

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Bernard & Kay Jeffery

INTERVIEWER: Aubrey Kerr

DATE: December 7th, 1992

Side 1- 45:35

[00:00:01] AK: Today is Monday, December the 7th, 1992. I'm Aubrey Kerr and I'm in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Jeffrey. Now, that's J-E-F-F-R-E...

KJ: No, no. E-R-Y

AK: J-E-F-F-E-R-Y. And there are many variations of that spelling. Right. Bernard and Kay, and your address is 104 Palace Way Southwest. And I'm very pleased to be here with you and to reminisce about some of the old days, especially as it pertains to Redwater. Now Bernard, would you like to tell me where you were born, what year and a little bit of background on your parents?

BJ: I was born on March the 7th, 1915 in Calgary. My parents are both from England, came here some 40 years ago from Devon, and never ever returned to England.

AK: And you grew up in Calgary?

BJ: I grew up in Calgary. Went to Stanley Jones School, then to Crescent Heights High School. And after... I also attended the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art. After which I found a job at Turner Valley with Royalite Oil Company.

AK: Alright. Now can you tell me what years that you went to Stanley Jones. Do you remember, or can you remember when you went to Southern Alberta Institute? Was that before the War?

BJ: That was... I went to the Provincial Institute before the War and must have graduated in 19...

KJ: You went to the Valley?? in '37, so...

BJ: I graduated in about 1934.

AK: Right. And well what did you graduate in?

BJ: Electrical engineering.

AK: Electrical engineering. At that time, they were offering that sort of a course, were they?

BJ: They were offering that kind of a course, that's right. But after I graduated, I could not find a job. Things were tough in those days, and I ended up going out to Turner Valley and working in 1937.

AK: Well, how did you get that job in Turner Valley?

BJ: I got it... I had a temporary job with Imperial Oil, out at the marketing department in the west end of Calgary, and I was replacing a man that was sick who eventually came back on the job, so I was out of a job. And the head office told me if I wanted a job with Royalite, to go out and see Walker Taylor who was the superintendent at the time. And I went out and saw Walker and he gave me a job. And I stayed with Royalite until 19...

KJ: '41.

BJ: '41. Until I enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941. And was in the service for four years. Three years overseas service, returned to Turner Valley and started to work again with Royalite. And eventually Royalite was sold to BA and I had a choice of either staying with Royalite or staying on with Imperial. Or staying with Imperial rather than going with BA and I chose to stay with Imperial. From there, I moved to Calgary office for a short time. And when Leduc was discovered, I was transferred to Leduc.

AK: Right. Now, tell me, what were your jobs while you were in Turner Valley, after you came back from your armed service. What did you do? Tell us. And what was your pay then?

KJ: Ha, ha. I know what it was when we were married.

AK: What year were you married?

K: '46.

AK: Oh, yeah, okay.

BJ: Well, when I returned from armed services and went out to Turner Valley, I went back to the office and my salary at that time was 90 dollars a month. And I wanted to get some field experience, so I requested that I be moved to the field to get this experience. And I stayed out there for several months and eventually was transferred back into the office.

AK: But what were your duties in the office?

BJ: I was in the accounting part of the office.

AK: Right. You never carried on with the electrical engineering?

BJ: No. At that time, you were lucky to have a job period.

AK: So, the accounting, your accounting skills were picked up, you might say, as you worked in the company.

BJ: That is correct.

AK: So, you were kind of self-educated.

BJ: In that respect.

AK: Yeah, whatever you learned, you learned off of...

BJ: On the job.

AK: Yeah. Who were some of the other people out there that you worked with at Turner Valley?

BJ: The people I worked with was... Ted Fisher and Don McCrae.

AK: Jack McCrae or Don?

BJ: Don McCrae.

AK: Was there a Jack McCrae? Wasn't there a Jack McCrae that worked in Devon? Mary McCrae.

KJ: Mary McCrae.

AK: Yeah, she's still around, is she?

BJ: Yeah, Jack McCrae was in [unintelligible], wasn't he?

AK: I'm not sure. I can't keep them straight... So, when did you first hear about, you were going to be moved up to Leduc?

[00:07:12] KJ: There's a story he has about Turner Valley if you wanted it.

AK: Oh, well we better get that first. What's the story about Turner Valley? Or do you want to tell it?

KJ: No. Is that still going or ???

AK: Oh sure. It's all going.

KJ: Oh, I see. When they sent you out on the pump jacks? Can you tell that little story?

BJ: Oh...

KJ: They sent you out in the field.

BJ: Just after I'd been sent out to the field with no training, first shift I went on was midnight shift. They sent me up to the north end of Turner Valley to operate a separator. And I was told that the chap that I relieved, he'd be going right away, but somebody had to come around and would show me what went on. Well, this man never turned off... or turned up. And during the evening, one of the pump valves went off. It scared the daylights out of me. I didn't know what to do, so I shut everything down.

AK: Oh, is that right?

KJ: Shut every tab he could find.

[00:08:25] AK: Right. So, let's get back to Leduc. What was your first indication that there was something really exciting going on at Leduc there?

BJ: Well, I guess once Leduc was discovered, why the phone was ringing like mad and it wasn't long before everybody and their dog knew that they had found something up there.

AK: Right. And this was when you were at 606 Second Street West?

KJ: Yes.

AK: Yeah. You had to be there.

KJ: Yeah, that's where we were.

BJ: Where six [unintelligible]

AK: Yeah, where the parkade is now.

BJ: Yeah right.

AK: And you were on the Imperial payroll?

BJ: I was on the Imperial payroll.

AK: Yeah. And then, what was your job when you went to Leduc?

BJ: Well, I was just transferred up there as one of the accountants. Actually, I was the assistant to Bruce Wilson. Bruce Wilson was the District Accountant.

AK: Now he was... That's two L's, wasn't it? Wilson?

KJ: No.

AK: One L?

BJ: Just one L, yeah.

AK: Yeah, okay. Some of the other people that were there at Leduc. Do you remember me there?

BJ: Yeah.

AK: In the basement? Right, okay. And what about...

BJ: I just remember Vern Taylor.

AK: Vern Hunter.

BJ: Vern Hunter, yes.

AK: By that time, he was field superintendent.

BJ: Yeah, that's right.

AK: What about Norm Gil? The draftsman?

BJ: Yes, I remember Norm Gil.

AK: I've tried to get a hold of him and, you know, he doesn't want to talk very much.

BJ: Oh, he doesn't, eh?

[00:10:20] AK: Okay, so then did you move to... by that time, you were married, then.

BJ: Yes. And I commuted to Edmonton. We waited in Edmonton for our house to be built, in Devon.

AK: Ah, yeah.

KJ: His salary was 180 dollars a month.

BJ: Yeah, salary was 180 dollars a month.

AK: Yeah, and then you qualified for a certain size of house, because the mortgage... or did you have enough money to buy it on your own?

BJ: No, we qualified for, wasn't the large house, one of the intermediate sized houses.

AK: Yeah, that's right. There were different sizes and... you must get my book and see, there was a table of requirements that...

BJ: Oh, I remember that, yes. I don't think I qualified for the large house. But we were right [unintelligible] of the intermediate sized house.

[00:11:23] AK: Right. Now, let's switch over to Kay. Kay, you tell us a little bit about yourself and where you were born and your maiden name and a little bit of your background. Because I want to get that stuff about what you did at the office there.

KJ: What was that?

BJ: When they discovered Leduc.

KJ: Oh, when they discovered the wells?

AK: No, no. Right back to the beginning of time. Where you were born.

KJ: I'm Kay Jeffrey and I was born Kathleen King. I was born in the General Hospital and my parents lived in Dalemead then. But I grew up at Millarville and went to school at the Plainview School. And subsequently Sheep Creek School was built and went there. And then to Turner Valley High and after that to Garnet?? Business College. I worked at McDermott Drugs for about three years and then when the fellows from Turner Valley all left to join the Air Force and the Army and the Navy, they started recruiting girls to work in the office at Turner Valley. And I went out there in the fall of '42. And worked there 'till I guess the spring of 1946, when they transferred us to the Imperial office at Second Street in Calgary. What am I missing here now?

AK: Well, I just wanted to ask you a question.

KJ: All right.

AK: Were you any relation to Dick King? Whose father was the Secretary of the Millarville area?

KJ: No.

AK: No relation?

KJ: No relation at all.

AK: Okay...

KJ: There were three Kings, no relation at all. There were three Kings at Millarville. We were west, and my father was Carlton King. And the W.H. Kings at Millarville. And there was the Jack Kings east of Millarville by the racetrack.

AK: Hmm, there were lots of Kings then.

KJ: Yeah, no relation, which is strange.

AK: What was your job at Turner Valley and who did you report to?

KJ: I reported originally to Wes Hewitt out there, who worked for Bob Trammel.

AK: He became a landman, didn't he?

KJ: Yes, Wes became a land man. They're still our dear friends. And I had known Glen as a matter of fact, Glen Hewitt in grade 3. We were buddies. In the one year that I spent in the city when I was a child. I went to Connaught School. In Turner Valley, I worked for the drawing department and had to compile rig reports to send down monthly to Toronto, St. Clair Avenue, and...

AK: Well, no, that was 56 Church Street.

KJ: 56? I guess you're right.

AK: Oh, yeah.

KJ: Correction, 56 Church Street.

AK: Yeah. Because Superior?? wasn't built until about '57-'58.

KJ: Yes. Yeah, that's right.

AK: Yeah. And these reports would be made up out of... these reports would be made up in the field? Like...?

KJ: Sent in and I assembled them.

AK: Right. Do you remember during the War, that Trammell and some of the others would gather all you ladies up, and put you in the car, and take you into Okotoks to get the allotment of booze?

KJ: High River.

AK: Oh, High River was it?

KJ: Yes.

AK: Do you remember that?

KJ: That is right. That was up fairly often. Or occasionally going to town for that.

AK: Well, that was a month, monthly.

KJ: To use our permits. Once a month, that's right. And we had trips to High River. Do you want to know any of the people in the drilling department?

AK: Well, yeah. There's another, there's a fellow I'm trying to think of... ??, loud guy that worked in there. He came up to... See, at that time, I was down at Taber. I don't know whether you were getting reports from Taber or not? You might have been.

KJ: Probably.

AK: Yeah. It was Gordon Connell came out there.

KJ: There was a lot of reports, yes. Through Saskatchewan and through there.

BJ: And there was Andy. Gordon and Andy. They were [unintelligible] Big fellow, Andy...

AK: Well, I don't know him. Well, there was Nate Goodman, was the Conservation Board fellow. But no, I don't know who that would be.

KJ: The people in the drilling office at that time, there was Floyd Walker and...

AK: Floyd Walker. That's the name I'm thinking of.

KJ: And Bob Stanhope and Marty Neeson.

AK: George Bourque?

KJ: And George Bourque.

AK: That's B-O-U-R-Q-U-E.

KJ: Correct. Does that come on here?

AK: Oh, yeah, you're supposed to, yeah, you're supposed to pick all that up. But I think Sophie knows how to spell those names. And, yeah, there's some pretty wild stories about old Floyd Walker, but I don't... Have you got any stories you'd pass on about those days with those hands?

KJ: Well there was one story about him, but I don't think I'd put in on there. But...

BJ: [unintelligible]

KJ: No, this was a sort of a good story about him actually.

AK: Well hold it up to your...

KJ: I can't think of any stories of that...

AK: Okay, digging back into the depths of time. And there's one...

KJ: In Calgary, Johnny Vissar was in charge of the drilling office there. And he was there for about a year and a quarter.

AK: What about Jim Todd? Did you ever run into him?

KJ I knew Jim Todd.

AK: He was the mud man.

KJ: There was Bill... Oaks? No.

AK: Billy Oaks?

KJ: Billy Oaks.

BJ: Oh, he was a machinist.

KJ: He was a machinist. Well I was looking for somebody else I knew...

AK: There was... Well, Ralph Archibald was in the Air Force, I think. But his dad worked in the machine shop. Was it Jimmy, his dad?

KJ: Jimmy Oaks.

AK: No, Archibald.

KJ: Archibald, or Jim Archibald. Yeah. I don't remember all those names. I knew some of the Archibald's.

AK: What was Fred Cameron's job out there?

KJ: Wasn't he in accounting?

AK: Yeah, was he a time keeper, or...?

BJ: No.

KJ: What was Cameron? Was he personnel?

BJ: He was at one time personnel. And then George Grey Wolf came up.

AK: George Thomson.

BJ: George Thompson, yeah.

AK: Silver Wolf.

KJ: Grey Wolf we call him. I have a [unintelligible], ha, ha. On that...

AK: And he came to, he worked at Turner Valley, did he?

KJ: Yes, he did.

AK: Oh. And Harry Robertson...

KJ: He wasn't our favourite person.

AK: No. He was nobody's favourite person.

KJ: laughs

AK: Was Henry Robertson... did he start out in the Valley then? During the War?

KJ: I didn't know him 'till Edmonton, I think, Jimmy.

AK: Well, he's in that picture there.

KJ: Yeah.

AK: I'm going to put that back in my envelope, because...

[00:20:13] AK: So, what kind of money were you making out there?

KJ: When I started in Turner Valley, when I was working at McDermott Drugs, I was making 65 dollars, I think I had gotten worked up to that. And all of a sudden, we heard there were jobs available in Turner Valley at a hundred and twenty. And that sounded very good, seeing as it was almost double. So, we started at that. I can't remember what I worked up to, but, beyond that.

AK: Where was the McDermott's drug store in Calgary?

KJ: On 8th Avenue, First Street. 128, I think.

AK: Oh, near the...

KJ: First Street West.

AK: Oh...

KJ: Or, 8th Avenue West.

AK: Right, that's in between Centre Street and 1st Street.

KJ: Yes.

AK: Right. On the north side.

KJ: Yes.

AK: And how did you get out to Turner Valley? Did you have somebody drive you out there? Or did you just ...?

KJ: I don't recall.

AK: No. And then when you were out there, did you batch or what did you...?

KJ: I stayed with Audi and Scotty Rohl for a year. And then...

AK: What's that name?

KJ: Scotty Rohl. Turner Valley Transport.

AK: How do you spell it?

KJ: R-O-H-L.

AK: Oh, R-O-H-L, right.

KJ: Yeah, Scotty was quite well known out there. Turner Valley Transport.

AK: Well, nothing to do with Riley's Transport?

KJ: No.

AK: That was separate.

KJ: Yeah, opposition, I guess.

AK: Yeah, at Black Diamond.

KJ: Yes, he was in the Diamond. Scotty was on Turner Valley, next to Mrs. Yost's place.

AK: Oh, yeah. Yost. Okay, so then you...

KJ: And then I went and stayed in the batch.

AK: They had a batch out there?

KJ: Yes.

BJ: Just for girls.

KJ: A girl's batch. Natch.

AK: Yeah, Natch.

KJ: And, in the Calgary office, you wanted to know, there was Charlie Vissar, the office that we were in.

AK: Well, what... it was just as a result of...

KJ: Ginny Lair worked there.

AK: Did she work in the office?

KJ: Yes.

AK: Did she? What was her job?

KJ: Virginia McMahon, she was then. Ginny, oh she was in charge of the mail and just a general receptionist there. I don't know what all her work was, but she was always very busy at it.

AK: That's where she and Doug met then?

KJ: I guess so.

AK: Yeah. I didn't get to find out where you two met. In the office?

KJ: I met Bern in the Calgary... and I went down the hall one day and saw this handsome Air Force officer out there. I wasn't particularly interested, but later he asked me for a date and we started...

BJ: This was at the Turner Valley office.

KJ: In the Turner Valley office.

AK: Oh, in Turner Valley, right. So, you were married in '46?

KJ: We were married in 1946. And we have two sons. Keith Jeffrey, he was born in 1950. And Ken Jeffrey in 1954.

AK: Right. Now this business in the office in Calgary. I'm kind of interested. There was another person that worked in there, was Sally Harvey. Did you know her?

KJ: Yes. I'm losing it. I'm not sure...

AK: I think she was on the computer, she was on the adding machines. That's my recollection of her.

KJ: I don't have much recollection.

BJ: Comptometer.

AK: Comptometer, that was the word. Comptometer.

KJ: Have you heard the one about Peggy and the office people? The guy swearing into the telephone?

AK: No, I'd like to hear that.

BJ: You better say which Peggy it is.

KJ: When I was in the Calgary office, Peggy Donnelly was on the telephone...

BJ: Switchboard.

KJ: On the switchboard. And I didn't know Peggy that well, but there was a cute story about it. There was a VIP up from Toronto, in the main office, and he phoned down to Peggy, he wanted an outside line. And he phoned down and said what he wanted, so Peggy said fine. In the meantime, he's talking to the people in Walker Taylor's office, and he's standing there talking about this and that, and all of a sudden, he said, Jesus Christ! And right in his ear immediate was, no, it's Peggy.

AK: Laughs. Yeah. Just call me Aubrey.

KJ: That broke everybody up for a few minutes.

AK: There was another person that I wanted to get your recollections of was Ted Link. Do you remember him? The chief geologist?

KJ: You mean the day he went to sleep in Walker Taylor's office?

AK: Well, I'd like to hear about that. Tell me about that.

KJ: Aubrey's just asking me about Ted Link and I don't remember very many stories, but I remember...

AK: Well, there are a million stories about Ted, but I'd like to get...

KJ: You're right. But in the Calgary office, people went through the office with the four or five of us that worked in the front and into Walker Taylor's office. So, Ted Link came up one day and Walker Taylor was not in. So, Iris Mitchell showed him into the office to wait. Have you heard that one?

AK: No, no.

KJ: And so, Walker Taylor didn't come, and he didn't come, so she thought, oh dear he'll be really stewing in there and getting upset and I better go in and placate him. So, she walked into the office quietly and he was sound asleep on the desk. Quite relaxed about the whole deal.

AK: Right. Well, did he ever play any practical jokes on you girls?

KJ: Not that I recall.

AK: Oh. Well, that was his famous stock and trade, but I'm not going to waste our time talking about that. There was another person that I wondered if you'd remember. Talking about people coming from Toronto. There was Mike Hider. Do you remember him coming out?

KJ: Yes!

AK: All right. Tell me something about Mike. Black Mike.

KJ: Black Mike Hider? I didn't remember him being called Black Mike.

AK: Well anyways...

KJ: But I remember Mike Hider coming out to the office. And he was a ... No, what would I say? Perfectionist, I guess. When he gave dictation, he wanted every exact word as he dictated it. And reportedly he made four hundred thousand dollars a year at that point. Which in those days was a fantastic amount of money.

AK: I rather doubt that he made that much, but...

KJ: Reportedly I said.

AK: Yeah, reportedly.

KJ: No, I think, that's what they reported at that time that I...

AK: Now, do you know why he was, you know why he was brought up into Canada from the States? He was moved to Toronto, to work out of Toronto. He never worked out of Calgary.

KJ: No, I don't think he worked out of Calgary and I don't know why they brought him out there. Dictation wasn't my long shot on, I did other things like that, and I had to take...

AK: What'd you use, Pitman?

KJ: And I had to take Pitman dictation from him once. I think it was the most terrifying day of my life. However, I got through it. Well he was very nice, but he was so exact that you didn't change an 'and' or a 'the' in anything, so. I think I only had to rewrite it once.

AK: I'm just going to turn this off for a minute.

[tape cuts]

[00:28:39] AK: Let's resume here. I wanted to get that story, Kay, about your selecting the lot of your house out in Devon. Would you just tell us about that? And you were renting in Edmonton at the time?

KJ: Yes.

AK: What was your, do you remember where you rented in Edmonton?

KJ: 78th Avenue and what, about...

BJ: Just off 109 Street.

KJ: Yeah, when we lived in Edmonton, we were about 104 Street, wouldn't it be? 104th and 78th Avenue, in the bottom half of an old house. And we were waiting for our house to be built in Devon. And we drove out one day and walked about, it seemed like about a half a mile, but I suppose it was about a quarter across a wheat field, past a number of pegs. And we came to a certain peg and they said, there's your house. So, we waited then until it became a house.

AK: And was, the ground had it been broken?

KJ: No. The wheat stubble was still there.

AK: The wheat stubble was still there.

KJ: Still there when we walked out to look at the...

AK: So that must have been in the fall of '47 then. Because I think they'd made their mind up about building Devon. You see, there was quite a controversy over building Devon.

KJ: Or would it be early '48?

AK: Well, it could have been. It had to be very early, but there was no snow on the ground.

KJ: No, it would be in the fall because there was stubble.

AK: Yeah, well it would be '47 because they'd... see, our house was ready in July '48. And we moved in in July '48.

KJ: We moved out in... let me see. We moved out there in January, to Devon.

AK: You must have been out there, because you were at the Christmas party. You said you were at the Christmas party because you saw me perform there.

KJ: No...

AK: Weren't you the one that told, that remembered my foot going through the hot air register?

KJ: No, that wasn't me.

AK: Well, then who else was it? Well there was a famous Christmas party at Devon in the winter of '48-'49.

KJ: Well it must have been... we worked in Calgary for a year and a quarter. And we moved up in November, I know, to Edmonton.

AK: Yeah, so that would be November '47.

KJ: Yes. I was thinking it was '48. But I think it has to be '47. So, it was a year and a quarter after we were married so it's got to be '47.

AK: Okay, so then you said you only, Bernard only lived in the house about 10 days when you moved in.

KJ: We were there for five months. In 10 days, he was transferred to Redwater.

AK: Right. And then you had to live in the batch up at Redwater then.

KJ: He came home weekends for five months.

AK: Well, what...? Well, let's see. You went up in '49 then, up there to Redwater?

BJ: I'd been in a room with Lauder Nowers.

AK: Right.

BJ: He was the personnel man.

AK: I thought that Gibby... was that in that first batch?

BJ: Yeah.

AK: Well, Gibby was in that batch too, wasn't he?

BJ: I believe he was, yeah.

AK: Now the story goes is that batch was so cold... that was the first one, that the you couldn't keep warm in there. Is that right?

BJ: I don't remember having any problems...

KJ: I'm not too sure on the times on these, Aubrey.

AK: Well that's alright. It's not all that critical, you know, but...

BJ: Actually, I thought it was very comfortable and it was well made.

AK: Well maybe you got into the second batch, because the first one that they... you see, the very first winter was '48-'49, you see.

KJ: Well he went up in the spring, because...

AK: Redwater was discovered in August of '48, right? And the first winter, there's people like Gibby and Lauder, and a few other people that lived in this terrible place that, hardly could keep warm. So that wasn't what you were in. You were in the next...

BJ: The big one.

KJ: We moved to Devon in January of '49 and then...

AK: January of '50.

KJ: No, to Devon in '49.

AK: Right.

KJ: And we moved to Redwater January the 14th and you want to say on that...

AK: Yeah. 1950.

KJ: Yes, we would have moved to Devon in January of 1949. And then it was January the 14th of 1950 that we moved to Redwater. It was 48 below in Edmonton that morning. The movers were two hours late getting to our house, because they couldn't get their trucks to go any sooner. And about three people registered that it was 62 below that morning in Redwater and most times when it was cold in that area Redwater was about 15 degrees colder than Edmonton. And we moved up to Redwater, and

by the time the furniture was in, the temperature in the house was 48 above and we found the furnaces were inadequate. And we never could get the houses over about 66. Running full blast. So, they had to change the furnaces.

AK: Oh, did they?

KJ: Yes, and put in a stronger, more... what is it? More BTUs or whatever they use.

AK: Yeah. Did you have a choice of what you could buy in Redwater?

BJ: In what way?

AK: In the way of a house. Did you...?

KJ: I think we did.

BJ: Oh, yes. We had the choice of the little one or the larger one. And we chose the larger one.

KJ: Or the medium one, yes.

BJ: Well it was a large bird?? house. They only had two sizes.

KJ: Yes.

AK: Well, the small one like Blakeley's was 500. And yours, what, about 800? Square feet?

BJ: Square feet? It's hard to know.

KJ: I don't know. It was like our house in Redwater, we could have the one story or a two story. And the two story is the same as the army barracks.

AK: Oh, the veterans...

KJ: The veterans. Our house in Redwater was the same as the veterans' houses here in Calgary.

AK: Now, what was your job at... do you want to give that over to... What was your job at Redwater?

BJ: At Redwater I was the district accountant.

AK: Right. You were in charge of the accounting procedures. Did you have to do the payroll there?

BJ: I did the payroll there, right.

AK: And do you remember where the bank, the first Royal Bank was? In the garage? Maloney's garage?

BJ: I don't remember where it was.

AK: But they had to do the same thing as they did at Leduc. Royal had to get a branch in there fast.

BJ: Yes, I don't remember where the Royal Bank was.

AK: Yeah, well that's okay. Well then, what was other... did you have to look after production?

BJ: Well, yes. In the accounting office, we looked after recording all the production from the wells and also the gas production.

AK: Did you do royalties? Did you work out the royalties?

BJ: No, royalties were all done in Calgary.

AK: I see. So, you'd send the amounts of oil that were produced from each battery?

BJ: Yes, we made monthly reports showing the total production for a month and total gas production.

AK: All right. What did you have to do with, did you have anything at all to do with Western Leaseholds? Because they were drilling, Imperial drilled their holes for them. Did you know that? Ed Campbell and Rob Morris helped.

BJ: In the economy part, we didn't have anything to do with [unintelligible]

AK: Right. So, you didn't have any... because, you see, Imperial Oil supplied tubular goods. And I just wondered whether you'd had to take inventory or kept...

BJ: Well, that would all be handled by the warehouse. Stan ??? was in charge of the warehouse at that time. So, he'd be familiar with that.

AK: What did Harry Robinson do up there?

BJ: He was the field... what would you call him?

KJ: Does he need to say Harry Robinson went to there???

AK: No, that's all right.

BJ: He would have been... not the [unintelligible]. He worked as the production man in the field but more maintenance.

AK: Would you say transportation?

BJ: No, no I wouldn't say transportation. He was... oh, built roads and well sites. Construction I guess, that type of thing.

AK: Yeah. Well, did you have to pay for any of that work that was done out in the...?

BJ: We didn't pay for it, no.

AK: You didn't have to handle that through your accounting?

BJ: No, that was all handled in Calgary.

AK: So, really what you were doing is production accounting, really.

BJ: Mainly production accounting.

AK: Yeah. Say, if people... there was some damage to a farm, broken fence or something, would you have to pay for that?

BJ: That would all be handled by the land department.

AK: And then they wouldn't put it through your books?

BJ: No. Calgary handled all of that.

AK: I'll just turn this off for a minute.

[tape cuts]

[00:39:58] AK: But Kay, when you moved up to Devon and Redwater, you'd given up any, you didn't do any jobs? Did you work at all when you were...? Before you had your children?

KJ: No, they didn't want you to work, when the fellows came back from overseas, it was frowned on.

AK: I see.

KJ: And I was... they didn't want the girls to stay on working after they were married. And I worked for a year and a quarter in the Calgary office. And they had said that they would let me out because of the fellows coming back, but they never did. But when I was transferred, then they just didn't expect us to go back to work then. It was considered unloyal, or disloyal, I think.

AK: Kind of understood.

KJ: It was understood, that's right. That you had a working husband, so you did not work.

AK: Right. Did you think about going back to McDermott's or...?

KJ: Oh no. We were in Edmonton by then.

AK: Yeah. Did you think about having a job in Edmonton or...?

KJ: Well, no, it just wasn't done. You had a husband who worked, and it was rather considered, as I said, disloyal to be also occupying a job.

AK: Even though it was another company?

KJ: In any kind of work. You were just supposed to be home and looking after the house and family.

AK: Did you have anything to do with the Alexandra Block in Edmonton? That's where the offices were. Did you ever...?

KJ: No.

AK: No, you didn't know about the Alexandra Block?

BJ: No, when we were in Edmonton it was in the Noble Building.

KJ: [unintelligible]

AK: That was where, on Jasper?

KJ: No. 109 Street and 82nd, 87th, 86th Avenue?

BJ: Wasn't far from the MacDonald hotel.

AK: No, you're thinking of the south side.

BJ: Oh, south. The Noble Building, yeah.

KJ: The Noble Building was south side, wasn't it?

BJ: That's right.

AK: That'd be quite a ways after.

KJ: The Noble Building to the Garneau Theatre. From the Varscona.

AK: Yeah on the south side, just across the High Level.

BJ: The Noble Building was all exploration people.

AK: That's right, yeah.

BJ: And Jack Armstrong was the exploration manager.

AK: Did you have anything to do with the people in the Noble Building?

BJ: Yeah, I was...

AK: Was this after Redwater?

BJ: I was transferred from Redwater into Edmonton.

AK: All right, tell us about that group because I'm very interested in that group. Tell us about Jack and...

BJ: I was transferred from Redwater. They formed the exploration district, I guess it was. I transferred from Redwater into the exploration district which was located in the Noble Building.

KJ: It'd have been '51.

BJ: In 1951, and the exploration manager was Jack Armstrong.

AK: That's right. And who did he have with him? Do you remember some of the...?

KJ: Jack and... as I said, I never did follow office politics.

AK: What about Gary McCourt? Was he there?

BJ: I think Gary McCourt was there.

AK: Right. Because he had worked, you see, in Devon for me, you see. He'd come to work, after he got his degree, he came to work for me at Leduc, you see. And then he went into Edmonton, but I wasn't sure just when that took place. How many people would you say were in the Noble Building? Was there 30 or 40 or what?

BJ: I would think there would be, yes, I'd say around 30 people. Because there were one or two landmen and I think there was a scout there. I can't remember his name.

AK: Bill Allen?

BJ: It might have been Bill Allen.

AK: I don't know. Now, there was a person that worked in the geophysical, and her name was Rita MacNeil.

KJ: She's a singer.

AK: No, no. Not Rita, sorry.

BJ: Did Perry [???

AK: She worked as a geophysical person.

BJ: I remember there was Sheldon Gibson.

AK: Oh, yes. Sheldon was there.

BJ: And Jerry Remple.

KJ: Oh, and there, around our neighbourhood there, the Perry's were there, and the Reese's were out there and...

AK: Okay. We'll just stop it here, because our tape is finished. We'll just turn the tape over.

Side 2

[00:00:04] AK: ...14th Street. Remember? There was a big building that Imperial built. But that was, I think, a couple of years later. Nothing to do with the Noble Building. Do you remember that?

BJ: No, but after the Noble building... after they formed the exploration district, and then they formed a division. And the offices then moved to the... I don't remember.

AK: Well, Devonian Building, wasn't it? Wasn't that called? On Jasper Avenue and 114th Street? Right across from the Misericordia. Right across from the hospital. It was quite a good-sized building.

KJ: No, the Mis is a way out. It'd be the General would be 114th.

AK: Well, it was the General, yeah.

KJ: The Mis is way out, 170th Street.

AK: Yeah, well, whatever. So...

BJ: Was it a brown building? Because this was an old bowling alley that they made into office space.

AK: No, I don't know about that.

BJ: They had engineering in there...

AK: Well, then what you're saying is that they set it up and they made a division and then they put the offices out in, what? In Peace River and...

BJ: Well they closed the Noble Building, and everybody moved over to the Crown Building. So, they had exploration and production in there.

AK: Oh, the Crown Building.

BJ: It was the Crown Building.

KJ: Speaking of that, Bern. There was one error in something you said to way back, I think. You said when you came back from the war you were making 90 dollars. And that wouldn't be right, because we girls started at 120. So, it would be before the war that you would be making 90 dollars.

BJ: It wasn't very much.

KJ: I don't think it matters.

AK: No, it wasn't much. Nobody was making anything.

KJ: No, but he would be making more than I did. And I was making about 135 or something by then. So, you were probably 160 or something.

AK: Well, by the time that you met the Armstrong's, I think Jack had become a pretty confirmed Mormon, hadn't he?

KJ: June was a Mormon.

AK: She came from Taber, you see? That's where she...

KJ: Mountain... Right by Waterton.

AK: Mountain View.

KJ: Mountain View. I played bridge with June and she was from Mountain View. A family of about 7, I think.

AK: Right. But that's where they met, when she was, she'd come up to Taber and Jack, see, he was on that seismic crew down there, as an assistant.

BJ: Oh, was he?

AK: Yeah, and then June and he got acquainted. Well, there's a lot of stories about that.

KJ: She was a Keith, wasn't she? June Keith.

AK: Yeah, and that's... do you remember Alex Bland?

BJ: Oh, yeah.

AK: He's dead, you know.

BJ: Yeah. He moved out to B.C.

AK: Yeah, right. And he was a half-sister to June.

KJ: Half-brother.

AK: Half-brother to June. Did you know that?

KJ: I did, I'd forgotten it. I did know that.

AK: Yeah, right. So, Alex Bland's career was fully insured.

BJ: Yeah. [unintelligible]

AK: Oh, yeah, he worked for me in Taber.

KJ: He's a nice fellow.

BJ: Oh, well you'd know all about him then.

AK: Well, he's quite good on the trumpet. Excellent musician.

BJ: He used to play in a band out there. They lived on the north shore of Shuswap Lake. A place called Anglemont.

AK: Well, did you ever think you'd like to move out there?

BJ: Oh, we've got a lot out there.

KJ: We have a lot. We'll sell it to you.

BJ: If you want to buy one.

AK: Oh, nothing on it?

BJ: No.

[00:04:25] AK: Okay, let's get on with this division thing. In this, you called it the Crown Building?

BJ: Yeah, it was the Crown Building.

AK: Right. And then you moved to that building?

BJ: Yeah.

AK: And then you come back to Calgary then, did you?

BJ: That's right.

AK: What were you doing down in Calgary here?

KJ: We came to Calgary in '55.

AK: Yeah. What were you doing here?

BJ: Well, in Edmonton I was the division accountant and then I was moved to the Calgary office to supervise one of the sections, in 1955. And I wasn't too happy there and they had an opening at Regina for an administrative assistant, so I requested a transfer down there. [unintelligible]

AK: And who were you administrative assistant to?

BJ: Vern Hunter.

AK: Oh, Vern, yeah. Well, you'd get along good with him. Now, at that time was there a fellow named McClause there?

BJ: Gordon McClause, yeah. He was, I think he was in charge of accounting.

AK: Yeah, he was an accountant, wasn't he? Did you ever meet his former wife, Jean?

KJ: Yes.

AK: Did you know her?

BJ: I don't really remember meeting her.

KJ: Yeah. I don't remember a lot about her, but yes, I knew her.

AK: Yeah. Well, they were still together then.

KJ: Yes, they were.

AK: And then they broke up.

KJ: They later broke up.

AK: I wonder what caused that.

KJ: I have no idea. We didn't know them well enough to know that.

AK: She has been a researcher for me.

KJ: Is that right?

AK: Yeah.

KJ: She was very, we always thought she was very nice. But we didn't... we knew a bit at that time, but that's a long time ago.

AK: Yeah, right. Well, then Vern moved back to Edmonton, didn't he?

KJ: I guess so. Because he was there when we went to Edmonton.

BJ: ??? George Shultz was there...

AK: Oh, yeah, George... And Doug Layer was there.

BJ: Doug, yeah.

AK: But the...

KJ: That was in Regina. They lived...

AK: That's what I meant, yeah in Regina.

KJ: Doug and Jenny were across the way from us there, in Regina.

BJ: Doug was the, he was the assistant...

AK: He was like assistant exploration manager or something.

BJ: Yeah.

AK: Well then, how long did you stay in Regina?

BJ: 13 years?

KJ: 13 years. '56 to '69.

AK: And then...

BJ: We turned the lights out.

AK: Was that where you packed it in, eh?

KJ: And then to Edmonton.

AK: Did they move your back to Edmonton?

BJ: Yeah.

AK: Free?

BJ: Oh, yes.

AK: Yeah. And what did you do? Did you buy a house in Edmonton?

KJ: Yes.

BJ: Yeah.

AK: And then how long did you stay in Edmonton?

KJ: For three years. '69 to '72. We came down here in '72.

AK: You decided Calgary was the place?

BJ: Well I got transferred back to Calgary.

AK: Oh, but I thought you'd packed it in in '69, you said.

KJ: No, no, no.

AK: Oh, you took a job...

KJ: We left Regina in '69.

AK: Yeah. And then you went... what'd you do in Edmonton from '69 to '72?

BJ: Well, let's see. I was division account there.

AK: Again, eh?

BJ: Oh, well, we got these things mixed up, a little, because I was only there once.

AK: Well, then what happened in '72 then?

KJ: Transferred here.

BJ: Transferred from Edmonton to Calgary.

KJ: There was a mass transfer in '72 here.

AK: Yeah. Well, now that was when they changed a whole bunch of the divisions. Now, were you aware of the holocaust of 1971, when they fired a whole bunch of explorationists?

BJ: Yeah.

AK: That was bad.

BJ: Oh, yeah. That was Marty Clarin [???

AK: Marty was one of them.

KJ: Bad for morale.

AK: Ray Sluzar. Did you know Ray?

KJ: Yeah. I'd forgotten his name. Yeah, Ray.

AK: And there was a bunch of them.

BJ: Two or three others. Real good men.

AK: Yeah. Did you ever find out why they did that?

BJ: Never did.

AK: That was a deep, dark secret.

BJ: Well-kept too.

AK: Yeah. I don't know what kind of a deal... the other person that I couldn't understand was...

KJ: Yeah, that lived just here. Two doors down was one of them, wasn't he? Three doors?

BJ: Oh, Hank McAllister.

KJ: Hank McAllister was another, I think.

BJ: He was in scouting.

KJ: Oh, yeah.

AK: And then I think the one that really I couldn't understand was Hank Kunst.

BJ: That's the name I'm trying to think of, yeah.

AK: Tremendous person. And he had done so much for the company. Well, okay, then you move back here in '72. And what was your job then?

[00:09:54] BJ: Well, I just supervised one of the sections. Accounting sections.

AK: Oh, I see.

BJ: Then I retired in '72.

KJ: '78.

BJ: '78?

KJ: We moved here in '72.

BJ: '72, that's right. And retired in '78.

AK: You retired in 1978? That's when you packed it in.

BJ: That's when I packed it in.

KJ: The spring of '78.

AK: Right, I see. Then you've been retired since then? Any work at all?

BJ: I went back for, they pulled me out and wanted me to come back for, I don't know, a couple months.

KJ: You... 3,4, 6 months. Somewhere between 3 and 6 months.

BJ: It was kind of a Joe-job and I said, well, I'll come back providing it doesn't interfere with some of the important things I'm doing, like curling. And they said, well this job didn't need to, there was no hurry, but they just needed somebody that had been in the industry to do it. So, I went back whenever I felt like going down type of thing.

AK: Yeah. So, there wasn't any urgency?

BJ: No.

AK: Right.

BJ: Then I finally packed it in.

AK: Yeah, right. Okay.

BJ: Did you know Harlan Hoyt???

AK: Yeah.

BJ: He's a landman. He lives down here.

KJ: Just down at the corner.

AK: He has that company...

KJ: Saunders?

BJ: And Jerry Saunders. Do you know him?

AK: No. Well, I should know him, but...

BJ: He lives over here. He was an ex-Imperial...

AK: Bob... There was a...

[tape cuts]

[00:11:25] KJ: Ours is not in Anglemont.

AK: Where is it?

BJ: Alec Bland was in Anglemont.

AK: Yeah, I know Alec was.

BJ: We're the other side of...

KJ: We're in Cedar Heights.

BJ: Cedar Heights they call it.

AK: Is that near Sorrento?

KJ: Yes. Just before Sorrento.

AK: You're near old Jack... or Johnny Jackson?

BJ: Yeah. And Ewing Smith. Well, we're not... let's see, they're right down on...

AK: They're on Blind Bay. Yeah. Blind Bay. So, you're...

BJ: Yeah, the development we're in is down the road quite a ways. And then the houses are all uphill. So, we have a lot...

KJ: There's Shuswap Lake Estates where the golf course is.

BJ: We have a lot up for sale. We put it up this spring, because, well, at our age, we're not going to move up there and start building a house.

AK: What size of lot is it?

KJ: Quarter acre. 85 by 120 or...? I think it's listed a quarter acre, wasn't it?

BJ: It has a good view on it. But we never got around to building anything. You remember Ewing Smith?

AK: Yeah, vaguely. I know Johnny Jackson very well. But...

BJ: I was going to ask you if you know Jack Yates. He was a landman.

KJ: Angus Moss. Jack Yates. Oh, you said Jack Yates.

AK: Well, there's a whole bunch of them out there.

BJ: Oh, yeah.

KJ: Doug Perry's out there. Eleanor Turnuck's brother is out there.

AK: Oh, yeah. Gordon.

KJ: Gordon Turnuck.

AK: He surveyed. He used to survey.

BJ: Yeah. You've got a good memory, Aubrey.

AK: Well, I have to. Because I have to hook all these people together.

KJ: I hope you edit those tapes.

AK: No, they're not edited. They're just in their raw state.

KJ: Ah, hmmm.

AK: No, well... Sophie, isn't that right, Sophie. You clean them up. Sophie is my secretary. I don't know if she'll ever get...

KJ: That was what I meant.

AK: She might not even type this one.

BJ: Is that the Sophie that used to work for...?

[tape cuts]

[00:13:33] AK: What I want from both of you is your philosophy of life as you've seen it from the, you know, your time in the oil patch and what's your, do you have any views about Imperial or about your experiences. And I'll get you to...

KJ: Let me think for a minute on that.

AK: You want to think? Well all right.

[tape cuts]

[00:14:02] AK: I get my best quotes from some of these final little wise sayings, so...

KJ: I think we were kind of on the fringe of things in...

AK: Here, just a minute. Here, go ahead. Say that again.

KJ: No, I meant like in the parties and things we weren't... we were sort of...

AK: Oh yeah. Right. Yeah, we were talking about the parties in Redwater. Well, there was some of them were pretty active. I think Jim Lineman was one of the ones that...

KJ: Oh, they were in a different group, yeah.

AK: They were a different group, were they? Jim and...

KJ: I think they probably had a little bit more...

AK: They were jumping around and... Rod McDaniel. Did you know Marilyn?

KJ: I knew them a bit, yeah. But, you know, we were, as I said, we were there just a quarter [???], so you didn't get to know too many people too well. Jenny and Lee, we knew better.

AK: Jenny and Lee, yeah.

KJ: ???

AK: Yeah, right.

KJ: We had known them before we were married, so...

AK: Well, that makes a difference, yeah.

KJ: But it's... well, we had a good life with Imperial Oil, we were quite happy with it.

AK: Well, put that on. Just say what you'd like to say or whatever you'd like to say. I'm not... I just like to get your philosophical comments.

KJ: Well, we lived a good life and enjoyed all our years I think with Imperil Oil. And we were still in the era when loyalty was quite strong and sort of a lifelong thing that you had. We made eight moves, which sometimes weren't always that enjoyable. But we met a number of wonderful people, and you'd move away from them, and then the next move, you'd move back to where your friends were, and to different friends. So, overall, we've had quite a good time doing it all.

AK: Did you ever hear the story about the quickest way to get transferred in Imperial Oil was to start building your house somewhere?

KJ: When you put the curtains up.

AK: Oh, it was when you put the curtains...

KJ: When you got all the curtains up.

AK: That was the time when you got transferred.

KJ: Right.

AK: I see.

KJ: So, you always... It was good to leave one curtain not done.

AK: Oh, is that right? Say, that's a good story, I like that one. So, you'd get your transfer notice when the curtains got up.

KJ: When you got them all up.

AK: Bernard, what did... can you give me a few words of your thoughts about your life?

KJ: Let me through here, and I'll look after the other end of it here.

BJ: When I think back over the years, I spent 41 years with Imperial Oil, four of them within the Armed Services. But I felt they'd been good years. Imperial Oil was an excellent company to work for. They looked after us when we were in the service and made up the difference between our service pay and what we were getting with the company when we left to join. I never accomplished very much in the way of position within Imperial Oil. But I felt that they are a great bunch of people to work with, and I must say I enjoyed the years that I put in.

KJ: And they provided us a very good living.

AK: Right. Well, there was...

KJ: We should add that.

AK: I think there's quite a bit of evidence for that. When I interviewed Don Gamble... do you know Don Gamble in Kelowna?

KJ: No.

AK: Well, you see his children went through education on Imperial Oil scholarships.

KJ: So did ours.

AK: Is that right?

KJ: Both of them, yeah.

AK: Is that right? And did they get a university degree? Or what did they end up...?

KJ: Keith's a veterinarian. And Ken went through in agriculture.

AK: Right. Where did he take his veterinary...?

KJ: Saskatoon. It's pre-Vet in Edmonton and the Vet in Saskatoon.

AK And who does he work for?

KJ: Keith?

AK: Yeah.

KJ: He was in a partnership. He's out of it right now, but he was in one.

AK: Where does he practice?

KJ: At Parksville.

AK: Oh, in British Columbia.

KJ: Vancouver Island.

AK: Right on Vancouver Island. Well, that's a nice place for you to visit then.

KJ: Right?

AK: You got that figured out, eh?

KJ: That's right.

BJ: You'd remember two people up there.

KJ: Gold...

BJ: Golbern??? he was a drilling man.

KJ: And the...

AK: What about...?

KJ: Kay and Jack...

AK: Jack McCaskill.

KJ: The McCaskills.

AK: Well, they're at Qualico.

KJ: And, yes. Well, they're only six miles apart.

AK: Yeah, a few miles, yeah.

BJ: And the other fellow was named...

AK: George Powell.

KJ: George Powell. And Ruth.

AK: George isn't too well is he?

KJ: Ruth died I think, didn't she?

BJ: Well did she die or did George die.

KJ: No, Ruth...

AK: George wasn't well.

KJ: I think it was Ruth. But anyway, I don't...

AK: No.

BJ: And Harry Robertson lived out there for a while. And then they sold out and they moved down to the States.

AK: Yeah. He's dead. Harry's dead.

KJ: Harry is?

AK: Harry Robertson?

BJ: Yeah.

AK: As far as I know, yeah.

KJ: Oh, we haven't heard that.

AK: No. Well, don't quote me.

KJ: We did correspond with them for quite a while and then eventually you move so many times, and they went overseas.

AK: Well, look, it's been most enjoyable talking to you two people and getting your story, because I think it's going to add a lot. And I do thank you very much for your time. And now that we know where we met each other, in the lab of Turner Valley in the basement there, in the Royalite building, and upstairs was old Trammell in his office. And with me was that...

KJ: And I was just outside the door of that.

AK: That kook Fritho Mulder. F-R-I-T-H-O. Mulder. M-U-L-D-E-R.

KJ: Mulder.

AK: Was he born in the... He was born in the Far East, wasn't he?

KJ: Java.

AK: Yeah, Java.

KJ: Yeah, his father was one of the six resident Dutch governors of Java. Then he retired north of the McKay place there.

AK: Right. Oh, yeah. Well this...

KJ: And then he had, there's two other brothers, there was. Three.

AK: Right, I didn't know that. Fritho doesn't live too far from me. He lives over on the other side of Elbow.

BJ: Who's this?

AK: Fritho Mulder.

BJ: Oh, Fritho, oh yeah.

AK: So, I'll sign off now and it's, oh, it's 10 to 10. Okay, over and out Sophie.

End of Interview