

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Sheldon Gibson

INTERVIEWER: Nadine Mackenzie

DATE: January 1985

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking. I'm interviewing Mr. Gibson in his home. Mr. Gibson, thank you for having accepted to participate in our project. Can you give me some background, when and where were you born?

SG: I was born in Calgary on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, 1922.

NM: What did your parents do?

SG: My father was in the Bank of Commerce, as it was called then, it's currently the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. My mother was a nurse, a graduate of the General Hospital Training School.

NM: Were they both Albertans?

SG: Well, no. My dad was born in Scotland and immigrated to Canada in, I think, 1906. My mother was born when the family lived in Devil's Lake, North Dakota and in 1901 they moved to Red Deer, where her father had a jewelry business of some sort. So she was raised in Red Deer and came to Calgary for her nursing training.

NM: Where were you educated?

SG: My dad at that time was a manager of country branches when I started school. So I started school in Carmangay, the same town the Bob Tedeski and Bob Miller of Imperial Oil came from, incidentally. We lived there until I was in grade . . I think I was part way through grade seven and then we moved to Calgary when they closed that branch, in I think it was 1933 or 4. Then I went to school at Mount Royal Public School on 14<sup>th</sup> Street S.W. for the rest of grade 7 and grade 8. I took grade 9 at King Edward, further south in Calgary and I took my high school at CCI, which is at 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Calgary.

#025 NM: And after high school, what did you do?

SG: In my final year of high school, my father died and my mother had had a serious cancer operation, so the family was moved to Lethbridge to be near some cousins who were medical doctors, the Hagues???. So I was out for a year and during that time I worked in the Hague clinic. I started out by doing the floor waxing and clean up and that sort of thing and took typing and shorthand at Garbutt's??? Business School for a couple of hours a day. Then I got to where I was doing some work in the office, typing case histories, information. So that was for I guess, a total of 14 months and then I went to university after being out that long. I went to the University of Alberta.

NM: What did you study there?

SG: I took a course that they called Honours Physics, it was in the Faculty of Arts and Science

in those days.

NM: Did you get a degree with that?

SG: Yes. I graduated with a B.Sc. in Honours Physics.

NM: And after graduation what did you do?

SG: I graduated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 1945, we got married on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 1945 and I went to work on, I think it was the 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> of May, 1945.

NM: You have a very good memory for dates.

SG: Well, the wedding anniversary, you keep being reminded of course.

#045 NM: What was your first job after graduation?

SG: My first job was on a seismograph crew that was operating in Davidson, Saskatchewan. We went to Saskatchewan and set up a . . . and joined the crew there. I was working as, I think they called it, operator trainee. That meant that you did the work of putting out the geophones and the cable. In those days all of the helpers on the crew were university graduates. That was standard practice then. Carter, which was the company in the States that did the exploration for Standard of New Jersey. These crews were really Carter crews, with just a nucleus of Americans on them, and then Canadian to fill out the crew.

NM: Where did you work in Saskatchewan?

SG: We're missing out some because I worked in Saskatchewan for a couple of summers when I was going to university, on seismic crews. I hit all the high spots, started in Omiston??? and Moose Jaw and Swift Current and another summer we worked out of Elbow and Eyebrow, I think in the reverse order and Swift Current again. After we got married, we started in Davidson and then we lived for a little while in Kerrobert. I missed some time in there because shortly after I joined the crew I became ill with a disease that was quite new then but it's been around a long time now, mononucleosis. The local doctor had a little trouble diagnosing it but it was diagnosed in Regina and it meant I was off work for a little while, while my blood came back. And the from Kerrobert, the crew moved to Alberta.

#076 NM: And what did you do in Alberta, was it the same type of work?

SG: Yes, we left Saskatchewan then. That would have been about. . . September, October of '45 and I believe that was at the time of the election of the . . . or it had something to . . . it may have been the election of the CCF government there. It was either the election of the CCF government or threats that the CCF government had made. I just don't remember that. Anyway we moved to . . . well, actually the crew moved to Provost. I had gone back to work . . . the mononucleosis effects were still there and my blood count started to go down and the company put me in the crew office. At that time the interpretation was done on the crews, records were worked up as we called it, and interpreted on the crew.

NM: I have forgotten to ask you the name of the company?

SG: Well, I was working for . . . I was on Imperial Oil's payroll. I think some of the employees, the American employees on the crew, were on the payroll of the Carter Oil Company in the States. When my blood count started to go down, I thought the people were very generous in what they did, because I remember the big man from Tulsa was Rusty

Gemmer??? and I was called in to see him because the Party Chief knew my blood count was going down. He asked me if I had ever done any work in computing and I said no. Had I any training in drafting and I said, since I was an Arts and Science grad, not an engineering grad, I said no. Well he said, do you know how to use a contour pen and I said no, and at that point I think he said, fine, we'll take you into the office anyway. So on the basis of all those qualifications I was put into the office, but it was something I remembered a long time.

#108 MG: Tell about the fly swatter.

SG: In the office, I was working with some people that you or others have already interviewed, Carl Chapman and Wes Rabey and I'm not sure who else was there. But I was the junior man for sure in the office at this time. I said, the crew had moved to Provost but the office was set up in Wainwright and the crew was going to ultimately come up to Wainwright when they finished the field work that was close to Provost. So I was low man and there wasn't really a tremendous amount of work to keep me busy. I was busy some of the time but I also had spare time. It was the fall of the year so the flies were coming in a bit. I busied myself with taking a fly swatter and attacking them. I thought that was a reasonable thing to do but finally it was too much for Carl Chapman, who was trying to operate a contour pen on a map that he was finishing off. Every time I hit, there was a great swat that put a little jiggle in the contour line. So I think that's the story that she's referring to.

NM: How long did you stay in this office for?

SG: I stayed in the office until the crew came up to Wainwright. That would have been, I think about February of 1946. And then I went back to the work on the instruments on the recording truck.

NM: How were the conditions of living, where were you living at the time, were you living in trailers or. . ?

SG: No we didn't. I think we didn't because I don't think we thought we could afford it. What we did was we rented accommodations in each of these towns that we had lived in. In Davidson for instance, we lived in a very small, I called it a room and a half shanty that was, what we described as being between the hotel and the blacksmith shop. It has since gone, we were back there this summer, just to see if it was still there. In Kerrobert, we rented an absolutely empty house and borrowed, rented and so on, the minimum of furniture to get by. Actually that's what we did for furniture in Davidson too. When we got to Wainwright, it was a bigger town and we had a two room basement suite. That was pretty luxurious in a way, you had running water in that house. Carl Chapman and his wife had the garage on the property as their living accommodation. It had been made into a suite. Wainwright was and is an army town, and I think they had . . some people had finished suites in the basement. But you just found what you could and if all else failed, you stayed in the hotel. You stayed in the hotel until you could find something. That's a picture of the little building we had in Davidson. That building down the lane was where the town pump was and that's where we went to get water.

#159 NM: It was not too near?

SG: Well, half a block or so.

NM: Can you give me the name of people you were working with at the time and then maybe later on, you found them again in Calgary.

SG: With people in this business, you sort of meet them and some of them go away at different times and your paths cross again, and then they diverge, this happens all the time. The first people on the crew, my goodness, there was Byron Seaman, who's now with . . . what's the name of Seaman's company, Bow Valley Industries, was on that crew when we started. Roy Beally???, George Longphee, and there was Bob Grier, I don't know whether Bill Allen??? was on that crew at that time or not, probably not. One of the operators that summer. . . the second. . . one of the things we did when we started in 1945 was we worked two shifts. The crews worked two shifts, one crew would leave early in the morning and work until about noon and the other crew would go out to the field and meet the crew and take over and work until on into the evening. So I guess we got twice as much work done that way. One of the false pretenses in the whole thing was that I told my fiancé we would have a glorious life of living somewhere in Canada and the winters in the southern United States, because up until 1945 that was the practice. Crews came up to Canada for the summer and went back to the States for the winter. We got married in May 1945 and by fall, the company had decided to see if you couldn't in fact, operate in Canada in the winter time.

NM: So she didn't go to California after all?

SG: Well, it wasn't California, it would have been Louisiana and that part of the States, but no, she didn't go there either.

#198 NM: In '47, were you more or less involved in the Leduc discovery?

SG: Okay, the crew that was in Wainwright, as I had mentioned before, moved just at the start of the road ban period in 1946, over to Leduc. Now, the program there was to shoot a . . . I think there were three lines of spot holes and spot holes were holes that were one mile apart but these were all in a continuous line. You'd draw a line across the map on the road allowances and then every mile you put one of these holes and took a seismic record there. One of these lines that we were working on, did run across the Leduc reef. So that crew that came from Saskatchewan and from Wainwright to Leduc, was the one that did the first seismic, I'm virtually certain, over the Leduc field. And did turn up the . . . .actually it was mapped as a lower Cretaceous anomaly, a lower Cretaceous high. It was a high but it was draped over the D-3 reef. The crew continued on this reconnaissance program of these one mile spot holes and I believe it was a Heiland crew that came in and did, what we call, continuous profiling, a more detailed type of seismic, over this anomaly that we had turned up. My participation in all this discovery of course, was that I was, either working, putting out geophones and picking them up again, or some day, working in the recording truck as the assistant operator. But I was not in a very heavy decision making role at that time.

NM: Who was working with you at the time of Leduc?

SG: It would be most of the same people that I mentioned earlier and I'm missing a lot of

them. Oh, we missed . . . I think we had the Garrity's on the crew then, drilling. Art fast, who was a driller, Bill Allen was on the crew by Leduc times. Pretty much that same group of people. It was in about that time that some of the trainees that had worked for a year or so, were approached to go to South America, with that affiliate and some in fact did go. I believe Byron Seaman was going to go but I believe he got as far as Miami and suddenly decided that he really didn't want to go down there. I think that was when Byron left the company, but it hasn't blighted his career unduly.

#264 NM: Nobody asked you to go there?

SG: Yes, in fact, we were on the point of. . . I had said, yes we would be interested, after we chatted about it and we bought our trunks and we were planning on all the dry goods and thing that Marge would have to have to make. . . why were we going to buy that stuff?

MG: Well, in those days, you were advised to take material down to make dresses and this sort of thing. Why I don't know but we were following the advice.

SG: Yes, so we did a bit of this and then of course, the Leduc #1 came in and Imperial's exploration activity was going to increase and Imperial was not about to send people on foreign service in the numbers that they had been going. So we came that close.

NM: And then what did you do?

SG: The crew that was in Leduc and was working on these spot holes. . . I guess that was when we moved to. . . we were even out at Winfield for a little while. That was an interesting place because a bunch of us were staying in . . . I think you'd call it a nursing home. A nursing home as an active treatment nursing home, rather than what we sometimes mean by nursing homes now I think.

MG: Yes, the sort of thing they would have in small communities, where they would have a nurse, who had a home, who took in people.

SG: Yes, because we were the only married couple on the crew so we got the maternity room, I believe, in that nursing home.

MG: She had no patients at the time.

SG: The health of the Winfield people was good at the moment, so seismic crews were able to rent her accommodation. We weren't there for long and it was quite long enough. Then we moved to Edmonton and continued this reconnaissance pattern.

NM: This is the end of the first interview with Sheldon Gibson.

Tape 1 Side 2

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## Tape 2 Side 1

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking, this is the second interview with Sheldon Gibson. Mr. Gibson, last time we were talking about Edmonton, what did you do in Edmonton?

SG: I was still working on that same seismic party. Incidentally, accommodation was very difficult to find but Marjorie had the job of finding it. She found three upstairs rooms in the home of the Keith's at 116<sup>th</sup> Street and 102<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. It was very close to where the crew's base was. It was in a railhead there, just north of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, across the tracks and then into the west a bit. Incidentally I think that summer, we were still working double shifts on the crews, as we had in the summers, when I had worked with the seismic crews. Because we can remember this matter of getting up extremely early in the morning some of the times. A beautiful time of day in the spring. Anyway, we worked out of Edmonton and then in the fall, the crew moved up north to Jarvie. Jarvie is northwest of . . . north of Westlock, I'd guess about 80 miles out of Edmonton. Jarvie was a very, very small place and that's where we had our first experience of living in seismic camps. These were shacks and I think we had 6 or 8 people to a building. They were less than the size of an ordinary farm granary in those days and we heated with these little metal air tight, type heaters, burned wood. There was a camp attendant and his job was to keep the fires going at night. I think he kept the fires going at night, but now that I think on it, I'm not sure because I also remember that it was extremely cold getting up in the morning.

#028 NM: Which year was this.

SG: That would be the fall of 1946. And I think we were there over Christmas. I guess that's the year we went home to Lethbridge for Christmas, to my mother's place, and while there I had an appendix attack and had to have my appendix out. So I missed whatever it was, a couple of weeks of work after that. One of the things about Jarvie was there's a lot of muskeg up in that country. I remember this glossy, fibrous material wasn't far under the surface, sometimes it was at the surface and in that country west of Jarvie, there were places where it was burning and you'd get the smoke and vapours at low levels. You would sort of come in and out of clouds as you went through it and it was extremely rough, because where it had burned out, it might be up to a couple of feet lower than where it had not burned out, the road surface or the surface you were crossing with the trucks. Anyway then we moved down to Barrhead and there I guess I had a better deal. I had a bunk in the office that the crew had there. That lasted on through the winter, then in the spring we moved back to Edmonton. I think also about this time we moved, the place Marjorie was living, from the house I mentioned to the one over on the south side, I think it was 10707- 81<sup>st</sup> Avenue. We had a gain, the upstairs that a recently widowed lady had made into a small apartment. We had 3 rooms and a bath there. She was a delightful, jolly, I think, Irish lady. So we worked out of Edmonton. That summer I was promoted to operator and moved to a different crew, which happened also to be working out of Edmonton. And we worked in the area west of Edmonton. I don't remember quite what all the areas were but I think most of it was out west, out in the vicinity of Lake

Wabamun, that part of the country, great bush covered area. In the fall our first child was born and the crew moved down to Camrose, where we were. Incidentally the Party Chief on that crew, Party #42, was Frank Spraggins, who got so much involved with the Syncrude project. I don't know what his final title was, but certainly at least, Chairman of the Board. He was the number one man in that company. Anyway, Camrose was a seismographers delight. The country was open and the roads were generally good, the seismic records were good. The drilling wasn't all that hard. We had a lot of fun on that crew and got a great deal of work done. That was a highly satisfactory and I think, highly efficient crew. Early in 1948 then, I was transferred back to the first crew I had been. . .no. . . yes, to the first crew I had been on, and we were located in Dapp, which is the town next to Jarvie on that line up there. Again, it was a camp situation and accommodation was as it was before. We all ate in the local restaurant, which was not outstandingly good. Later on we moved again, repeated the thing and went back to Barrhead, I believe. Then at road ban time we were back in Edmonton. In the summer of '48, I was sent to Tulsa. Imperial was increasing its level of seismic activity and was going to start a new crew. There was a new instrument or recording truck being built for us at the Jersey Production Research Company lab, in Tulsa. So I was sent down to Tulsa for the month of August to assist in the final check-out of the truck and then to bring it back to Edmonton. That trip to Tulsa was an outstanding one.

#096 NM: What happened?

SG: I got on the airplane in Edmonton and it was a very hot summer day. And there were lots of. . .I suspect we were flying in a DC-3, it wasn't a very big airplane anyway.

MG: Had you flown before?

SG: I don't know whether I had flown before or not. But I know that it didn't fly very high and with the fields that were covered with grain and the fields that were summer fallowed, it was an extremely rough ride. The plane landed in Calgary but I would say that about the time we had reached Red Deer I was sick as I could be. We landed for awhile and stayed on the ground for a little while in Calgary and then went on and flew to Lethbridge. I don't think that airplane was outside of the city limits of Calgary before I was sick again. I was so sick to my stomach, I can remember wondering if I could persuade them to land this airplane at one of the Air force training stations somewhere along the way. I didn't care where as long as it was on the ground. So I got off at Lethbridge and terminated my trip at that point that day. I didn't know how I was going to Tulsa, but I knew I wasn't going to continue on that day. In Lethbridge I had two first cousins of my mother's that were doctors. Incidentally it was several hours after I got off the plane before my stomach was back to where I could even consider food.

#117 NM: That sounds very bad.

SG: It was very bad. So these first cousins once removed loaded me. . .I looked into bus schedules and train schedules to see if there wasn't some other way I could get to Tulsa. But they were really much too slow and were going to take forever. So they came up with some samples of their sick pills and I took off with these in my pocket and a fair number

in my stomach. In those days the planes landed just about everywhere there was a landing field along the way. We certainly landed at Great Falls and I think we landed at another airport before that. I can't remember where all the route went. We left in the afternoon from Lethbridge and it was early the next morning, you know, 7 or 8 in the morning when we landed in Tulsa. And I got to Tulsa on my last pill and was only very slightly sick during the rest of the trip. A terrible trip. I was sure glad I was coming home in a truck. Anyway, I spent the month in Tulsa, that was before air conditioning was all that common too. I stayed at the Mayo??? Hotel, which was a very nice hotel, and an old hotel, sort of a Rafayette???, Palliser, equivalent and all I had for air conditioning was a big ceiling fan that was over the bed.

NM: And it was the month of August, that would be very hot.

SG: I think it was the hottest month of the year, yes. I had my nice Harris tweed jacket with me, but that didn't get used, except for one day and very briefly. I woke up and it was raining and I was quite delighted, because I knew when it rained in this country it got quite a bit cooler. It was almost automatic, it would be a much cooler day. So I put on my jacket and headed down and I went out the front door of the hotel and I thought I had stepped into a steam bath. It was quite a shock really. Anyway, I took the jacket back up to the hotel room and went back to work. So the trip back was. . .the truck was checked out, the trip back was quite uneventful. And I operated that truck on the new crew for a short time, because in August of '48, I was made Party Chief of the company crew that was #46, that was working up in Grande Prairie. That was the crew that Labby Laberge??? had been Party Chief of and he was being moved to Calgary. This crew of course, had a fair number of people on it that I knew. We rented the house that Laberge had had, in Grande Prairie, from Mrs. Donald, who was reputed to own most of the town. This was a funny little house. It certainly had no basement, it was just sitting on the ground. It appeared as though it had been built in four stages you know, it was a one room house and then they had put another room on behind that and then another one and then they had put one out to the side of the second one.

#168 NM: So adding in every direction.

SG: Yes. And it had no running water, I can remember. We bathed in a circular galvanized tub that was, I don't know, 4' in diameter. As I said, the house was. . .they had banked the dirt up, piled the dirt up around this house to try and keep it warm. It was a Dr. Thompson that lived across the alley, a young doctor in Grande Prairie, who had a precocious little. . . might be a fair word. . little girl, Marj still remembers hearing this yell for help one day, because here was I sitting in the tub, in the kitchen and outside, standing up on the dirt banking against the house, was the little Thompson girl, with her nose pressed up against the glass, watching this whole performance. That's where I had to chop kindling too, of course, because we didn't have natural gas for cooking. And as I say, she was a frank child too, I was chopping kindling and she said, you do chop an awful lot of kindling don't you. I'm not sure I had the most efficient operator working the kitchen stove. The crew was there until the end of the year and then we moved over to McLennan. McLennan was a divisional point on the Northern Alberta Railway, so it had a lot of

railway people living there. We rented a house from a little old lady who was the widow of the local barber. She was living with somebody else for the time there and so she rented us her house. Her house had a little dugout under it, but . . . clearly there was no insulation in it. It was a little better than the house in Grande Prairie interior, and it had a dugout and there was a little stove down there, that you could heat, which helped keep the floors warm some. But the kitchen area was an addition on the back and I don't think it had any heat under it. That's where Marjorie wore socks and then wool socks and then fleece lined slippers on her feet. When we tracked snow into the kitchen she had to sweep it up because it would not melt. It was a very cold winter there. We had temperatures in the 40 below range for a long time it seemed.

MG: It got to 50 below there.

SG: Yes, I think it did get to. . .

#216 NM: That's very, very cold.

SG: Yes, it is. But McLennan was also, or at least we found it, a very friendly town too. Certainly Grande Prairie had been very friendly to the crew, although they had been there longer than I was. That's where a lady in the town, Mrs. Jones, invited Marjorie to curl with her. Marj demurred that, while she'd like to, she never had, but she said, well, you have to start some time, so she started. It was after she'd been curling with Mrs. Jones for awhile that she realized that Mrs. Jones was one of the best curlers in the town and had been the zone representative in the ladies' play downs on occasion and so on. Now, she wasn't taking Marj on that team but she was helping her get started. A couple of the other memories we have of that town, the way, when you get to these temperatures of 40 and 50 below, the trains that were way over the other side of town, about 3 or 4 blocks away, but they would sound as though they were just outside the front door. They sounded so close when the air was that cold. That house was very cold too. I used to have to get up in the night and stoke the heater that was located in the room that was the dining room. Our son by this time, was a year and bit old and we had him in another bedroom, and he would be put to bed and covered in blankets and so on. But in the morning you had to dig for him because he had retreated pretty far under the covers.

#248 NM: Because he was cold during the night.

SG: Because it was cold. Marj used to keep the milk and cream on the windowsill in that bedroom to keep it cool, but we finally moved Ralph out of that room, when she came in one time and found the milk was frozen. One of the things Marj did, when we were traveling about, was take the Belik??? tea set with her. She felt that we were going to be living in a variety of places that were not elegant, but she did want to have something nice along with her. So we had a barrel, it had been originally packed by professional, with this Belik tea set in. When we were leaving McLennan, the dray came to pick up this parcel of express and take it over to the station. Marj watched him going down the street on his dray and also saw it roll off, fall off the back of this dray.

NM: With the tea set inside?

SG: With the tea set in it of course. I think she took some satisfaction when we finally opened

it in finding that not a single piece of it was broken.

NM: That was very lucky.

SG: Well, good packing.

NM: Even so.

SG: one of the other memories I have of McLennan that ties in with this cold weather that we experienced there, was that . . . we had some of our crew people were hockey players. Jerry Remple was particularly a good hockey player and of course, all these towns had hockey teams and they would play each other. I think it was in that connection that Jerry was playing with the McLennan team and the operator on the crew, Roy Bealy???. . I had loaned him the company car, my Party Chief car, to drive some of the players to, I think it was probably Peace River, to play hockey. Roy brought the car back and parked it, when he got back, at the garage where we kept it but outside. It was on a block heater and he had it backed in so that it was pointing straight down the street. When I went to get the car in the morning, it did start, not happily or easily but it did start. But there was no way in the world I could turn the steering on that car, it was so stiff until I had got down the road 2 or 3 blocks and I finally managed to wrestle the wheel around to get it to turn. It was a very cold spot. Anyway, when we left McLennan, we went down to Barrhead for a little while. My recollection was to just do a bit of work in the tail end of the winter. Then we moved in the spring, just after road ban, out to Provost, which is out, close to the Saskatchewan border. It was at Provost that Marjorie and I bought a trailer to live in. At that time, the trailer industry in Canada, or in this part of the country was very, very minimal. There were some trailers that had been made in the States that were available, I think. And the other alternative was to buy, what was in effect, a commercial camp trailer type and have it modified inside, or built inside to be a family residence.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

## Tape 2 Side 2

SG: This trailer was built by United Trailer here in Calgary. Ted Rebach??? was the President, I guess of it. It was made, it was 28' long in the building part of it. It was only 8' wide because that's all they were making in those days. But it was covered with corrugated aluminum the way the camp trailers were. It had big square windows, they were about 3' square. The insulation was not all that great, it was this cardboard with shiny aluminum foil on both sides. I remember that at Marj's father's suggestion we had them do that double. In this 28', we had a very small bedroom, we had a small sitting room, we had a highly efficient galley kitchen and we had a children's bedroom at the far end.

MG: And an indoor bathroom.

SG: Yes, we had an indoor toilet in the thing. We had a little apartment size washing machine, we had our own water barrel, we had an oil heater with fans on it for heat. And the kitchen stove was a trailer type stove that used propane.

#106 NM: So it was quite comfortable to live in.

SG: It really was, it was much better than anything we'd been able to rent. We felt really very independent. All we had to have was electricity mind you, but we had our own barrels of fuel oil for the heater and our own tanks for propane. Mind you these things are not as well insulated as I'm sure they are no, so we did have a little trouble with our indoor toilet but that was solved by putting . . .the toilet was finished inside, if you like, like a country privy with a bench and then a flap over the seat. So I wired in a socket and put a 60 watt bulb in there that was on all the time and that provided plenty of heat to keep the toilet pail from freezing solid in the wintertime. Another fellow on the crew, Alec Smith and his wife Marj, had a very similar unit. We normally parked together. And then from time to time, we would one way or another help each other to drive the car. . one would drive the car while the other one sat on the front fender and held this very full pail beside him, alongside the tire. And we would run out of town to the north and find a deserted place, then we would fertilize the ditch, very well. Occasionally we would prevail on this fellow I mentioned before, Jerry Remple, to drive and then we could make it all in one trip with Alec on one fender and me on the other. Part of the trouble with it was that the emptying of it was such a chore that you always waited until the pail was way too full for properly doing this performance.

#041 NM: So it was well organized then.

SG: It worked fine. So we had this trailer when we went to Provost and we were there until September. Those were fun days on the seismic crew. We were there in the summertime and in August we set a record for the amount of work done by a seismic crew and we had a lot of fun and good spirits on the crew. About the first of September, we were all moved down to Stettler, which is a much more attractive part of the country. And we worked again, on spot hole shooting that fall and then it was decided that we would try to continue that program in the wintertime. Up until that time, crews had always shot. . .they

had done the reconnaissance with shot holes in the summertime and they would do continuous profiling in the wintertime. Now, in continuous profiling, you need much less bulldozing done, because the holes are much closer together, the holes are only 1/4 mile apart. And if you did 2 or 3 miles in a day, that was a pretty good days work. In the spot hole program we were doing, it was two miles between holes, but the request was to do it and we said we would do it as long as it was economic and worked. That's when we hired a D-8 bulldozer, which was really quite a large cat for what we were doing. But I think it was an excellent move because that bulldozer didn't have to work all that hard, it could move anything it had to move. Snow was not terrifically deep and we had a good operator on it and we never did get held up by lack of dozing. I was . . . my memories of that was that at road ban time, I was walking along the street with the shooter on the seismic crew and we met a fellow who said hello to me, and to whom I said hello. The shooter, Herb Sinclair, said, who was that and I said, that's the fellow that was operating the bulldozer this winter. It was just an indication of how well he'd kept ahead, that Herb Sinclair had never even seen the bulldozer that winter. So we had a good winter there. Our second child, our first daughter was born in Stettler, while we were living in the trailer. One of our memories, I guess it's Marj's memory, was that while she was in the hospital with Lorna. The hospital was only about 2 or 3 blocks from where our trailer was set up. And from the sitting room, on the maternity wing, you could look down the street and see these two trailers, the Smith's and ours. Marjorie was sitting there and a couple of other ladies were looking out the window and chatting, and they were interested in these trailers. They were not all that common in those days. The one lady was saying, families actually live in that, and the other one was saying, oh yes they do, but of course, never in the winter time. And here we were, this was February and we were certainly living in the trailer and doing very well, thank you. Stettler was a good town. Jerry Remple played on the hockey team and we drove cars around to take some members of the team to adjoining places and of course, went to the hockey games in Stettler. One of the side benefits was that when there was a game coming up, the municipal office was perfectly willing to send a road grader to make sure our crew had no difficulty getting back in from work, so that their hockey players would be able to go play hockey for the town.

#097 NM: That was very important.

SG: Yes, they had their priorities straight. So we were there until the road ban and by this time, it had been decided that Imperial would move a couple of crews into Manitoba. So we planned to move. Now at the time we were going to move, there were highway bans on in Saskatchewan, so we couldn't get through Saskatchewan. So we went around. We came down through Calgary and Lethbridge. The plan was to cross at Coutts and then go on Highway #2, to the vicinity of Minot, North Dakota and then come up into the southwest corner of Manitoba. So away we went and everything went fine until we got to the U.S. border at Coutts. At this point we ran across an American customs man that these trucks, although the big trucks had mostly come from the States, the drills and . . . I guess the hydraulic equipment had but the trucks were Canadian, I guess was the deal. Because the seismic crew trucks, which were originally American, were able to go

through all right. But these others would not be able to go through unless they were shipped in bond. That meant they had to be put on a flat car or in a box car. These trucks were virtually all pulling trailers. The house trailer that we had, had to be pulled by a large three ton truck. You wouldn't move it with a car of course. But the customs man also said, now, the reason you have to do this shipping in bond, is because there is a rail facility here. If however, you were to go west about 20 miles, there is a border crossing at Delbonita??? and they have no railway, so they can let you cross there without putting it on the railway. So we chose that option, of course, and headed west. That road that goes west is only about. . I'm sure it's less than two miles north of the border. As luck would have it, just before we got to where we would turn south to the Delbonita customs station the motor on one of these water trucks went out. Delbonita is not very big, but as I remember it was towed over to a garage, parts that were needed were determined. The driller and I made a fast trip back to Lethbridge to get parts after hours, brought them back, got the truck fixed and went to the border. All this business of towing trucks around and truck break-downs and so on had not gone unnoticed. So the customs man at Delbonita was quite troubled by the fact that these trucks had been coming from the direction of Coutts, he though there was something up and he wasn't about to let them go through. So there was another quick trip back to Coutts and the customs man there wrote a letter to the customs man in Delbonita. Coutts being a bigger place than Delbonita, I presume the man in Coutts was senior. And he told the man in Delbonita that yes, in fact, he could let them go through and it was quite okay.

# 156 So that seemed to have everything under way and they went across. In the meantime the rest of the crew, the seismic personnel, had gone on down to Shelby to stay that night. We didn't get to Shelby, I think I got them by phoning, reached them on the phone and it was agreed they would go on. One of the things they did, I think we said, leave word at the first service station, on the west side of such and such a town, where you can gas up, where you can use your credit cards for your trucks, as to where you are. This delay with the motor and so on had delayed us to where I didn't catch them in Shelby. Anyway we came around to meet the this water truck that had had the motor repaired and the rest of them and they had just got across the border and the motor had gone out again. So there was the big deal of hauling it into Shelby. Now in those days, at that time, there was a real difficulty obtaining American money, when you were in Canada. So we certainly didn't. . I didn't have enough, the drill contractor didn't have enough American money to pay for a new motor, which, we decided there was no point in messing around with that old motor again and so they put a new motor in. We were actually on the payroll of the Carter Oil Company then, which was in the States. All the seismic personnel were on Carter's payroll. Then they charged Imperial for it. I think it was about 14 months that we worked for Carter, although what we were doing didn't change a wit. But anyway, I phoned the fellow by the name of H. W. Brown, his nickname was Haywire, from his initials, in Tulsa that night. I didn't know his address, but it was rather amusing, I found very cooperative telephone operators and they tried three H. W. Brown's. The first one, I'd almost think, from the sound of his voice, a very black man, and Haywire Brown was not. The next one they got had an English accent in Tulsa. The third one was the right man

and he was tremendously helpful. He just said, fine how much do you need. You know, I asked him if he could wire me some money, so he wired me some money and as I remember it, I said, I'm going to be leaving Shelby, I think I will be. . . . He had to send the money to me because I was an employee, he couldn't send it to the drill contractor, he said. So I said, I expected to hit Wolf Point about 10:00, when I expected the banks would open. So I walked into the bank at Wolf Point the next morning at 10:00 and lo and behold, the money had just come in. I sent it on open to. . . then I loaned it to the drill contractor back in Shelby and then I went on to try and catch the seismic crew. I guess the night I phoned Haywire Brown, I also phoned ahead to catch the crew. That was even tougher than getting Haywire Brown, tougher for the operator. I said, I want to speak to the service station on the west side of whatever town it was, I don't remember. The first one that is either this or this or this company, you know, it was Phillips 66 or Carter or Mobil, say. So she tried one or two, because the fellows had been asked to leave a message there as to where they were. On about the second try they got one, and they said, yes, they were through here, they gassed up here and they are at the such and such a trailer court, motel. I phoned the motel and got them on the phone and we communicated.

#219 This was a fairly significant surprise to the crew members, who thought there was no way in the world that I would be able to get in touch with them. But the telephone operators were most helpful and took the challenge and met it. Anyway I took off to catch up to the crew and ultimately did, but it was about another day later. I went on with the seismic crew and we all went up into Melita. The drills had not come and of course, in the seismic business, you need drills to do anything. But we spent . . . we were there early in May, we spent a lot of time going around the area we were going to be shooting, doing what we called poop shots, where we would auger a very small hole, maybe about five feet, put a charge in it and then record a record. It's good for. . . it was a way of getting near surface velocity information. But we did this and we shot poop shots all over the place until we had more than adequately done that. About this time too, there was a tremendous blizzard hit this country. Finally I could stand . . . the drills were still not there, they were still coming and I couldn't wait any longer, or stand it any longer and I took off to get them. Of course, this was a case where all the weather reports and road reports said there was no way any of these roads were open. And some of them were, I guess closed part of the time. But if you don't get too much snow, too long and too heavy, a little bit of speed on a car and you can go through some. Anyway this was another one of those instances where the reports of the bad road conditions were somewhat exaggerated. The roads were bad but not impassable, but ultimately I did meet them and the drills were coming along behind a snow plow from the west. So we got the drills up and in to Melita too. They were of course, the drills and water trucks were pulling some of our living accommodations, so some of us were staying at the motel in Melita for awhile, waiting for the drills to get there. We had a nice big area in Melita, up the main street, where we set up a trailer camp. We had about, I guess 8 or 9 trailers in a hollow square, the way the early settlers used to draw the wagons in a circle, I suppose. I don't remember very much outstanding or particularly of interest in Melita. I guess the Remple story of the little girl sleeping in the drawer from the chest of drawers in the hotel room is one item. You know,

their stuff had not arrived and Mary Jane was just a little, wee girl, so they took a drawer out of the thing, Lois did, and fixed it up with blankets and so on and had it on the bed with Mary Jane in it. They had one of the front rooms in the hotel and the hotel of course, had a neon sign outside, I don't remember whether it flashed or not. But apparently Lois woke up one night and she suddenly realized that here was Mary Jane lying in the drawer, sleeping peacefully, but when the green light came on, she thought she looked like a corpse in there. So she said, Jerry, we've got to get out of here, I don't care where.

#293 Anyway we were working a swath of spot holes in a northeasterly direction, up through Suirus???. so when we got far enough away from Melita, we moved the crew up to Brandon and we had a different situation there for location. Brandon was a fair sized city, we rented a community skating rink, an outdoor skating rink. So we had all of the trailers in around the fence, inside the skating rink and I had the office in the buildings that went with it, so that worked out very well. We were there for the summer. Again, that was a good summer, but I don't remember anything particularly outstanding about it. Brandon was a nice town to do business in.

However mentioning Brandon, and the bank there, does remind me, what to me, during my days when I was Party Chief, I feel I observed an attitude in the Royal Bank managers that still puts me off even to this day, to the point that I don't deal at the Royal Bank unless absolutely necessary. When I would go into a bank, when my crew moved into a town, I would go into the bank manager and in those days, they were still charging exchange on cheques, and the company policy was this was an expense item and I would .

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NM: This is the end of the tape.

## Tape 3 Side 1

SG: I would go in and arrange for them to keep a charge account, if you like, on the company cheques, for the exchange. This was done with varying degrees of difficulty. Sometimes the instructions wouldn't get to the people and so on. But I did find. . . I did get the feeling almost universally, in the Royal Bank's in those days, that the bank manager was somewhat looking down on this whole operation and the people therein. What reinforced it, was the different attitude that I ran into when we went to a town that didn't have a Royal Bank and I would deal with the Bank of Montreal or that Bank of Toronto or the Bank of Commerce. In Provost the man in the Bank of Commerce was extremely interested in what was going on and friendly and asked me if I could take him to the field someday so that he could see the operation. And so I did. But as you said, when we were not recording, it almost made you think that at that time, the Royal had recruited or made managers of people who had this particular bent. Why they would do it, I don't know. It's certainly my impression. We were in Brandon and then we had to . . . when we finished that swath that went from Melita through Brandon, we moved on up to the northwest to Shoal Lake in Manitoba. We were there, I think we were there by September, it was about that. In Shoal Lake we were allowed to put our trailers in the fairgrounds. One of the features of their fairgrounds was that, on the north side and on the east side they had a high fence and then a sort of a wooden roof over it, but it was a lean-to type roof and I don't think it was necessarily waterproof. I think they used this for some of their booths and displays when they had the fair. We were there long after the fair and we had our trailers in close to or underneath this. I don't remember whether they were underneath it.

MG: Just beside it.

SG: Just beside it. We were going to be there in the wintertime and there was an outhouse on the fair grounds near where we were. The resourcefulness of the crew was shown there. . . Oh, another feature of that time in Manitoba was that they didn't put meters on for our electrical hook-ups. They just connected us and charged us a flat rate. Now what happened was in order to make this outhouse more comfortable, the fellows lined this outhouse with cardboard from cardboard boxes and then wired it and put an electric heater in it. That made a very superior sort of an outhouse.

#044 NM: A very luxurious one.

SG: Yes. I was on the crew until probably sometime in January, it might have been February, when we got word that I was going to be promoted to Field Supervisor and we were going to be assigned to Peace River. It was January. So, that was a farewell to the crew, which was rather a sad occasion for us. And we took off to cross back to Calgary. There was almost no accommodation to be had in Peace River at that time, so the arrangement was that Marjorie and the two youngsters would live in Calgary in her folks place, her folks being in Texas for the wintertime. So we started and got as far as Regina on the first day and it was bitterly cold and there was a wind. It was one of these 30 below, 30 mile an hour wind days with snow blowing. We phoned the bus depot and anyway we got word that the buses were still going through so away we went and headed west on the

number one highway. Everything went fine, we got to Swift Current and then as we proceeded west the road got a little heavier. The road was not of course, a divided highway in those days and it was not graded up the way it is now. So one of the things we had noticed as we went along and I was becoming a little concerned about the roads, was that there was a freight train in the siding somewhere, just to the south of us, sitting there waiting, which made me think that, at least it was heading west and if we needed anything this would be along. Anyway, we went along and at one point we came around a corner and down into a little dip in the road, and across a bridge I think, but in any case, we were suddenly in snow, stopped in snow that was well up on the radiator of the car. So no question about it, we were stuck. We had the two little ones with us, so they were. . . that's early '51, isn't it.

#075 MG: Three and almost one.

SG: Three and one, yes. The car was running and we were close to the tracks. So, I think Marj got some more clothes on the kids, I walked immediately over to the tracks, which was not too far, but it was a bit of a hike in this snow, with her kind of pale orange coloured sweater to wave. The wind, as I said, was strong. I waited awhile and she came to spell me off and I went back to the car to warm up a bit. The heater was working fine. I guess it was during that first stint of yours that a passenger train. . .

MG: No, you had come back to spell me off and I went back.

SG: Oh, okay, so we had spelled each other off a couple of times. It was on the 4<sup>th</sup> watch, I guess you could say. The watches were not terribly long, because it was cold. Anyway, when she was there, the passenger train, heading west came along and she waved the sweater vigorously and thought that the train people had not seen it. The fact of the matter is that when a train is going along, it takes quite a long time to stop it. So they did in fact stop the train. I don't think they backed up but the trainman came back and we got the kids and got onto the train. Marj took the train. . .

#096 NM: It was lucky you were so near a train.

SG: Yes. Well of course, that road does parallel the tracks quite closely, I think, most of the way. So Marj went on to Lethbridge, where my mother was. And I went on, I think just to Webb, where I got off and stayed and waited until the road was clear to get the car. Marj's memory of being on the train was that some curlers, who had been bonspeiling and who were returning to their home, came back. Of course, she was cold and she was also shaken by this experience and they poured her a drink of straight rye in a paper cup and that got her back on her feet. So the next day, of course, they had the snow plows out and I went back with a truck and got the car started and went on over to Lethbridge. Then we went up to Calgary and then I went on, left Marj at her folks' place and I went on up to Peace River. The Peace River business of supervising field crews was an interesting one. I was traveling all over the northwestern part of the province, visiting seismic crews. There were quite a number there during those days, I would guess, 6 or so. There was no accommodation, as I said, to speak of, but I finally did find, what was, in effect, a rooming house. And it was a fine old house that was past its best, run by a lady. I think a

lot of it was occupied by workers who worked in the bush and who would come into town and be on days off. We ended up with one room, it was the former living room of the house. Quite a good sized room, but not all that big for four of us. At this time, we knew that a man by the name of, I think it was Ray Lahey, was building an apartment house in town, which Imperial had the right of first refusal on or something. We knew we should get an apartment in this place when it was done. So we got this room in this old house and Marj came up and we were in there. You had to get hot water from the reservoir in the kitchen. One of the occupants in the other room had the mumps and next thing we knew, Marj had the mumps. Her story is that it is an air borne virus, that's how it is transmitted. Anyway she got the mumps, both the kids got the mumps and then I got the mumps. I had, in effect, kind of a miserable time with the mumps, because I didn't get them very badly but I had them for quite a long time. It was very hard to be patient and wait to be fully recovered. And yet the consequences of not waiting were painted as being very serious, so I did wait. While I had the mumps, the apartment house was finished and our suite was finished. Marj was recovered, so she had to arrange for the move. I guess I had been lying in bed for so long, for one reason, I was pretty weak. Anyway, the big deal was that she had the bed up and the bed made up and I could then come in and lie down. I got into bed and she had forgotten. . maybe forgotten is not the right word, didn't know you had to put the slats in to hold the mattress in. And so when I got into it, down went the bed. I think it was the head of the bed, the head end of the mattress only that went down. So here was I, with my legs up and my head down, supposedly being comfortable. However it was a great treat to get into that apartment, because it had a toilet, it had running water, it had hot and cold running water. It was two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and dinette area off of the kitchen. I know that our son, who was by this time, 3 ½, was terrifically intrigued with the action that you could get when you flushed the toilet, this was a big deal. I was out in the bush and traveled out to see the crews a lot, so I didn't see a lot of Peace River. Marj made some good friends. Of course, Imperial set up a whole office in Peace River at that time. So there were interpreters and so on, it was a whole exploration office. So there were quite a number of Imperial people moved into town at that time. I guess in fact, that was one time when Don McIvor came to Peace River, as a very young interpreter. I think he was interpreting then. He also seemed to be helping out at the radio.

#175 The company had its own transmitter for communication with the field crews. He often used to be on the radio. Marj remembers that from time to time Don would phone her after I had radioed, as to where I was or when I would be back to Peace River and joke and say, well, I think the squaws have got him this time Marj, he's not coming back. But that was also the summer. . during the time I was there, in the summertime, we had crews out in the bush working on track vehicles. You did a fair amount of flying in the company, Beaver aircraft. I had one flying experience that was an interesting one there. I believe the Beaver was not available, but there was the occasional charter plane around. I arranged to take this little one out, I think we had to take somebody out to a crew. I think there were two of us to go, but one small plane and, I'm convinced, not maintained in the way in which company aircraft were. So I went down very early one morning to get on

this plane and go out and we got it all set to go and got in. These are all pontoon equipped planes and started from the Peace River there. And we flew and flew and flew, climbing and climbing and climbing and it didn't climb very fast. I remember the man we were taking was a mechanic and he had a very heavy tool box and that made a significant affect to the rate the plane could climb. But as we were coming up and getting almost up to the level of the country around Peace River, we were getting what looked like drops of rain on the windshield. But they kept getting more and more and it didn't look at all as if it should be raining, it was a nice, sunny morning. So the pilot suddenly turned the thing around and down we went and landed. What had happened was, the mechanic had changed the oil the night before and then not put the cap back on, where he put the oil in. So it was throwing oil all over the place. So we didn't continue that trip. I mentioned having trouble flying in that plane on the way to Tulsa, I had lots of trouble with the Beaver. Again, it doesn't fly very high and so you do get more ups and downs in the wind. It's not like a DC-10 or a 747 that goes up to where it's almost always real smooth. And one of things of course, you're using a fair amount of the time, you're using these Beaver for is to follow something on the ground. Page McFee??? was the pilot up there, an excellent pilot, but you know, he would stand that plane on its wingtip to come as close as he could to making a right angle turn, the way the bulldozers had done. Page did have to stock air sick bags when I was up in Peace River. I understand they no longer had to after I left. I had one interesting landing and take off with him. We were out at what they call, House Mountain airstrip in the Peerless Lake country. This airstrip was, as I remember it, sort of a west-northwest to east-southeast line, something like that. It was also not level. It was on the side of a hill a bit, so that the west end was higher than the east end. It was no problem to come into it. There's normally a west wind blowing, so we flew into it, into the west, landed, did what we were there for. Then we had to depart. Now, the thing was not a real long runway. So Page had the choice of taking off into the west, which was into the wind, which helps a plane get airborne. It was also uphill, which made it go slower and therefore harder to get to flying speed. On the other hand, if he chose to go the other way, it was downhill, which helped you get going faster, but the wind was going with you and therefore you had to be going faster in order to get airborne. As I remember, he tried the uphill route first and that didn't even come close. So we went up to the west end and he gave it all the throttle that he could and we did get off, and nicely, but not with too much to spare, cleared the trees at the end of it. Those are the kind of exciting things that you remember. Flying on a float equipped plane was interesting.

#263 A lot of the times when I was up there. . . I got my first helicopter ride, first and only helicopter ride so far. We had a helicopter up at Steen??? River, which is up on the Mackenzie highway, near the Territories border. It was working with a gravity meter crew, I believe, with Jim Houson???. The helicopter was to fly the gravity meter around to different places to take readings. For some reason or another it was possible for me to have a little ride in this helicopter. I think we pretended we were scouting something. But anyway, it was an interesting experience to fly out and see what it could land in and then fly back. In the geophysical end of it, up there, we had a couple of interesting things. One

was, we had Frank Byhee???, from Tulsa come up and we tried some shooting up around Steen River, with the Polter??? method. Polter was an American geophysicist, who invented, developed, patented, I believe, a method of putting dynamite charges on stakes, maybe 6' above the ground. And putting them in a pattern, a string, a line, and then firing them simultaneously as a seismic source. That area where we did it was an area of poor seismic quality and the records using the Polter method were still poor. Another thing I was initiated to, with Frank, was my first look at, what I would call, multiple geophones, where we laid out a long array of geophones, which fed into each seismic trace, rather than just having one or maybe three quite close together. And that did produce an improvement. And we tried patterns of shotholes, which has the same sort of an affect, only you're helping the source of the energy there and with the geophones you're improving the detection of the signal that comes back from the underground beds. So that was my first initiation to multiple phones, which were just coming in then. Anyway, about the end of the year, the operation had got to the point where it was decided to have two supervisors in Dawson Creek. . I'm sorry, not Dawson Creek, in Peace River and two in Edmonton. I was moved. . we were moved to . . .

NM: This is the end of the second interview with Sheldon Gibson.

Tape 3 Side 2

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## Tape 4 Side 1

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking, this is the third interview with Sheldon Gibson. Mr. Gibson, do you have some anecdotes to tell about Peace River?

SG: There were some things I left out the other day when we talked. I think I mentioned the time when I got mumps, when we lived in that one room. At that time, our Exploration Manager was George Chiltas???. He had to . . .he was going out somewhere to a meeting and for some reason or other he was going out on the train. So he asked me to drive him from Peace River down to McLennan, to catch the Northern Alberta Railway train out to Edmonton. I did. As it turned out, that trip was made just when I was coming down with the mumps and I guess I was at my most infectious, and so George Chiltas came down with the mumps some 10 days later too.

NM: Thanks to you.

SG: Thanks to the ride he had got with me. I don't know how humorous he thought that was. One of the things that happened during August 1951, during the almost a year we were in Peace River, was that my mother had an operation, down where she lived in Lethbridge, a gall bladder operation and then took a serious turn for the worse. I remember being given the use of the company Beaver to fly me out to Edmonton, actually to Cooking Lake, because the plane was on floats. I then went on from there to Lethbridge. I certainly always remembered that help I got in getting to Lethbridge, with a great deal of gratitude. Trips in the Peace River country, very often were kind of interesting. Up in the Steen River area, I remember getting a hole punched through the bottom of the gas tank. There was a crew there and as I remember it, it was a gravity meter crew working out of Steen River. There may have been more. We had occasion to want to go to Hay River that night and so what we did was we got a branch off a bush. A branch that was about the right size, but stuck that into this hole in the gas tank and then everybody had to chew gum to use this to calk around, to seal around the hole. So we were charging down the highway, going as fast as we could because we never knew when the gas tank was going to spring a leak again and everybody chewing like mad.

#038 NM: But it did work?

SG: It did work, yes we made the trip satisfactorily. I don't think I mentioned the time, on another trip west of Keg River, I got a bad hole in the gas tank and this time what I did was to loosen the gas line where it enters the gas tank and loosened it, where it was secured as it came along the car. And then I bent it and brought it out to the left side of the car, just level with the window in the back door and bent it up and opened the window and bent it down and into a jerry can of gasoline and made the rest of the trip with that. That worked fine. I made the rest of the trip with that as the gas tank. It didn't give me a very big gas tank because those jerry cans were only about 4 gallons I believe, 4 Canadian gallons. The copper tubing for the gas line wasn't long enough to reach right to the bottom of the tank, so I remember having to keep topping it up, when I'd used about half

of the tank, I topped it up out of the other can. It's been alleged that I drove quite fast up and down that Mackenzie Highway that year, but the road was almost always very good and there certainly wasn't much traffic. In the summer time if there had been traffic the dust would have been terrible because it was a gravel road in those days but it was a good gravel road. I drove a fair number of people up and down the road. I think I didn't mention either, the frontier spirit of helping one another that is more wide spread, I think, in the Peace River district, than it is in the more settled parts of the province. You would never be stopped along the road. . .nobody would pass you if you were stopped along the side of the road. They would always stop to see what was the trouble and if they could help you. It was a very nice feature but it did work against me one time, when I had driven a long way in from the west and reached the highway. I remember getting to Manning at about 6:00 in the morning or so and there were no rooms to be had in the hotel. So I went on a little bit but I was really too sleepy to drive the rest of the way on into Peace River so I pulled over to the side of the road and left the heater running and tried to sleep. But it was a very unsuccessful effort because you would no sooner get to sleep than somebody would rap on the glass and ask, were you all right. But it was a very nice comforting feature to have that attitude up there in the Peace River country. I think that covers most of the things I can think of from Peace River times. I was moved out to the Edmonton exploration district, in I believe, it was about the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1951, so the family moved. That was where we had the experience of buying our first house at 11216 on 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue. We were pretty pleased with this semi-bungalow, story and a half house, whichever you wish to call it. I remember we had to put in 10% of the price of the house as a down payment and that took a little scratching to reach. That amounted to \$1,370 in those days. The company, Imperial then backed a second mortgage at Montreal Trust at the same rate as the first mortgage on the house. I think that mortgage rate was 4%, which sounds very attractive nowadays.

#090 NM: That's incredible.

SG: Our third child, Ann was born in Edmonton in May of 1952 and it was while we were in Edmonton that the fourth one, Mary was born in January 1955. Work wise, not a great deal here. You don't get the bush experience in Edmonton that you do in Peace River. There was an increase in the use of multiple geophones and pattern holes.

NM: What was your title in the company.

SG: At that time I was called Geophysical Field Supervisor and that's what I did, I did field supervision, along with George Agnew???. Now during the time we were in Edmonton, apart from doing that, I spent about a year on interpretation of the seismic data. That was sort of a training year. During part of that year, I shared an office with Ernie Shaw, who's currently the . . . well, I guess he's the Manager of Exploration Technology in Esso. And with Wes Hatlid???, who was with Imperial and Esso for many years, I think Buzz Crosby was the District Geophysicist at that time. I also spent about a year, I believe it was, as a Management Assistant to Keith Huff???, who was the Exploration Manager at the time. That was an interesting experience. We had crews in and out of Edmonton, in all directions. A fair number of them in areas like Ponoka and Bashaw and so on. That's

really about all I can think to say about Edmonton.

#122 NM: How long did you stay there?

SG: Until September 1959.

NM: And then what happened?

SG: At that time the company abolished the posts of Chief Geophysicist and Chief Geologist in the Regional office in Calgary and I was transferred to the Calgary office as the Administrator of Geophysicists. That made me responsible for the Regional Office part of personnel administration in geophysics and for the contracts for the contract seismic crews and the contract drills on the company crews. That was certainly an interesting time. Mind you the number of company crews was gradually being reduced. A number of reasons I think, were behind that. One was that the areas where we were going to work needed, in many cases, a variety of equipment through the year. We didn't have work for a track crew all year, didn't necessarily have work for a truck crew all year. You maybe needed this kind of equipment for some part of the year and then the other time they'd need different equipment. So it would have been very expensive to have 2 or 3 sets of equipment for each crew of people. And you could hire contractors who had the particular equipment you wanted, at the time. And it was getting to be increasingly difficult to get professionals to work on field crews. Then in the fall of 1965, four of us from . . . let me back up a little bit. Before '65 I got involved a bit in the planning of part of the building that Imperial moved into. When I went to Calgary in '59 we were in the, what we called the old Albertan Building, at 300 - 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W. During the time I was there the plans were developed to build a new building, which was at 500 on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue West. It's that big, blue metal and white limestone building that currently has an available for lease sign on it. I believe it was Jim Ward and I who had responsibility for conference and meeting rooms in the new building. We found that an interesting assignment. In particular, we wanted to have one quite formal, large conference room that was sort of Board Room caliber and another one of the same size that would take as many people, but this one to also provide, in effect a sloping type floor in it, with theatre type seats, so that you could have presentations for 70 some people, I believe was the capacity. Had some difficulty getting that approved. It was felt that a room with fixed seating didn't provide enough flexibility, but we finally prevailed in the discussion. I think by persuading them that that whole thing overall provided them with the maximum flexibility and usefulness for the meeting rooms in the building

#182 NM: So did they agree?

SG: Oh yes, it was agreed. When I say we prevailed, that means that they agreed. That was a lovely building. The evolution of the module size was also an interesting part of it. I was somewhat involved in that, but not greatly but I saw it happening. They started out with four foot modules. . . are you familiar with what modules are in a building?

NM: So-so.

SG: It means that your windows and so on, on the outside for instance, and your columns inside, will be centred on things that are four feet apart, or the windows may be four feet

wide. Ostensibly you could put an inside wall to an outside wall, sort of in any multiple of four feet. Four foot modules meant that you could have offices, for instance, that were 8' along the outside and 12' deep. That didn't work very well because that was too narrow. So people did all their planing on 12'. Well, 12', as it turned out, used up the outside wall too quickly and we didn't get enough outside offices. So then they tried it on 5 foot modules and the hope there was that a 10' office would be wide enough. But too many people felt that they just couldn't get by with 10', so we finally ended up with something that was, I think, at that time, the used a 5.5 foot module. That made private offices that were two modules wide, 11' and three modules deep, about 16.5' and those were very nice offices, I think there's as nice an office as exists in that downtown area probably. Certainly they were bigger than the offices in the new building that is currently in Esso Plaza there. The new one is I think, in the 5 foot modules. Okay, that's kind of an aside. In the fall of 1965, digital recording of seismic data in the field was just coming in. GSI had introduced it and others were scrambling along, trying to catch up. Four of us from Imperial were set down to a digital data processing course in Tulsa. It was a four week course. The four of us were Dave Harding and George Gamble, who were play back supervisors, Doug Perry, who was the District Geophysicist in Regina and I. that four week course was given by research geophysicists at the lab there. It was a pretty stiff workout for those of us who had been out of school for some twenty years. However we passed the course, I guess and all came back and it was that that led me into digital data processing. The following year, I went to an industry course, a course open to. . actually it was open I believe, only to Canadian industry people, at the Colorado School of Mines, which is a well known geophysics school, at Golden in Colorado. That was two weeks. That had a lot of industry people from Calgary here. Bob Kennig??? of Sun, Pete Bediz for Century, Peter Savage, from Teledyne at that time. Who else was there?

#257 MG: Roy Lindseth?

SG: Oh yes, Roy Lindseth, who's owner of Technica???. I guess when I think on it now, that school was arranged by the Canadian part of industry and it was just offered here. That was, likewise, a pretty vigorous, rigorous, two weeks. I think I was the only one who had my wife along. We stayed at that little hotel in Golden. She got pretty favoured treatment. Incidentally, by this time of course, as I mentioned, we had four children and let's see, in '65, the youngest one was ten. So Marjorie was having a two week holiday away from four children, from 10 up. She got pretty special treatment. The maid rechanged her schedule for vacuuming and doing rooms, so that she came to the end where our room was, last, so that Marj would be able to sleep longer. One morning, I think you went into the coffee shop, 8:00, 9:00, and the staff was quite concerned that something had gone wrong, that she was up at this unusual hour.

#305 NM: So you were spoiled?

MG: It was a great holiday.

SG: Actually her first responsibility of the day was to have a bucket of ice in the room, for when Pete Bediz and Pete Savage and I came down the hill from the classes each

afternoon, ready for our drink before supper. So that was a good period. Then we came back and somewhere in there, I was selected, agreed, whatever. .all of these things probably, to head the digital data processing function in Imperial. Toward that end I went into the Systems and Computer Services Department for about a year and spent my time learning how to write programs. I learned Fortran??? and took the program learning courses that IBM had out. Worked with George Dunbar, who is my mentor in that and a very helpful one. So then we got in to the point of setting up the data processing function. I guess we started to get people in place in early 1967. The location for the group was pretty clear, the company's computing was being done in Edmonton, in the building where marketing was. You see, marketing used the computer before exploration got into it and used it a lot. So the computer was set up by marketing, I mean near marketing, in their building. They had quite a full building, there on 109<sup>th</sup> Street and just north of 111<sup>th</sup> Avenue and just south of Kingsway, in Edmonton. I think the Mounted Police currently have it.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

#### Tape 4 Side 2

SG: We had to get some. . .well first of all we had to decide where we would be. Now, if you're in data processing, there's a lot to be said for being close to a number of groups of people. It's nice to have the data processors located convenient to the people who are going to use the processed data when they finish it, so that there can be discussion and communication about what's been done to it and so on. On the other hand, you also have to be near, or you should be near the computer because you are putting input cards in, in those days it was cards, and running jobs and getting the output and examining it to see how it has done and then in some cases displaying it and so forth. So I felt that we really had no choice, that certainly at least, at that stage, we had to be beside the computer. And so we had to get space in that building, controllers were pretty full. Bob Wilson, who's now in Toronto, in charge of the Human Resources Department, I'm sure he must be a Vice-President. Anyway, he was the controller there and I dealt with him. I did much better dealing with him than I did dealing with some of his people. One of the things was, we were taking into our group, quite a number of professional geophysicists who were, in any normal sort of a situation, that were senior enough that they would have had a private office. And there were some of Bob's people that were going to give us space that was several steps down from that. As it turned out, we had to agree on double offices, but we got adequate space there with Bob Wilson's help. The department gradually grew, I can't give you numbers. We started to gather people together there in early '66, Woody Woodard moved from Regina to Edmonton. I started working up there most of the time in the spring of '67 and as a family we moved in July that year. We started to process the digitally recorded data from the field. Now at that time, the field crews were just changing over from the analogue tape recording to digital tape recording, so there was a transition period there, where gradually more and more of the data was recorded digitally.

We had our own variable density display device that was hooked onto the one 360 model 50 computer, we had to have it sitting in a darkroom on the computer floor. One of the things I remember about that time was that the people in the S&CS who were on the computer were used to having deadlines and so on, for the controllers and marketing people. We were the newcomers and the S&CS people, we felt were inclined to give precedence to the controllers and marketing at, what we thought, was our expense. There was a period of time there, where we seemed to be. . . fighting would be too strong a word, but certainly pushing wouldn't. Agitating for faster turn around and better service from the computer. It was just a thing that had to happen I guess, because of the addition of the new kids on the block. As I say, our display device was hooked on line to the computer, and so when it was ready to display, we had to have somebody there to operate it and change the film and so forth. I can remember one fairly memorable night, we'd had troubles and we had some

#067 budget deadlines coming up. So Woody and I stayed there and we worked all night. I operated the machine, which was not a hard thing to do, and Woody would take the film and develop it, which was a harder thing to do, which he knew how to do, and we got a great deal of work done that night and met our deadline. One of the advantages, it was immediately obvious to the digital data processing thing, was that it could handle large amounts of data much faster than the old analogue processing methods. I know in the budget presentations of that spring, I guess it must have been of '68, when the budget presentations were made in made, the district was able to have the interpretation of the winter's work. Normally the winter's work would be done on through the summer. The department gradually grew, until I guess we had about 8 geophysicists, doing processing, about 2 or 3 in the programming end of it and a couple of technicians and a secretary. Along in there too, and I can't remember exactly when the new building was built downtown, by Oxford. . . or maybe it was by Poole Construction, before Oxford. Anyway, the one at 100<sup>th</sup> Street and Jasper Avenue, the Imperial Oil Building, as it was called and we moved into a floor on that. It was while we were there that seismic processing grew to its full size and we had most of a floor, I think it was the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. We were immediately above the floor with the computer on it, because we had so much to and fro with them. It was in 19. . . about 70, that there was one of these periodic times, when the company got real concerned about whether we should be in this business or that business and this was whether we should be in the data processing business. So a task force, study team, was put together, consisting of Ernie Shaw, who I mentioned earlier, George Smith from the Research Lab, Jeff Davies, from ??? Service Department and me. I think that was all. Anyhow, we did a very careful study and talked to the district people, the explorationists, as to how much work they would be needing in the future, how much exploration they would be doing. And we came up with conclusions to the effect that, it was better to do the processing in house than outside, rather than having contractors do it, we had higher quality people involved in it and we had a better product. There was no additional cost, it didn't cost anymore to do it ourselves. But it was also very clear from the forecasts, that while we had enough work for the present and maybe for about three years into the future, that after that, the amount of work required was going to be gradually dropping from what

it was to zero. Exploration would be all done. It's one of these things that always bothered me about forecasts. We can never see into the future and yet we have to forecast or we don't look ahead as we should. The report was fine, it was sufficient, it established that we should continue and of course, the department is as big now, I think in '84, at least as big as it was in 1970 and yet we could only see three years work ahead. It was very clear at that time that the established areas of the province, the provincial areas were all explored, there was no point in exploring any more there. All we had left were a couple of frontier areas, the Beaufort and the Atlantic. Within three years they'd all be explored and that would be that. It shakes you when you think of how wrong that forecast was. I used to look back at that report from time to time, just for amusement and also to keep me from taking forecasts too seriously. The department grew with added equipment, computers were upgraded, we had new processing systems. One of the interesting things, and I think it must have been. . . it might have been in the spring or the summer of '72, but it might have been '71. We did get to where we had a tremendous quantity of marine data to process. One big difference between land data and marine data is that you can get many, many times more data in a day of shooting in the ocean with a boat than you can on land with a crew. Of course, all this has to be processed on the computer. So we got to the point this one time, where we couldn't get enough time on the western computer. Imperial had a western computer centre, located, by that time, in the new downtown building in Edmonton and one in Toronto. The S&CS had always tried to keep the two computer centres, compatible if you like, so that if one computer centre got in a bind, or got broken down for an extended period, the other one could do that one's work. There was too much work for it all to be done, but the priority work could be done on either computer. So that time anyway, there was time available on the computer in Toronto on the weekends and we arranged to get it. What we did was we sent our programs and some data down with a fellow, who loaded the programs and did a test run to be sure that the system was on and working and so on, on that computer. Then on, I think it was a Friday night, in Edmonton, we got the company plane, I think it was a Convair, good sized plane anyway. And we loaded many, many, many tapes on it and we took down about 4 people. A programmer who was familiar with the programs, and a processing geophysicist, who was familiar with the inputting of them and so on. This was in the evening and we got into Toronto in the wee hours and went over to the computer centre and they were ready and alerted and expecting us and started running data and ran data all weekend and then took the output tapes on to the plane and came back on Sunday evening. We got a tremendous amount done and it was a real satisfaction, to me, because the operation went very well and a lot of people had to be coordinated into it and it was a lot of fun. I had made up sheets of the sequence of everything that would happen and who were the contacts, and what to do if this went wrong and what to do if that went wrong. I think a few of those incidents like that, helped persuade and get the message through, to S&CS management, that geophysics processing was not just something that you could leave until you didn't have anything else to do. That it was work that was considered very important by exploration management.

NM: This is the end of the third interview with Sheldon Gibson.

## Tape 5 Side 1

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking, this is the fourth interview with Sheldon Gibson.

SG: I think that trip to Toronto that I mentioned at the end of the last tape, was done about 1969, would be my best guess as to the date of it. The company found, we found that the data was processed faster with digital processing than with analogue processing, the old analogue magnetic tape recording. The speed of that and the volume that could be handled, both constituted advantages. All this time we worked very closely with the people down at Exxon Production Research Company, in Houston and also with the Exxon U.S.A.'s data processing centre, which was close by the E. P Arco lab in Houston. We had good relationships, good cooperation and visits back and forth for the comparing of notes and information. I'm not sure just when we moved into the Imperial Oil Building in Edmonton. We had, I think we talked about it, that we had been in the controllers building on 109<sup>th</sup> Street and just north of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Edmonton. Then we moved to the Imperial Oil Building at 100<sup>th</sup> Street and Jasper Avenue.

NM: Was it a new building?

SG: It was a brand new building, built by Poole Construction. It's the smaller tower of a two tower complex, the other one is AGT's head office. That was a nice office. Again, we had to be close to the computer, so we were, as I recall, on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and the computer was on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. I think those numbers were right. Anyway, we were very close by the computer because of going back and forth with the submission of jobs. At that time all the jobs were submitted by punch card and it's gone away from that now, of course, it's all done from terminals. One of the things that was interesting, while we were in that new building, at least for me was, that in about 1971, there came a bit of a recession in the oil business and there was a pulling back and all sorts of things were being examined as to whether you needed them and one of them of course was this expensive new business of digital data processing. We had a very fine committee of George Smith, who was in charge of geophysics research, Ernie Shaw, who's . . . I'm not sure whether he was Chief Geophysicist then or not but he was of that level. The systems and computer services man, Jeff Davies, and I representing geophysical data processing. The question was, what were the future needs of the company, how could the company's processing needs best be met and so on. I don't know whether I have a copy of that report or not but I kept it for many years. It was fascinating, we very carefully went and talked to all the district people as to how much work they would need processed in the future years and we came up with the forecast that, while certainly there was a need for the next two years of this level, after that, all our thinking was that it was going to taper off and there would have to be a reduction in staff. We also established that we would be better to do our

own processing than to simply have a group that supervised the processing of our data out in . . . contract processing out that area available. That was 1971, as a matter of fact, we did cut back a small amount on staff at that time, but we continued on otherwise with the organization. Two years later we could see another couple of years ahead before we would come to the downturn and we have never yet found the downturn and this is now '85. I used to get it out and look at it from time to time and remind others who were making forecasts of the inherent inaccuracy in it. We aren't very good at seeing into the future. In 1972, Imperial's districts were all consolidated into Calgary. We came down in September. At that time the company had added, I think, five floors to the Imperial Oil Building, at the northwest corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W. Again, Systems and Computer Services were on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, so we were on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Much of the Production Department was on the floors above us. There's not a great deal of interest that happened, the processing continued to develop. We used a program that had been written by E. P. Arco, as a means of greatly reducing the affect of water bottom multiples on our marine data from the east coast. Actually, this program was used and then it was somewhat improved to make it more effective and we greatly improved the records, or the sections on the east coast. In 1975, the latter part of the year, I was given the supervision of all of the geophysics part of Exploration and Research, which department we were in. That included field operation supervision, that at the time was headed by Fred Ornell???, data processing part was headed by Woody Woodard, programming, or the data processing was headed by Bill Clark, and systems application was headed by Jack MacArthur. That was a fine job and one I enjoyed very much. Then in 1979 I was made Manager of Exploration Service and Research, which . . .

#101 NM: In Edmonton?

SG: No, here in Calgary.

NM: When did you move back to Calgary, which year was it?

SG: That was '72. Now, I don't have exactly the date when the company decided to form a Research Department. They decided that the exploration part of research should be in the Research Department, under Vern Larson. Anyway, we were transferred, not physically moved, but organizationally transferred to the Research Department. There was a heavy oils division in research, there was production, there was a coal and minerals and an exploration group, which was ours. I would guess that was sometime in 1980. It was certainly when the boom was still on and that made a fairly difficult time, because exploration management, in large part or certain important parts of it was violently opposed to us being in the Research Department. Yet we had to work very closely with them but there was a fair amount of antipathy about . . . not directed at us, for the most part, but at the Research Department, because they had stolen us away from Exploration.

And that was a period that was one where a fellow got a lot of practice exercising tact. The Research Division Manager had his ideas of how things should be done, this might be different from the way Exploration Department thought they should be done and one was our boss and one was our client and it was a somewhat challenging time. However I think that lasted about two years and in August 1982, we were moved back to the Exploration Department as the company was pulling in its horns. I think that made for a much more relaxed environment and a more comfortable environment to work in. It was in 1982 that the company got concerned with reducing staff levels and came up with a proposal that was offered in July, I believe, maybe in the latter part of June, to all employees who were 55 years of age or more. A very attractive offer I think, I think it must have been. I found it that and I believe there was something like 70-75% acceptance of the offer of people in the Exploration Department. What it amounted to was it gave people in that age group as many years as they had remaining, until they were 65, credit into their pension. That gave them as many years up to 7, in their pension calculation. There was half of the Canadian Pension plan and the Old Age Security in addition.

#160 NM: So it was a very good offer?

SG: Yes. It was accepted by many. You're probably familiar with the expression about leaving money on the table, if you bid too high for mineral rights and it was said that in the case of this offer, the company had left quite a bit of money on the table in that case. The offer had been better than it needed to be to achieve the desired results.

NM: It was too good to turn down.

SG: So that was very nice, and I took retirement at the end of 1983.

NM: Did you go into consulting or not?

SG: I have been doing, it's now more than two years, essentially none. I now have a small contract with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to consult with them as required on this matter of the Petroleum Incentive Plan grants. I have done a very small amount of that, I'll be doing some in the near future, but that's the only work I have done.

NM: Could you compare the training of oil people in your time to what it is now?

SG: You talk about when I first came on. My impression in geophysics would be that, when I came on, it was almost completely on the job training. You learned by working with somebody else. That was certainly true in the field and I think it would be pretty well equally true in the office. I can't say quite as surely about that but I think that's right. Nowadays of course, there is a formal training program, at least at Imperial, where people get certain courses in their first year and certain courses in their second and so on. Now Imperial does provide, I think, quite good training for people on a continuing basis. By and large, most professionals would expect to spend some days in training courses every year. No doubt there's a lot more need for training.

#195 NM: But in your time, do you think people could be self taught? I'm thinking about somebody like George DeMille???, do you think that could happen now?

SG: George DeMille of course, is an outstanding individual and an anomaly. If you had asked me then if somebody could have been taught I would have said, no I don't think so and

there's George DeMille. I think it would be more difficult than it was for him, nowadays, to do that. But I won't say they couldn't.

NM: It might be more difficult.

SG: I think so.

NM: The attitude too would be different. People's attitude towards somebody who is trying to be self-taught might be different too.

SG: How?

NM: Well, I think it's ??? nowadays, everybody has to go and take some courses, when in George DeMille's time, people were ready to help him or teach him.

SG: I don't think I'd agree with that. I think if George DeMille came along now that he'd find people to help him just as. . . maybe even more readily, I don't know. I wouldn't think any less anyway.

NM: Can you talk about the contribution of Alberta to the development of the Canadian oil industry?

SG: I can't remember the numbers, but I think Alberta produces 80 some per cent of Canada's oil now. I guess that's an indication of its contribution. Turner Valley was an indicator in the very early days that there was gas and oil here. The only thing before that was down around Petrolia, in Ontario, I think. But with the discovery of Leduc and the subsequent finds, that was just the thing that provided the impetus that has been absolutely major in the thing. I'm not sure what you mean by what its contribution.

#237 NM: Historically speaking. Everything started in the east and then everything moved to the west. First Turner Valley and then Leduc.

SG: Yes, there was a long time between Turner Valley and Leduc though, too.

NM: That's right.

SG: Have I answered your question? Okay.

NM: You have been a witness to the ups and downs of the oil industry, can you comment on that?

SG: Sure. Yes, they have been and when you're in a down period, it's very nice to have been a witness to a number of ups and downs so that you know that whatever is true now will not be true forever. Things don't stay great and they don't stay terrible, it's cyclic. I think . . . I guess there are business cycles, there are world cycles, that certainly affect it. Then I think also we have the situation, the governments have a major stake in the oil industry, they have a major stake in the money that comes from it. They set the prices that crude oil can be sold for and it's my impression, and I'm quite sure it's right, that the governments wish to maximize their share and maximize their take. That means taking as much as they dare to still have the oil industry proceed. I heard the Minister. . I'm not sure whether he was called Energy or Petroleum or whatever, from Britain, at a seminar here, a number of years ago. Somebody asked him how much they were going to be taxing the oil from the North Sea and he said, we will tax it just as much as we dare, so that the companies won't quit operating. I think that's one of the reasons we get these cycles. This is a difficult thing for governments to legislate and if they take a lesser share than they might, the industry is in a boom condition and then when the government reacts to seeing what their

last regulations or legislation has done, they take more and they maybe take too much more and suddenly there is a recession in the oil business and everybody pulls back and says, we can't make any money on this. A 4% rate of return is not enough and we won't operate, so we'll lie low and the government eases up again and this is I think. . . .

#295 NM: So it's like a yo-yo, up and down all the time.

SG: Yes. One of the expression they talk about, it's like them trying to fine tune the thing, so that they can get the most out of it and still keep it alive. That's domestic, that's Canadian and it has to be. There's also the impact of world economic conditions. The world has been in a recession the last few years too.

NM: What do you think of the National Energy Program.

SG: I would be very happy to see it go away. I'm hopeful that the Conservatives will do what they said they would do and get rid of, at least the worst features of it. I felt that the so-called retroactive back-in was one of the very worst things. I also feel that much of what the National Energy Program set out to do was already happening, that is increasing Canadianization of the industry. This was all set up as a desirable goal, without to my mind, any proof that there had been. . . the lack of Canadianization had hurt us at all. This kind of ties into that last question about ups and downs, the government just. . .

NM: This is the end of the tape.

#### Tape 5 Side 2

SG: The NEP was a case where the government was reacting to a period of time where their incentives had been, I think, excessive and the industry was booming. Then when the oil prices were forecast to go on up to \$80 a barrel in a few years, the federal government and the provincial government decided how they would split the money from this and what share of it industry would get. And then the price of oil didn't go up that way and they were left with an energy program that was based on assumptions that had not turned out to be true. So it's a difficult thing and I guess there always will be ups and downs with the governments trying to maximize their income from it. And of course, the oil companies, likewise trying to maximize theirs and the government sets the rules. And if the rules are not favourable enough, are too onerous, the companies slack off and then the government has to ease off again. That's the sort of cause of the ups and downs.

NM: What do you think of nationalized oil companies, like Petro Canada?

SG: So far I have never had to buy any gasoline from a Petro Canada, I came close one time. But I luckily found a Shell station that was open in Fort Macleod. I feel really the same about nationalized oil companies as I do about nationalized businesses of any sort. Especially where competition exists, I think that governments shouldn't be in them I think it's not a function of government to be in the . . . that may put me down on the right wing side of things, but I think the governments job is to govern, not to be in business and it is other people's . . .

#028 NM: Do you think that the new government is going to change?

SG: I think it's going to change, but I think it's not going to change as much as some people hoped. For instance. . .well, of course, you can't dismantle Petro Can, the only thing you could do with it is privatize it, as they say, sell it to shareholders. That would take a great deal of money and I don't know whether they will do this or not. It is also true that in the world there are a great many countries with national oil companies. In Mexico there is one. So I'm not sure, over the world at large, maybe we're the ones that are out of step with so many private oil companies. But I think it stands us in good stead. But I don't think the government should be in other businesses either. Perhaps in places where it wouldn't happen without the government doing it, okay, that's fine. That, I think was the case, with a company like Air Canada. But there's some talk now of privatizing Air Canada and there is competition between CP Air and Air Canada and I see nothing wrong with that being . . . I see much in favour of that being two publicly owned companies rather than one government owned company. There's always the risk the way it is that the government owned company gets breaks, regulation wise from the government and . . .

NM: Competition is quite healthy too.

SG: Yes, I think so.

#050 NM: Let us go back to your career now, who were the most influential persons in your career?

SG: I think that I was influenced over the years, to a reasonable extent, by a good many people, virtually everybody I did business with. There's certainly no one stands out or no handful stands out all by themselves.

NM: What about the most rewarding experiences in your career?

SG: When I think about these, I come out with mostly things where I was involved in making something we were doing work well. My first sort of highlight that comes to mind, was working as an operator on a field crew, down at Camrose, on Frank Spraggins' crew. The fact that we had a real good crew and we were getting good records and we got a lot of them done and we really shot up that country much faster than they thought we could. There was a lot of satisfaction in that. Then I thought I wouldn't get that again, I remember when I was made a Party Chief on a crew, but we got down to Provost, down in eastern Alberta and it was a matter of getting the crew organized to be in balance and shoot a record number of seismic profiles in a month. In August of whatever year that was, that would be 1949, I guess it was, we set a record for seismic crews that stood up for quite some time. Getting the crew organized and up to do this was a significant satisfaction. Probably the next one was when I was given the job of setting up of geophysical data processing and that was a matter of starting from scratch with an organization and being somewhat involved in the picking of the people and certainly involved in setting up the organization. And getting this to be a group of people that could do a job that was intended. Building that thing was a real satisfaction. I think over the years, another thing would be, and this was more spread out, was that there were times when we were cutting back people and I take some satisfaction in the way that these necessary cutbacks were minimized and made less painful than they might otherwise have

been. There are a number of things you can do. You can get a transfer for somebody to an affiliate, a transfer to another department and so on. I'm happy with the way that was able to be handled. Probably the last one that I would mention was the development in our group, and it was not I who developed it, of this enhanced program to reduce water bottom multiples. We certainly had a regular processing method for marine data that was, I think, the best in the Exxon family and I think probably in industry. Certainly from any sampling we had done outside, in contract processing houses, it was the best and it was a real satisfaction seeing that develop in our group.

#108 NM: What do you consider your achievements?

SG: I guess the first thing I would respond to that is by and large, when I had an operation, I made things go. It went ahead, it operated, it worked, that sort of a thing. Another thing I guess that I would believe to be true, in the area of people supervision, I think that people that were in my supervision would feel that they were fairly treated and not be unduly concerned about not getting fair treatment. The third item would be, I think I helped in the selection of, helped in the training of some good people. Part of the selecting is in the hiring from universities and outside, when we were doing that. I certainly helped with the on the job training of some of these people. I guess that's about it.

NM: And this is the last question, looking back at your career, Mr. Gibson, what do you think about it?

SG: Well, as careers go. . .well, I don't have a lot to compare it to, but I think it was great. I enjoyed a very, very large part of it, it was interesting, fascinating, interesting times, interesting technically, lots of good people. I have no regrets whatsoever. One of the interesting things was when I was thinking about retiring, I had a concern that I might miss this business of going to the office every day. Really, at the suggestion of one of our daughters, I spoke to a professional counselor, who is our minister. He asked me if I had any unfulfilled ambitions and I really didn't, I haven't had and I guess that's one of the many reasons why retirement has been so great. I certainly don't feel frustrated by my career, I feel well satisfied, well pleased with it.

NM: That's a very good positive attitude.

SG: Well, I suppose, it's just the way it is. It was good fun and you know, you could always change the odd little bit here or there but overall, unquestionably, it was great.

NM: Mr. Gibson, I've really enjoyed interviewing you, thank you very much.

SG: You are welcome.