke, and didn't have any cigarettes. So the boys went back up. Two of us stayed with the horses, and they walked back up to retrieve the cigarettes. They had to take both of our rifles, so the two of us left didn't feel very secure with no rifles. Anyhow, they got back, cigarettes, rifles and all.

Then we spent the night there and carried on the next day. We got down as far as Janze's farm the next day, but as it generally does, it was raining, so we were pretty miserable before we got home. Soaked to the hide.

(Q) Nowadays it only takes 90 minutes to drive to Sweetin.

(L) (0 minutes? Yeah, I guess so, but that's pushing it pretty hard. That's with one of these logging truck drivers.