

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Labby Laberge

INTERVIEWER: Nadine Mackenzie

DATE: November 1984

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking. I am interviewing Mr. Labby Laberge. Mr. Laberge, thank you for having accepted to participate in our project. Can you tell me first, where is your name coming from, Laberge is very French?

LL: It is very French and our family really came into Saskatchewan from the United States. My grandfather moved from Quebec to Wisconsin when my father was a small boy and they went into the logging business in Wisconsin and from there we came to Saskatchewan. My father had logged out all of the properties that they owned and then had planned to go to California, to stay in the logging business and overnight decided to go to Saskatchewan, get rich quick on wheat. So he moved to Elrose in Saskatchewan, incidentally Elrose was originally called Laberge to start with because he was the first settler there in 1910. Elrose of course, is south and east of Saskatoon, about 125 miles. South and west rather.

NM: So where and when were you born?

LL: I was born in Saskatoon in 1917, May 9th, 1917.

NM: And where were you educated?

LL: I was educated mostly in Saskatoon. I graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1939.

NM: What did you study at the University of Saskatchewan?

LL: Geology.

NM: Why did you choose geology?

LL: I don't really have much of an idea of why I chose geology other than the fact that I knew a couple of fellows that had gone to Saskatchewan before me and had taken geology. I felt it was a field that wasn't overly occupied at the time and there would be some good opportunities coming up in the geological field. And that's really why I decided to take geology.

NM: How many years did you spend at the university?

LL: 5 years, from 1935-1940.

NM: Did you get a B.Sc. or an M.Sc.?

LL: I got my BA in Geology but I took quite a bit of engineering. But I never did get an engineering degree. Didn't stay long enough, it would have taken another year.

#027 NM: Did you have any summer jobs?

LL: Yes, I worked for the Geological Survey of Canada during the summer months, for three different summers. The first summer I was at university I worked in a logging camp but then I got on with the Geological Survey in northern Saskatchewan for the last three

summers that I was going to university.

NM: Do you remember the name of students who were studying also geology at the same time as you were?

LL: There were probably a group of about, in my class, it would be about 12 geologists at the time. A fairly small group. As a matter of fact, the total enrollment at the University of Saskatchewan in those days was only about 1,200.

NM: That's very small, compared to what it is nowadays. So what did you do after graduating from university?

LL: Well, I started with Imperial Oil in May of 1940 and spent my entire career with Imperial.

NM: Who hired you?

LL: Dr. Cam Sproule. I worked for Dr. Sproule in 1937 on the Geological Survey of Canada, he was the one that hired me on the Geological Survey as well as for Imperial Oil.

NM: When they hired you, did you start working in Saskatchewan or did you come to Alberta?

LL: Yes. We did geological surface work in southern Saskatchewan, especially the Soorus??? Valley. We started from Estevan and worked the Soorus Valley in both directions, east and west. And then went all the way across west the Soorus Valley during the summer months. And of course, we worked some of the surrounding areas as well. We did plain table geology, shooting, running in farmers wells. We would track coal seams back from the Soorus Valley by using farmers wells and well logs to map coal seams. So we were able to do surface geology, some subsurface geology that way as well.

NM: Do you remember who was working with you?

LL: Yes, the President of Imperial, Jack Armstrong was one of the members of that crew. Besides Cam Sproule. . .gosh I don't just off the top of my head, recall who else. There was a gravity meter crew operating at the same time out of Estevan and Bickle was the Party Chief of that crew. I, just off the top of my head, don't remember the other members.

#064 NM: Oh, it's all right. How were the conditions of living?

LL: Well, at that time living in Estevan for that summer was really very good. We were able to find board and room at a very reasonable price. We were given \$125 living allowance at that time, which was very good. We were able to make money on our living allowance most of that summer. And we lived in small towns like Bengough and Gravelbourg and smaller towns throughout the southwest part of Saskatchewan and did very well. So working conditions weren't all that bad there.

NM: How long did you keep this first post?

LL: Well, we worked the surface geology all of that summer of 1940 and then in the winter of 1941 we did core drilling. And we worked all through the same area with core drills and worked through the winter with core drills. Of course, that was the first experience that we had with core drilling in southern Saskatchewan. We would drill holes with the core drills, almost 1,000' deep, just about 1,000' and would take cores for the entire length of the hole. We had a lot of trouble with surface sand and gravel in a lot of areas and we would have to run casing before we could take a core. But in some places, like south of Weyburn for example, the shales were right at the surface and you wouldn't need to run

any casing, you could just core it right from the surface. Then after core drilling we moved over to Alberta in 1942 in Brooks and Tilley, continued with our core drilling there. I finally joined the seismic crew in Norman Wells, in January 1943 and we worked all of 1943 in Norman Wells doing seismic work along the river.

NM: Was it for the Canol project?

LL: It was part of the Canol project, that's right. In the summertime we tried working along the riverbank and we built a landing barge so that we could offload the drills and the seismic equipment wherever we could work along the bank, as long as surface conditions were right. One of the things we soon discovered was that we had to be in the permafrost to be able to get any valid seismic reflections. If we weren't in the permafrost we didn't get anything. In other words you couldn't just stay right on the riverbank and drill a well and take seismic recordings because we just didn't get anything. We had to get up on the bank where there was permafrost. So we were drilling up there and seismic recording up in the permafrost.

#109 NM: The Canol project was a very big project.

LL: It was very large. As a seismic crew we weren't very large, we were a pretty small part of the whole operation.

NM: How long did you stay there in Norman Wells?

LL: I was there three different times, all of 1943, the winter of 1945 and the winter of 1946.

NM: Were you with Harold Atchison?

LL: Harold was there part of the time yes. He was a gravity meter man and he and Floyd Medill were there and. . . [speaking to his wife in the background, trying to remember someone's name]

NM: How were the conditions of living in Norman Wells?

LL: That was a little tougher because we were off in the bush most of the time. In the wintertime we were back in the bush and of course, we had D-8 cats that would clear line for our seismic operation and we ran grids for miles. We operated in the area of the Carcajou??? and also below Hoosier Ridge and downstream as far as Mountain River. We covered that whole area in the two winters that we were there. The winter of 1945 we pulled our equipment onto the bank of the Mackenzie and waited for the ice to go out before we could get out of there. It was really a sight to behold to watch the ice go out of the Mackenzie. Very noisy, all night and all day long as the ice was breaking up and really a tremendous sight.

NM: What about the equipment, was everything coming from the States?

LL: Well, we had Phaling??? Drills and that was kind of standard equipment for Canada in those days. Most of the shot hole drills that we had on the prairies were Phaling drills as were the drills that we had in Norman Wells. We had two of them. Very good equipment. We had them mounted on iron sleds that were fabricated at Norman Wells and pull the sleds, they were totally enclosed and we put the mass up on the drills permanently and enclosed them in canvas and had everything closed in so that the drillers were at least able to operate inside.

NM: Was much oil found at Norman Wells?

LL: Well, not outside. . you know the oil patch was discovered there, the oil was discovered there in the 1920's. Of course, as you probably are aware, the field itself is just now being developed as a major field. But in the Norman Wells area, very little oil has been discovered outside of the existign oil field. We didn't discover anything at Hoosier Ridge or anywhere really, downstream on the Mackenzie.

#156 NM: I was told that the U.S. Army sent a battalion of black people, were you there then?

LL: Yes, we were there then. The black people were cutting wood for the steamer that used to operate on the Mackenzie. It was a stern wheeler and operated with steam and burned wood that was just gathered anywehre along the Mackenzie. The blacks that were there were cutting wood and stockpiling it for the steam boat that was there.

NM: I was told that they were frozen all the time and they couldn't get to work?

LL: The funny part of it is, they had leather boots, they didn't have good moccasin boots either you know. They really were. . .

NM: So it was really very cruel to send them there.

LL: Mind you, there were quite a few Americans there that had never seen the north before as well. So it wasn't just rugged for the black people although they, you know, in cutting wood they operated more out of tent camps and that sort of thing, rather than permanent type bunkhouses so they had it pretty rugged.

NM: And after Norman Wells, what did you do?

LL: When I came out of Norman Wells I went back with the seismic crews on the prairies. Actually when we first started, when I came out of Norman Wells I went to Mississippi. [wife in background: he got married first]. Oh yes, got married, that's right. We got married in late 1943 and then the war was on of course, and I had to register at the Wartime Bureau of Technical Personnel prior to going to the United States. After we were married we did that in Ottawa because I had some relatives there, I had a brother and a sister in Ottawa, in eastern Canada and we visited them all and got my paperwork on my way down to Tulsa first and then joined a seismic crew in Vicksburg in Mississippi. In those days the seismic crews were operating in the States in the wintertime, mostly in the southern States and then came to Canada for the summer.

NM: So who hired you for going to Mississippi, was it still Imperial?

LL: Yes, although I worked for Carter Oil Company while I was down there. In May of 1944 it would be, the whole seismic crew came back to Calgary. Malcom Riis was our Party Chief in those days and Jack Armstrong was also on that seismic crew, as well as Harold Stoneman, Frank Spraggins, also a very well known oilman that put the oil sands project together.

NM: So you did not stay too long in Mississippi?

LL: No, we were only there from January to May really. And then we came back to Canada again, and operated all summer long. And then from Calgary we went to Wellington, Kansas and I was there until December and then went back to Norman Wells again, for the winter of 1945.

#207 NM: What did you do in Wellington?

LL: Seismagraph.

NM: And then back to Norman Wells again, and after that?

LL: After that we came out to the prairies again. I think that's where I pick up this letter here, I joined the crew in Calgary as a seismic interpreter. From then I moved into Devon as assistant field superintendent, in production rather than exploration work.

NM: Tell me about Leduc, you were there at the time of the discovery?

LL: Well, we weren't there at the time of the discovery. The discovery was in 1947, we went there in 1948. The oil field was just really humming along in those days, we had 27 drilling rigs running at the time I went there. That's a lot of rigs running. [wife: it was '49 when we went there because we were in Grande Prairie in '48] Anyway the town of Devon was just under construction at the time we were there and I have some pictures of the main intersection that was just a lake. It took a little while to get it all constructed so people could move around properly.

NM: Yes, because now they have nice streets and trees and everything.

LL: Beautiful little town now, but it was pretty raw in those days. Incidentally I worked for Vern Hunter, Vern was the Field Superintendent then, when I first moved to Leduc and of course, he was on the discovery rig that discovered Leduc.

NM: So how long did you stay there?

LL: We were in Devon for 7 years. Because it was 13 years in Edmonton after that, so we were 20 years in the Edmonton area all together at that time, which was a long time for us to have been in one place. We hadn't been located permanently anywhere before we moved to Devon actually.

NM: So you moved to Devon and you were working at Leduc. Can you tell me about your work there?

LL: I had to do a lot of training to learn the production end of the business while I was there and I used to spend a lot of time on the drilling rigs, with Woodrow Wilson, who was the drilling superintendent at the time. He taught me a lot about the drilling end of the business there, while we were there. Of course, there was a tremendous amount of construction going on all the time. We had to build production facilities. The gas plant at Devon was built in those days too, it was built in about 1950 and came onstream in the early 50's. We had a lot of excitement in those days. Of course, Atlantic 3 was a blowout that occurred just before I arrived there really and was in the clean up process. But we had a couple of other blowouts while I was there as well that were pretty exciting to try and get under control. Especially the one that was on fire.

#276 NM: Was anybody hurt?

LL: No, they weren't.

NM: That was lucky.

LL: That's quite right.

NM: How did you put the wells under control then?

LL: Actually we brought in Myron Kinley, who was a very famous firefighter, to get them under control. One of the things we had to do was build a boom that you operated from

the end of a D-8 cat. After that, we built it for that particular well, I think it was Leduc 552 that got out of control and on fire, we built a special boom with a hook on it to rake all of the tangled mass of molten metal really, that the rig had turned into, away from the well site. Then Myron Kinley would put a charge on the end of the boom, of dyanmite and set the charge off and of course, this would put the fire out. From then on he was able to make enough repairs to the well head to be able to put a set of rams on that would bring the well under control.

NM: I remember Stu King telling me how he had to try to pour golf balls into the blowout of Atlantic #3 and they tried also chicken feathers, everything.

LL: Oh yes, they put walnut shells in. Walnut shells in Atlantic # were used quite a bit. They finally wound up using really, gunny sacks in tubing, rolled up with chicken wire, so this would spread out and fill the hole up and it was a tremendous hole that was down there. There were carloads of material that were pumped in there to try to fill it up. A very large cavern. Atlantic 3 was a little different type of blowout than Leduc 552 becuase it was a producing well that got out of control. At least it had a string of casing in it that was still in good shape but it wasn't nearly as difficult to handle as Atlantic 3 was.

NM: How long did it take to control it?

LL: That particular one probably took the best part of a month, a month to six weeks. Which wasn't the six months or so it took Atlantic 3 to. . .

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 1 Side 2

NM: So you stayed in Devon 7 years? And then what happened?

LL: Well, from there, Imperial set up a division that's compared to districts and with the reorganization I then moved into Edmonton, eventually as Divison Production Manager.

NM: So what did your work entail there?

LL: As production manager. Of course, mostly we were involved with exploration and development of really, the oil fields that were discovered and being developed in all of Alberta. In the mid 50's, Leduc was still being developed of course and Redwater was still under development as well. And that whole Fairway area. . they went from sort of Camrose all the way down through to Big Valley was being discovered and developed in those days too, as well as the Joffre field by Red Deer. All of those areas were under development at that time and we were looking after bringing all of those into production as they were being discovered. So it was a very active time as well, all the way through the 60's. There was kind of a lull in the mid 60's and then things got a little more hectic again. In 1968 I moved over to Regina, still as Manager of the Production area in Saskatchewan. At the same time we were closing down the exploration office in Regina at that time and I was looking after that phase of it as well.

NM: How long did it take?

LL: Probably the best part of a year, to close down that oepration.

NM: What were the reasons for closing down the operation?

LL: I think we felt that most of the exploration work we could accomplish had been done in

Saskatchewan. We weren't making any major discoveries over there and it was decided to concentrate technical effort in the deep basin area and Alberta basin. But at the same time our effort was starting to move into the north, in the early 70's. So the exploration effort was being put in the north country as well as concentration on Alberta.

#039 NM: And after Regina where did you go?

LL: We were responsible for the oil fields in the Weyburn, Estevan area, as well as in the Smiley area. We had a pretty fair sized operation at that time and I guess probably it still is. We were producing close to 40,000 barrels a day then in all of Saskatchewan and it was starting to decline to some extent so we were involved in secondary recovery projects as well as in fill drilling and this sort of thing. It was a very large area to operate in and from that point of view, not the easiest in the world either, but had field offices in most of the strategic places that we could operate from.

NM: And how long did you stay in Saskatchewan then?

LL: We were there 8 1/2 years in Saskatchewan. At that time I was very active with the Canadian Petroleum Association and I was Chairman of the Saskatchewan division for almost 3 years, 2 1/2 years really. That in itself was rather unusual because they don't normally retain a Chairman longer than a year.

NM: Yes, generally it is one year and that's all.

LL: But because I was located in Regina and sort of on the spot and we were having very difficult years with the NDP government at that time, taking the oil industry over really.

NM: Did you give a lot of talks?

LL: Yes, we did a lot of that. I used to travel around with the Canadian Petroleum Association and talk to service clubs in smaller towns, sort of all over the province really.

NM: What about publications, did you have any publications?

LL: No, never did. The odd technical paper of course, perhaps exploration converts or something like that but I did not publish anything.

NM: And after Saskatchewan, where did you go?

LL: I came back to Calgary, from Regina to Calgary. When I arrived in Calgary I was responsible for our environmental group within the engineering department, or the production department I should say. Was responsible for that for the remaining 4 or 5 years that I was in the Calgary office.

NM: What was the environmental group doing?

LL: We had two main functions, one was making sure that our operating areas were well aware of environmental regulations and did in fact, not only be conscious of the regulations but make sure that they performed under the regulations. The other major function that we had in Calgary was to put together some oil spill recovery teams, strategically located all over the province. And we worked closely with an environmental committee to establish these oil spills recovery groups.

#086 NM: Were there many problems with the environment at the time?

LL: Not really. I guess probably the main problem was the development of equipment to contain oil spills. When we first started these projects there was very little technology and

very little capability so this was one of the functions of the industry committee was to develop the techniques and the equipment to be able to handle these things.

NM: Which year was this when you came back to Calgary?

LL: 1977.

NM: There was a purge at Imperial in 1971.

LL: Yes. You called it a purge. It was a consolidation really. Some people probably would look at it as a purge. They did reduce the staff really. My impression of it was that it really happened earlier than that, we had a sort of reorganization in 1968 and I guess probably there was a consolidation as well, back into the Calgary office. It seems to me, I've forgotten the dates but shortly after that I think the Edmonton division as such, was phased out and the main organization was back into the Calgary office. This is when it was starting. As a matter of fact I think it's still going on today.

NM: And for how long did you keep this post with the environmental group?

LL: Right until I retired.

NM: And you retired?

LL: I retired in 1980.

NM: Did you go into consulting after retiring?

LL: No. I did one small job for the company after I retired and that was to present a paper in Estevan to the . . . it was a meeting of all the Commonwealth countries and it was something. . .

NM: Is it Commonwealth Studies?

LL: I have a file.

#120 NM: What was your presentation on Mr. Laberge?

LL: My presentation was on the oil industry in Saskatchewan. This was attended by mostly Mines Ministers from all of the Commonwealth countries. What we tried to do was just give an overview of the way the government of Saskatchewan was handling the oil business at that point in time and also an industry view of how we perceived the provincial government were trying to, what we felt was take over control of the oil industry at the time. They had passed Bill 42, which was a piece of provincial legislation that really, in effect, put very onerous restrictions on the industry and took more than we felt was a fair share of the royalties. They drastically increased the royalty rate. As a matter of fact, some of those marginal fields in Saskatchewan could no longer afford to operate under Bill 42. This is really what the essence of the paper was all about was to give the other Commonwealth countries a feel of what was happening.

NM: And you were representing Imperial for that?

LL: Actually I was representing the industry, not Imperial.

NM: So not only one oil company, it was the whole industry of Alberta?

LL: It was industry yes, that I was representing. As a matter of fact the papers that were presented at that particular session of the Commonwealth Study Conference were really on various phases of the industry in Saskatchewan. I of course, was not the only one that had a paper to present, there were several of them. As a matter of fact, that particular part of the conference I think went on for something like 2 1/2 days.

#152 NM: So it was closed to the public too, was it not? Some parts of this conference were because they could not go and report and listen?

LL: I don't think there was anything particularly closed about this particular study group because it was really general as far as the oil industry was concerned in Saskatchewan. There were MLA's, who was the energy critic, was on the agenda. Gaylen Longmire???, the mayor of Estevan was also on the agenda and he sort of covered the affects of the industry on a town like Estevan. David New was the a.m. editor of the local newspaper and I think he was there. So it wasn't, this particular session was not a closed session. Although I must admit that there weren't very many people that knew about it other than people that were on the ???.

NM: Did you give any other papers or was it the only one, after you retired?

LL: This was the only one.

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

LL: Of course, training of people changed rather dramatically I think, during my career, because when we first started in the oil patch it was on site training and that's really all that was available. For example, my experience at Norman Wells, we just had to work things out as we went along. There was no previous experience, for example, doing seismic work at Norman Wells.

NM: It was really pioneer work.

LL: It was pioneer work and it was strictly work things out as you had a problem. You just solved them on the spot and took it from there. Very little opportunities to stop and train anybody. I don't guess we really became very conscious of training programs, in my recollection, until probably the early 60's. Perhaps you might say, in the 50's, in training we always didn't use summer students for vacation relief of our regular staff and this might be considered a training program but it was also on site training and the kids that came on the summer program had to learn as quickly as the guy who just left the job. But formalized training programs, really in my recollection, didn't seem to arrive until somewhere in the mid 60's, early 70's.

NM: I was thinking of people like George DeMille, who was self taught. And nowadays that could not happen.

LL: He was self educated and self taught. That's quite right and it would be very difficult for an individual to come on like George deMille did.

#206 NM: Could you talk about the contribution of Alberta to the development of the Canadian oil industry?

LL: I think in the early days of the industry, the thing that impressed me most, Premier Manning, at that time was I think, a very progressive businessman and he did not put in excessive controls. He worked very closely with our industry and really, as a government, I felt under Manning they did everything they could to assist the industry to get on with the job of making discoveries and developing them with minimum government control. I think for that reason the industry probably grew faster in Alberta than it would have under a more restrictive type of government than we had. As a matter of fact, I feel I can compare Saskatchewan iwth Alberta, having moved there with the NDP government and

saw how restrictive they were and how they did in effect, set the industry back by excessive royalty takes and in effect, sort of strangling the industry. And that didn't happen in the early days of Alberta. It wasn't until later that we begin to see those sort of things happen. But under Premier Manning's administration, I think that government was extremely helpful to the industry to make sure that it grew as quickly as it could without restrictive government legislation.

NM: Could you comment on the ups and downs of the oil business, it goes into cycles?

LL: It's very cyclic and it sort of seems as though it's kind of a numbers game. You have to drill a certain number of wells to make any discovery. In those days, even now I guess, one discovery in ten wells drilled seems to be a norm. That law of averages seems to take place so when you do make a rash of discoveries, like we found Leduc and Redwater and Golden Spike sort of in rapid succession, then there was a dry spell again. I think this is the reason why you run into those things, the law of averages say that we're going to average out one way or another.

#252 NM: It's almost like a yoyo, up and down.

LL: Yes, that's right. Of course, when you do make some major discoveries like that I think you become preoccupied with development. I know in the case of Imperial Oil, we were strapped for money in those days because we didn't have enough to develop it as quickly as we would have liked to have been able to. Well, it resulted in our sale of some properties in Turner Valley for example, to acquire that money. So those were difficult years in that sense. And it probably is a good thing that it is cyclic. When you think back of those days, when we had really more than we could handle and we'd have been spread pretty thin if we'd been making any more discoveries than we did in the late 40's and early 50's.

NM: You were in Saskatchewan at the time of the OPEC crisis, in '73?

LL: Yes, I was.

NM: What was the reaction there?

LL: Well, we didn't . . . as far as affecting the oil industry in Saskatchewan, it didn't really have an awful lot of affect because we were pretty restricted. We had a certain volume of production that we could get out of the province. Because our wells were sort of on a marginal allowance there wasn't a great deal of extra oil that could be produced in Saskatchewan in any event. There weren't large volumes of oil like there were in Alberta. And we had. . . our allowables were fairly consistent and set. There were a few ??? in some places but not a lot. So the crisis wasn't as obvious I think, there, as it might have been in other places.

#292 NM: What do you think of the National Energy Program?

LL: I don't think very much of it personally. My view of it is it's in fact, been a very large contributor to the recession that we're in right now. It certainly was not the only cause of the recession because there certainly is a very large global effect. But my opinion is that the National Energy Policy has been very damaging to Alberta and the west as a whole. It certainly didn't help things in Saskatchewan very much.

NM: And many small companies just disappeared, they couldn't survive with that.

LL: Well, that's quite right. I think it was a politically motivated policy that was poorly conceived and I think it's very well to have some national objectives for the oil industry but I think the national objectives should be worked out with the industry and not just by politicians.

NM: So what do you think of nationalized oil companies, for example like Petro Canada?

LL: I take serious objection to companies like Petro Canada because I don't think government should be in business in the first place. I include all of the Crown corporations that we have in that statement. I don't care particularly for Air Canada, for example. I think we need a national broadcasting company but it doesn't have to, it shouldn't be trying to compete with private industry in that field either. So my objection to Petro Canada is the large volume of my tax dollars that they're using to buy it with. And those large tax dollars went right out of this country.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 2 Side 1

NM: How do you foresee the future of the oil industry?

LL: I think if the oil industry is left alone to its own devices that it's got a good future. If we don't see restrictive policies like the National Oil Policy I think we can be a very healthy industry. As a matter of fact, I'm beginning to see that the Mulroney government is starting to take some of the fetters of the industry. They perceive it as an opportunity to bring our economy back into some focus where the oil industry can make some great contributions to get Canada back on track again in an economic and industrial sense. We are a very large employer and I think the National Energy Policy had a great deal to do with the recession that we've had in this province. Because there were some very major projects that were sort of in the mill when that policy was put in place that died. Mind you the world economic conditions have as much to do with that as anything, high interest rates and those sort of things made for a very poor time for business opportunities. But I can see those times coming back and there are some very large projects that can go ahead under the proper economic incentives.

NM: So you are positive, you think things are going to change for the best?

LL: Right.

NM: Let us go back to your career now. Who were the most influential persons in your career?

LL: Well, I guess probably the ones that I remember the most are the ones that are known. I think people like Tip Maroney had a great influence on me, he was a very fine gentleman and a pretty capable oil person as well. Of course, there are a lot of unforgettable characters too in the industry. Vern Hunter I think, is one of those. Woodrow Wilson is a person that I will always very fondly remember. He was a very down to earth individual and certainly knew the drilling business. He was the kind of a guy you always remember as being a very fine person and I think had a lot of influence on me and my career. George Bandentine??? was another one I can recall, a very, very fine gentleman that was well respected and liked throughout the industry. I think there are a lot of others that I fondly

remember as being good friends and made my life in the oil industry most enjoyable. People like Walter Dingle and Charlie Visser, very memorable type of an individual. These are characters in the industry that we have a lot of fond memories for, are very well known and will always be highly regarded.

#046 NM: What were the most exciting experiences in your career?

LL: I guess probably the most memorable ones were my Norman Wells experience for example. It was always a pretty exciting time because it was certainly a new and difficult operating area and it was a lot of fun, looking back on it. Of course, I guess the biggest thrill are the discoveries that we made in western Canada. When our first company first started oil exploration I guess I was the kind of guy that didn't think it would ever really happen. But boy I saw it happening every day and it was a real thrill to see it, to be with it and to grow up with it.

NM: You were a witness to that?

LL: Yes, and to be part of it, it really was very exciting, the whole experience.

NM: And what do you consider your achievements?

LL: That's difficult to say. I always prefer to leave that to somebody else. I think I had a little bit to do, in the seismic sense, in the discovery of the industry or at least the beginning of Leduc and Redwater. I think probably operating or starting off in those pioneer days you feel like you contributed quite a bit but exactly, to put a finger on it is pretty difficult to do that.

NM: What about your professional affiliation, you are still very active with the CPA?

LL: I'm an honorary life member but that's an honorary title and I'm not active in any of those things. I guess probably what I'm doing now is Maddy and I look after the Opinion Society in Calgary and that's a full time job. So as far as any real contact with the oil industry anymore, since I've retired I've had very little except for all our close friends are still in the oil patch. But most of them are retired now too, so I'm kind of losing touch a little bit I think.

NM: Looking back at your career, what do you think of it?

LL: I'm very happy with it. We had some very good times and some very thrilling times in our days in the oil patch. I fondly remember the early days of Leduc and growing up with the town of Devon for example. We built golf courses and curling rinks and swimming pools and all of those things. They were very, very busy times but boy, they were sure a lot of fun too. We had great times.

NM: Before I ask you the last question, is there anything I've forgotten to ask you or anything you would like to talk about?

LL: I don't think so, in particular, I think we've sort of covered the whole gamut.

#087 NM: The last question is, on the whole, what do you think of the oil business here in Calgary and in Canada, what is your opinion?

LL: I'm not sure in what sense you're asking that question. I think as far as the oil business in Calgary is concerned it's been a very dynamic contribution to the city of Calgary and to the province of Alberta. I think it always will be, it's here to stay and I don't think the oil

industry is going to go away and I think it's made a very major contribution to Canada as a whole and will continue to do so for a good number of years. We are not energy self sufficient as yet and if we continue to strive to be self sufficient in energy, we've got very, very many years of active exploration and development to do in the energy field and I think it will continue.

NM: Mr. Laberge, I have really enjoyed interviewing you, thank you very much.

LL: Thank you.