

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Bill Lockhart

INTERVIEWER: W. J. Wood

DATE: November 1984

JW: My name is Jim Wood and I'm in High River, Alberta interviewing Mr. Bill Lockhart. This is Tape 1, Side 1. Okay, Bill, I wonder if we could start this morning and find a little bit about yourself. Where and when were you born?

BL: I was born in Northern Ireland, near the city of Lundeary??? and I was born on the 24th day of October, 1900, which makes me 84 now. My parents were small farmers, most of the people there are anyhow, compared to our farms here. When I was 20 years old I came to Canada. I didn't have any relatives or friends here so I stopped at Ottawa and I got work from there. I lived in that district till August of 1922.

JW: When did you come over?

BL: We landed in Quebec on the 15th of May, 1921.

JW: How come you picked Canada, what was there?

BL: Our relatives were pretty much on immigrating but they'd all gone to either Australia or New Zealand but that's what I thought, I was just like the rest of them but it just came at that time that they weren't taking anybody in those countries. They had stopped letting anyone come in for awhile. So the next thing was Canada. We didn't know very much about Canada at the time. Sure we saw it on that map but when you don't have friends or relatives in that country, you don't know so much about it. However, like I say, that was the 15th of May and I went to work pretty soon and it was on the harvest excursion in 1922 that I came west. The tickets were reasonable, \$10 to Winnipeg and half a cent a mile from there as far west as Calgary if you wished to come that far. So I came just as far as the ticket would take me.

JW: Do you remember anything about that trip?

BL: Yes. It was the colonization coaches pretty much. You slept on the benches and if you wanted any food you brought the food with you because some of the people, especially those from the Maritime provinces, on these trips, there wasn't only one trainload, there were several trainloads came. And about a week or two before we came a bunch from Nova Scotia and they had been pretty rough so when we stopped in these small towns the windows and everything in the stores would be boarded up. But they'd have one little place like the post office, one little hole where they'd sell you anything that you wanted. But that was just because the way some of the men had been so rambunctious before that. I don't remember the days but I do remember that was a pretty bleak looking country. We came out on the CN and we came up through by North Bay and that and all you can see is rocks and timber. When I was in Ottawa it was all deery??? country, we didn't see a ??? all along through there, til we came to Winnipeg and I suppose what impressed us there, we stopped in Winnipeg and through the town was the wide streets. We of course,

only had a stop over, we apparently had time to go uptown part way anyhow. And then we came west, but I don't remember now how many days it was, probably two days and two nights but I'm not too certain.

#042 JW: Did you have any expectations as to what you were going to do once you got here?

BL: Oh no. You know, it's great to be young because you don't think of it. And the west was not so good a place to come at that time because it had a series of dry years in the late teens, and 1920 and '21. Even '22 there was a small crop through Saskatchewan. It didn't look what we would call a crop today but they were happy because it was better than had been for those few years. The thrashing, like all those harvest people, we came out for the harvest so it was thrashing mostly in the fall, that was the time of ??? thrashing. And I remember that wages were \$6 a day around Swift Current. But I came to Calgary, I went out to work for the CPR and I was happy about that but I had a partner with me and after a little, he heard about high money in Saskatchewan and he said, let's go, so we went. I remember the first fellow I saw, we got in there late in the afternoon and a man was looking for workers and I said, what about sleeping accommodations, oh he said, if you've got a blanket, there's a straw stack there.

JW: That was in Saskatchewan?

BL: In Saskatchewan, it was out of Swift Current. Then my partner he come along and he said, he'd arranged for us to go with another outfit, we don't have to sleep in a straw stack. But anyhow it was all right, there were a bunch of young people all together. But then that fall I came west to Calgary and I stayed in Calgary that winter, there wasn't much work. Calgary wasn't very big, it was pretty much like it is now. There would be more jobs now than there was then, there just wasn't hardly any jobs.

JW: So what did you do Bill, when you got to Calgary and there was no work?

BL: When I first came to Calgary I went out to the CPR to work because that was... On their farms, they had farms. I went out to Tilley, they were trying to bring the settlers in and it was for irrigation so they would take a little farm and put a small house on it, break up 40 acres and they would have that ditched and growing seed to alfalfa and some wheat. Then that was improved farms and it brought the settlers in for that. Actually it didn't work too well, after a few years very few of them could make it go. But then they tried later with another bunch. It's still flourishing. It was their way of trying to get people on that land, there was a lot of antelope around and that's all that land was good for, outside irrigation. But when you get irrigation you can grow anything. And I do remember there was an experimental farm and I think maybe it was the CPR was running it and I believe it was at Brooks. Now there, of course, there was one that the government run, but I don't think the government was running that one but they were showing that you could grow anything there. And pretty much like it is today. Like I say, I didn't stay very long around Tilley. Tilley is a small place just immediately south of Brooks. The next year I worked on farms out of High River. That's the first ??? of High River, the spring of '23, the first ????. I should say that when I landed in Calgary it was I think maybe it was the 17th of August, that's what it seems like. But that fall I went to the States, the fall of '23 and

that's where I started working in lumber work. I worked out of Spokane for that winter.

#088 JW: Did you just go down there on a whim or did you have a job?

BL: I went to Vancouver and it was so wet. Going from the prairies over there, it didn't seem like a place you wanted to live and said, oh well, if you go south over the border it gets better. I went to Seattle and it was just as bad as Vancouver. Then I went to Portland, it was still raining just the same, mud. I remember there was a new town there, they were just building it. But in those days there were not rucks or anything, the hauling was done with horses and dump trucks and being holiday, it was getting close to around Christmas, and there was no one working. But the streets were just mud but they were paving the streets as they went, you stepped off the pavement and it was really mud. Somehow that didn't appeal to me and I went back to Spokane and the drier climate and that's where I went to work in the lumber woods. I pretty much done that for a year or two, that fall I came back up to Alberta and then I stayed that winter in Alberta, near High River and hauled grain for a farmer. Then the fall of '25 I went back to the States, down to Spokane and worked. I worked in the woods but it was a nice winter. Along about February it was too, the ground was too soft, the snow was melting, so they laid us off and I went over and I worked on construction. They were putting through a tunnel, it was between Barium and Scenic, which is bottom of the Cascades I think, west towards Seattle. And that tunnel incidentally was the longest tunnel in North America. There's one now they're talking about the CPR that will be long but this you see is what, 55-56 years ago. More than that, oh yes, close to 60 years. It was 8 miles long. It cut out the . . . prior to that it was so steep. It was for the railroad and it cut out quite a pull up there because the . . .?? interest in it, to make a tunnel like that, they make a small tunnel just that you can work in, then your tracks and you have little railroad cars. What they did, they started at both ends, west and east and halfway through they ran a shaft down and worked both ways from there. What maybe it wasn't a surprise to the engineers but it was to the men working there, when they met they weren't quite head on but very close. That little tunnel was only about halfway. I actually wasn't there at the finish but this is what someone that worked there told me about it. But when you get a tunnel made that way then you have a way to take your material out of there so you can go at it from all sides. And then of course, it's rock all the way, there isn't any soil or anything, you're going through solid rock. But you can readily see that if you can work on either side or above you or anything else and widen out because you have the track to take your stuff out. I have never been back there but it's a long time, the rail's been there for a long time now.

#133 JW: Were you pick and shovel work?

BL: Yes. They didn't have the equipment then like they have today, it was different. I came back to Calgary that spring and I got to work to Turner Valley. That ended my roving days. I worked for Imperial then off and on for 15 years.

JW: What was your motivation for going off to Turner Valley, you hadn't really been exposed to the oil fields before had you?

BL: That is correct but neither was anyone else. There was a little work done at Shelby but

that was another country as far as we were concerned. We had never taken it seriously. So that, I met a fellow there that I knew and we talked about it and he said, let's go out and see what's doing out there. We drove out, the road at that time, there wasn't very much of a road but as I tell in that story there, it was just made for wagons. That's what they were hauling the oil with and it was one wagon wide and there was the cut outs so that when the teams would meet whoever got there first pulled into this run around and let the other pass. I went to a little north of where the town was, only a couple of buildings. They were doing one or two buildings were being put up there. Charlie Knowles was building what was later to be a restaurant and rooming house. I forget what the other one was but I went a little north of there to the Dalhousie camp, went up there and there was this pile of timbers built up, new timbers, unloaded. Went to the cook house and asked the cook, where's the boss. He said, that's him way down the field, so I went down and I spoke to him and I said, are you needing any men. He said, I don't know, what makes you think we need men, well I said, you've got a pile of timbers up there it looks like you're going to do something. He was a Scotchman by birth but he was from Ontario really, . .

JW: Who was this?

BL: Angus Sutherland. And he'd worked for Imperial for many years. Actually he was working for them up in Fort Norman when they first discovered that field, or Norman Wells rather. But he said, what do you do with timbers, I said, I never did anything but I worked in the woods and I know how to handle logs. He said, can you climb. . and I thought he meant the high rigger like they have on the west coast and I said, no, I wasn't a high rigger, I don't know whether I can climb or not because I didn't have to do it. He said, I think maybe you could. So another fellow had drifted up the same time as my friend and I had went. My friend was actually looking to fire boilers because he had a 50 horse ticket. This other fellow he was standing there, Angus Sutherland turned to the fellow and said, can you climb, oh yes he said, I can. He never said another word to him. Later he said to me, I know darn well that fellow couldn't climb. But anyway he said, look we're going to build a rig down south here and we need someone for a tool dresser and you look to me like you'd just fill the need, where are you staying. I said, High River, he said, come back out Sunday and go to work. I went on there, we had to build some bunkhouses. We built the cookhouse and then we built two separate bunkhouses because they worked 12 hour shifts in those days and the shift would run from 12 noon till midnight and the other one from midnight to noon. So naturally they had to have different sleeping accommodations. I worked there, we built the rig after that and I think in my book I tell about how that was. Another fellow came there, we were both just helping and this rig builder, we had worked with another carpenter when we were building these houses but then the rig builder came. And he had been laying all of this thing out, he knew just the cuts to put on the braces and everything and he'd done a lot of that with a cross cut saw before he ever started putting the derrick up. And these derricks at that time, they had been generally 84', the old cable tool one, but this one was higher, they were starting to build them higher, this one was laid out for 112'. It was a 24' base. The base of course, it was easy to build the base and the legs, I think you started them . . corners and set in cement and they were standing up, oh it would be 6' above the floor,

they weren't elevated like the derricks are today because you dug a basement, you dug a cellar as they called it. It was probably 10' square, enough to have room in but it would be 6, 7, 8' deep. That was to care the Christmas tree, if you got a producing well you put on this what they called the Christmas tree, but it was the pipes and valves and things. Nowadays of course, they have everything up above so you don't do that. But these derrick legs were made out of 2 x 12 lumber and they were like three planks, a V shaped, three planks, six planks all together, three and three. But naturally you had to splice them so they wouldn't be all the same height. And that was on each other. When we got up then, generally if there was four men in the building, one would be on each corner and they wouldn't have to walk across but when there was only the two of us up there, there was one man to send them up, they must have had. . yes, with the two of us you had to walk across there from one corner to the other because on one corner you were using 4 1/2" spikes for to nail the derrick legs together, these planks that they were splicing. But on one side you used your right hand, that was easy to anybody but the left hand on the other side. You'd take that spike like that, we didn't use hammers, we used derrick axes.

#231 JW: What is a derrick ax?

BL: A derrick ax is an ordinary little ax but it's not like an ordinary ax. You've got the one face and the head, even the blade is small and narrow and the head is corrugated so that it doesn't slip. And the knife handle, there's more weight to it you see, it drives better. So you take that and you stick it like that with one bang. And then you drive it in. Well, this man, Whiteman that was the boss on the job, he had built lots of them, he was good at it. He just went in and one drive and you had that nail in. I could do it with two drives but even that I tell you. . . I should describe him so you get a little idea. He was quite a rough customer, actually he was a good hearted fellow. I can do it better if I stand up. These pilgrims books, he looked like a lumberjack really, he had snide??? pants, wool pants, the mackinaw jacket, the black hat set back on his head and this derrick ax and he was going, with the derrick ax in his left hand, going. Actually to work with him you really had to be on the ball to work with him because he was really quite a worker. He never had much education I don't think, or else too much liquor had put him where he was. He wouldn't drink when he was working but when job was done he'd generally go and have two or three days of it. But he could look at the derrick and he had these cuts all, the angle that you'd put on, where you cut your timbers your derrick notches come in a little all the time. And at that height he knew how to figure it so that it would come just where he wanted. And if I could jump ahead for a little, later on one of the drillers said to him one time, when you're building these why don't you make them a little wider at the top because it gives, on the top where your crown blocks, that is when you run the hoist you see, with the rotary anyway, well, you had it too with the cable tool for your casing. But he said, when you're up working on those blocks and that, it would give us more room. He says, how much room do you want, the fellow told him. Charlie did a few strokes with the pencil and said, okay, next one will be that. He was good that way. But anyhow, we got up on this after the first legs, somebody had to climb. He said, any of you fellows climb, the other chap said no, he didn't want to climb. He turned to me and said, can you

climb, I said, let's find out. So that's how we started on it. And it was you know, the first 24' doesn't look much on the ground but you get up a ways on a 12" plank, that does seem quite a ways to walk across. But after we got up a few each, the braces across were 6' apart, like the one above, this one was up and the next one would be 6' up above and the next one. And the braces, you put the braces from the corner on top to the other corner below cross ways. And then when you had two up, when you finished, there was an extra brace went across every two naps or girths. I don't recall, it took quite a little while to get it up you see, not much help and then . . .

#293 JW: How long would it take do you think, do you remember?

BL: I don't remember just right now how long it took us but not that long for those days. Today you would want things done quicker but you'd have better. . . they were pulling the timbers up with a team and every time they pulled up you'd have to turn and come back and then put another one up. But I suppose the put them up as fast as we could nail them anyhow. Then when that was done and we were ready to start, I went on dressing tools for this fellow. That was May you see. Well, by September. . . dressing tools, I should tell is with the cable tools, at that time you started with a 24" bit, that was one that would make a 24" hole. I'm wrong here, it had to be a little bigger than that because you had to run. . . yes, that is correct, you run 20" casing in it. Your hole is always a little larger than your casing. We didn't have a steam hammer. We had to hammer those bits out by hand. The place where you dressed your bits, the ??? you had was also in where the boilers were. And that gas were forcing the boilers and everything. So there wasn't probably enough air going in, there was always a strong smell of fumes there. You'd be standing beside that bit and you sledging it out, the fellow that was the driller, he was a big man too. Of course, they were mostly big men in the oil field at that time. I know that we had high top boots, boots that come up to your knees. Just the same they got so hot, I kept a pail of water close so when it got too hot I'd stick my foot right in this pail of water. That's the way most people did it. We could sledge, he and I could sledge that bit out. It wears off you know, on the rock, and you have to keep it out or change bits. It would depend on the formation, how often you had to change them. I do recall that when we got down. . . I'm getting ahead of myself. I should tell you that, you go a distance with that, you set surface casing when you get down into the rock, maybe 100', maybe 200, but I don't think many went that. But they you got smaller, you had 20" casing, you would run a bit that would just go down the 20" you see. And that one, I think we run the 20 to 1,500'.

JW: Bill, I'm going to change the tape here.

Tape 1 Side 2

JW: Okay.

BL: That was the problem with cable tools. If the hole would start caving and they couldn't stop it from it, they hit softer spots, they had to run casing to do that and sometimes they carried their casing. By that I mean the hole they run the casing down but they wanted to run that string of casing further so they would run a bit. . . I'm going back a lot of years.

Yes, you would drill a ways through it then you would run a reamer on it, you see, inside your. . you had to ream that hole out so the casing would go down. You'd have to have th So it was made with two things on the end, this reamer business with springs on it and I remember we would just run a stick or something in between. at bit that would go down inside the casing and then spread out. And when you'd get down and bump it would spread out and then it would ream this hole down so the casing would go down and you'd follow your casing down, you'd drill a ways and ream it and then put your casing. And you could carry it quite a ways generally. But when you got, we got down 1,500 on that and then we run bits so we could run the next size of 12 1/2" casing. And when that. . that went down maybe 2,200-2,500', roughly on that well. You wouldn't necessarily do that on every well. But I do recall that we were , it was pretty hard drilling, there with the 12 1/2" bits and I recall dressing five bits, every shift. We were working 12 hour shifts though. And that way a bit didn't have time to cool off before they were changing and getting another one. So you had to have extra bits to do it. But you didn't have that always, that was just an exceptionally hard streak that we had that for a few days. When it came September. . .

- #026 JW: Let's hang on a second here Bill. Just backtracking a little bit, on this derrick ax, what was the ax part used for? You had a hammer on the one end and an ax on the other, what was that for?
- BL: I've never seen it used for anything. Though it would be a nice handy little ax and makes you think of the Indian ax that you read about. But as far as trimming anything, we didn't use it for anything, it was there just for weight I guess. I don't doubt that you could buy then today though you don't generally see them in the average store, not in the farm places anyway, they wouldn't need them. But I would think in these oil well equipment places they would have them. They were much better than a hammer for driving nails.
- JW: Because of that extra weight.
- BL: Oh yes. And that corrugated head on it and everything. With anything, even if it's just a chisel or anything you do much better if your equipment is heavy. Even a screwdriver, anything at all if you've got more weight to it you do better.
- JW: Okay, well, that makes sense. You went to work at the outset for Dalhousie Oil. I guess that was a subsidiary of Imperial at that time.
- BL: Yes, Dalhousie was formed in 1925. It had originally been Alberta Southern or Southern Alberta. I think it was Alberta Southern. And that was just two men, Joe Pugh and Bill Livingstone. Pugh was a real old-timer. And a man that had worked for them for years was Sandy McNab, a Scottish fellow. Sandy was well known in the valley and when Dalhousie took over he just kept on working for. . and worked for Dalhousie as long as he lived. Dalhousie of course, the work was being done by Imperial men, as was Royalite. Imperial had formed Royalite in 1921 and that was taken over from the company started by Dingman, who was one of those who drilled that first well in Turner Valley. But Dalhousie was a company for quite a few years but always under Imperial, yes. It was just a subsidiary.
- JW: Maybe you could talk a little bit more about . . .well, did Dalhousie have a camp?

BL: Oh yes. That's where I speak about first going to the cookhouse. They had not a large camp but they had maybe about 17. . there wouldn't be that many, there were maybe 8 or 10 men there at the time. Yes, they only had a couple of cable tool wells working first and they don't take many men. One or two of them were married but there weren't too many working there that were married and had their own houses at that time.

#064 JW: Where was the camp?

BL: It was a little better than half a mile north of present Turner Valley. It was just a little north of where the #4 well was. I do recall that I think we built a house or two there but there weren't very many bunkhouses. That was sort of just a small camp where everybody knew each other pretty well. It was Royalite camps, when the drilling got going better and there were a lot more crews, the bigger camps were the Royalite camps. They had one right there as you enter Turner Valley. At one time when things were going strong, say in 1928, or '29, they kept there would be two cooks, there might have been two cooks in the day time and one at night, besides their helpers. But they did sometimes have as many as 175 people at a meal. And their bunkhouses, they were really good to their employees because we were well treated. I don't know if we appreciated it, sometimes younger fellows don't you know. But they had a man to . . the first camps we had a large bunkhouse with maybe 6 or 8 beds but it was all single beds. But then they built the next ones and they had separate rooms. And they had a man there to change the bedding once a week, took care of the beds always. For those of us who would drive our own car, they built a garage and I think maybe we paid \$2 a month for the rent. That was our stall, nobody else ever got in there, that was ours as long as we paid it. So really Imperial treated us very, very well. Like I already said, I'm not sure we appreciated just how good they were.

JW: What were the wages at that time, you mentioned a parking stall was \$2, what were you getting paid?

BL: \$14. I believe the drillers maybe had been working for \$13, the cable tool drillers I'm not sure but the rotor fellows came in, they had to bring them in from the States. So they set the wages at \$14 a day for driller. Well then, cathead men and derrick men got \$6.75 and this. . I jump ahead now, this was for 8 hour days. To begin with the cable tool wages, when they worked 12 hours, the cable tool wages were \$300 a month for the driller and \$150 a month for the helpers, which were called tool dresser. But they didn't work Sundays. It was after the thing got really booming that they got on to a 7 day week. And I think probably for a rotary drill you pretty well had to work continually. Because you were continually building the walls up with mud that you were circulating. I don't want to get away on something if you have other questions there about these cookhouses.

#102 JW: Yes, a little bit.

BL: There was other cookhouses . .

JW: What kinds of things then, did you do for recreation, after a 12 hour day?

BL: Well, when you were out on a camp, on a cable tool which you were away from everybody else, you didn't do anything. But when you're working 12 hours in the

summertime, it was hot in those little places and you couldn't sleep very good, you didn't have much recreation really, no. But it wasn't too bad in Turner Valley because we weren't too far from the village, but there wasn't much doing there either.

JW: Maybe you could just describe the village a little bit as it was at that time.

BL: They were mostly what the call shacks and I suppose the name maybe would convey what they were. Nobody expected the thing to last and you didn't have to worry about heat because there was lots of gas, there was gas everywhere and it was raw gas. To begin with there weren't many buildings but after I would say, after the middle of '28, when the work started up, there was more rigs starting up and more people moving in and then they started really building a lot of these shacks. They ended up then, but 1930, there were a lot of. . there always had been, from when I went there, there had been a little place called Dogtown, which was near the plant, people who worked in this plant. This plant was built, from 1921 on they were adding to it. That's when Royalite was formed. And the people working there lived on this place down by the river that they called Dogtown. I don't know too much about that because I didn't but that was about the only place there at that time. But later you had Whiskey Row and Poverty Flats and ??? Flats, Cufflink Flats, I'm probably leaving some but that was it roughly. That was all little places that had been built up by these people. They didn't buy the land, if they were on the farmers land they paid him probably \$2 a month for it and put their own little shacks there. And sometimes these little shacks were owned by other people who had built them. I think Whiskey Row, that was Royalite property or Dalhousie property. Dalhousie owned quite a bit of land there. In those early days I think they bought the land. If a company wanted 20 acres to drill on, they bought it, they didn't lease it as they did in later years. Whiskey Row, you wonder where the name come from. Well, it was in the north end of the valley and it was looking down towards the valley. There were people there, and the ladies got together like they do anywhere and this day they thought they should have a name for their little place because by that time there were 8 or 10 houses anyway along there, maybe more than that. So they finally decided that Valleyview would be a very fitting because that's what. . . anyway, they were at Curry's when they did this, Mrs. Curry's and they put it to Scotty what he thought about it. He said, Valleyview, Valleyview hell, Whiskey Row. So Whiskey Row stayed with it. This Scotty was quite a known character. He was a small fellow. But he was a trainer for the hockey when they got to where they were running a hockey team, he always ??? the hockey team. He was Scots by birth and I remember once in awhile, you asked what we'd do for recreation, well occasionally when the Dalhousie camp was about the only one there, that we were in, the cook was a rather nice fellow, they'd put on a dinner and invite the married people and their wives. There wouldn't be more than maybe 17, 18 people there. But they would have a little beer, nobody was going to get drunk on it, but Scotty would be the bartender. And he would hand out a few and then say, well, it's time the bartender had a drink and he'd have one, he'd hand out a few more rounds and he'd say, I think the bartender ought to get one. But he was a happy sort of fellow anyhow, it never showed too much on him. But then there wasn't enough liquor there that anybody was going to get mean about it or anything. At that same time you see, Spiller??? was drilling close to there. Spiller Oils. Though I knew their people to

meet them but when I speak about the valley and the camps and that I relate to the Royalite or to the Dalhousie because they were the ones we knew best.

#166 JW: You talked about Scotty McNab, who were some of the others then that were working at Dalhousie when you went on?

BL: One of the cable tool drillers was Al Patrick. He was a son of the Patrick that surveyed the west. One of the real old timers. Another one was Andy Rutherford and Andy was quite a character. He had come from down east, Booth???County because he used to tell lots of stories about Booth County. A rather nice, good fellow. I already told you Sandy was quite a company man, quite conscientious, very conscientious. Actually when he died later, he just went out, he kept some saddle horses, more for the benefit of some of the people that came to visit him. They had sort of a riding club and he was the one that kept it going. This mare had a colt but the couldn't find the colt so he and another fellow went out looking for it, the other fellow was carrying the colt and Sandy was coming along behind and this fellow was talking to him and suddenly realized Sandy wasn't answering. He looked around and there wasn't any Sandy and went back and Sandy had just died right there. So that was a quick way to go out. See, at that time, J. H. Macleod was the head of Dalhousie. He had grown up in Ontario, near Sarnia, Petrolia. There were several people there, yes, Petrolia was where some of those people came from, that's where they first discovered oil down in there.

JW: Yes, I was going to ask you where these people came from.

BL: One of these drillers from #5 was Benfield??? He had drilled, he started as he used to tell me, on the pull tool rigs. This is where instead of a cable they had metal pulls, the rigs probably weren't over 500' deep, but he had gone from that to California and had worked there for years. The California boom was on long before Turner Valley. There were some others that had followed the same thing. But this Macleod, he'd been, I think that in earlier days he'd had his own company or he and some others, contracting just with small rigs. But I did hear him tell that he was 15 years old when he first went working on the wells. He later got to be head man for Imperial over everything in Calgary. His son Harold, who was also passed on, he was my age, he had worked down in South America, as the dad had and Al Patrick, several of these fellows. They had been in Peru, at the moment I can't think, there was another place they worked there too and the name escapes me at the moment. Something about the Turner Valley gas, when you would go out there first, you'd think you could never stand that odour but when you were there a week, you didn't even notice it. I know some of those men that got married to Calgary girls and those girls would come out there and of course, like the rest of us, they noticed it at first, pretty soon they didn't notice it. They'd go to town to visit their folks and I know one family, this girl's sister wouldn't let her hang her clothes in the same room as theirs. But she herself didn't know anything about it because she was used to it. Yes, the gas was dangerous but you do it. Now there was leaks, it was no welded pipe at that time, your pipe was surface and mostly screw pipes, where they screw into each other. I do recall, there was one leak at the corner where the bank was at later years. I believe it's still there at the same corner. That really run a boiler, that leak was so strong. Nobody paid any

attention. And that was pretty much the same everywhere.

#223 JW: But that caused a lot of accidents though, didn't it?

BL: No, well, the mere fact that your pressure was all on the lines. You see, these surface lines, naturally they followed the low spots in it. Now in cold weather it didn't freeze up, it didn't hurt you. But there's a certain amount of water would be in, condensation, from these lines with the sun hitting in the daytime and the cold at night. And that water would form in the low spots. When the chinook came they would thaw and that's when that would plug the line probably. Then the pressure would build up and there was no. . . those lines weren't on meters. Then was when it was dangerous because when that plug would go then there would be such a pressure on the stoves that it would jump the lids off the stoves. But I think later, when they got putting meters on that that didn't happen so much. But there was one or two houses burnt up maybe, on that account. The people weren't at home at the time. But it wasn't bad that way. But to speak about how dangerous the gas was. Now, I didn't let any of my men in these cellars to work on valves and that, except we had a rope around them. So that if they pass out we could pull them out. And I think that was probably a common practice with most people. For some reason the oftener you got hit with it, the less you could take. That seems different to what you'd expect, you'd think you could stand more of it as you got used to it. I was only knocked out with it once but I knew. . . I was far enough away from it and I was trying to get away from it. I was all right, I got out of it. It knocked me down all right but I wasn't real out. But one fellow that we worked on, we had to pull him out and he said he could hear us talk well enough but he couldn't answer us. But we thought he was out. But we just took him far enough away from the rig, we saw right away something had happened to him, pulled him out. But for the number of times that we had to do that sort of work, these things didn't happen very often. And the gas today, it's just possible in some places there's more of this whatever it is. . .

JW: Well, H2S.

BL: Yes, that strong. It may be. But as far as the Turner Valley is concerned, you can't tell those people living there that there's anything wrong with the Turner Valley gas that hurts anybody. We were all young and healthy which might have had something to do with it. But there was very little sickness in Turner Valley. To this day I know there's so many people there who have grown up in Turner Valley and that's how most of them feel, that this is all talk about this down south and also up north. But I'm not going to say that the gas isn't dangerous because I don't know how strong it is. But I only know the Turner Valley. But I do think that the fumes from Turner Valley drifting down, we have a ranch out there southeast of Turner Valley and the wire doesn't last. You know this barbed wire, you have a galvanized coating on it, well, it doesn't stay on very long. I think that the gas, when there's a morning when it's sort of heavy you know, the air's heavy, sort of a dull morning and the fumes are drifting low. Used to be that we wouldn't notice it much but I believe that that does affect it. I believe it does because we've had to put in quite a lot of new wire.

- #283 JW: You mentioned several of the people working at Dalhousie and I should add that you've mentioned that was Dalhousie #5, the rig you were working on. They were from Ontario, was that common for most of the people or were they from the States or just about anywhere.
- BL: Well, from both because these fellows that learned, like I already said, that learned their work in Petrolia, they were some of the earlier drillers down in California. And things had slacked up there and that was what was bringing them back up to Canada. So you see, really they were American drillers though, they were Canadian drillers to start with. There was a Dunk McMurphy, I think they called him Dunk, it would be Duncan McMurphy was another of those that had been there. And some of those Imperial officials at that time, they had started their work there and I suppose they had worked for Imperial, not only in South America but some of them, this Angus Southern had worked over in Romania at the time. That's where he met his wife. So I think though it was a small company at that time, that it had spread out a lot. But when they started the rotary drills, the rotary drills were even new anywhere and they brought those drillers in from the States.
- JW: We'll talk about rotary in a minute. You had mentioned you were a tool dresser and among other things you sharpened the drill bits. What other kinds of things was a tool dresser doing on a cable tool rig.
- BL: Well, there was always a little machinery too and you helped change the bits too, because they pulled them out every so often. For 12 hours it was a pretty steady job, that dressing tools at that time. Like I say, when we got a steam hammer that helped things out a lot. I know that I think the dressing the bits, the fumes from the boilers and that were worse than the work. Because it wasn't . . . that air was so heavy with those fumes. But it didn't sicken anyone. But yes, you had other work to do. I don't know that I could put my thoughts on any one special but there's always certain things. But it kept you going anyhow.
- #328 JW: How many people would be working on a rig at one shift?
- BL: In cable tools, the fire in the boilers, the boiler was always a little ways away from the rig. So we didn't see much of him so on the cable tools there was just the driller and the tool dresser.
- JW: The two of you.
- BL: Yes, and that's when you had it bad because you worked together, you slept in the same little shack. The only time you saw the others was when you were changing shift you see. They don't generally get along too well if they're that close to each other often you know. Even anywhere you know, when people are so close. But I think most of them got along pretty good. But that was one thing about it.
- JW: Okay, I've got to change the tape here.

Tape 2 Side 1

JW: Well, when you were working Dalhousie #5, this was about 1926, 27, and you'd been working for Dalhousie now. .

BL: Yes, it was the summer 1926.

JW: That's right. Had rotary rigs come into the valley at that time?

BL: Yes, they came in in 1925. There was one on Royalite 5, which was situated just a little north of #4, #4 being the original well, the discovery well. And the other one was #6, which was south of Turner Valley, almost direct south of what's known as Snob Hill. That was where the houses for the officials were, later on, at that time there was only one there but most people knew it by that name. Or else the older town site but I think better known by Snob Hill than anything.

JW: So what happened to you then, you were working on this rig and. . .

BL: Yes. I did remark there earlier that in September, where they took me up to help build this other rig. This Whiteman was not steady on the job with them, he was through that first rig that I went to work on. He was away doing other work, but then there in September they decided to drill another well and they called him in for to build the rig. They called him in the office and he asked them what help they had, oh they said, we've got lots of help, we've got two crews out there, we shut down on #3 and there's two crews not doing anything, there's lots of help. Yes, but he says, can they climb, he said, where's Bill. When he explained who it was they said, he's dressing tools over at 5, well, he said, you send somebody else over to dress tools, let him come with me and then I don't care who you send, anyone after that. So that was the start but we were some time getting that rig going and one day when it was finished Mr. Macleod who was head man came and he told me, he said, now if I wished I could go back dressing tools where I had been, the job was mine if I wanted. But they had a diamond drill coming in, it was a large drill and it was something new. He had been asked to pick his own crew to go on there so they would have their own drillers later and they had picked me as one to go on. Well, naturally I was glad to go on something new and that's how I started. The diamond drill came in but we didn't get going that winter for quite a long time. Joe Jackson and I did carpenter work. They paid us the same wages as we'd have got anyhow. Joe had not been roughnecking, he was a native son around there, he'd been born up around that country and he hadn't got on the rigs, except just working around. We done that sort of work most of that winter. It was getting on by spring before we got going. And they brought their drillers in from the east. A diamond drill was a Sullivan drill. Sullivan was a company that sent drills out, the small drills, they had them so small you could carry them on your back up the mountain climbs where they do this mining. They take them inside the mines and drill at all angles. But they had a few larger ones. This type of drill had gone somewhere over in Asia, I think, some of those countries, they'd gone as much as 7,000' with one. So they brought their drillers in from there and I went on just working on that rig. But a year later I went drilling. Let's see that was the spring of '27, by the summer of 1928 I was drilling.

#044 JW: What was the point of this diamond rig?

BL: In the early days when they were drilling they didn't have very good equipment. They'd set their casing and set another string and that, they got into such a small hole. They hadn't been used to going say, 5, 6 7 thousand feet at that time. 4,000 seemed an exceptionally deep hole. So when they got down to where they had a 4 1/2" casing then there wasn't, you couldn't do much with a bit that size, a cable tool bit. And most of them, because of that, they'd left tools in, what we called junk in the hole, which was probably a string of tools or something. The diamond drill you could go in there and it was very sensitive. You had a gauge, it's a hydraulic and you could test it on, you can touch things, just barely touch them. Now this would seem far fetched but exactly so. If you dropped your watch down that hole I could go down there and bring that up and never hurt it. Now you couldn't very well do that with this other equipment but a diamond drill is very sensitive that way, you knew exactly what you were doing all the time.

JW: Was it a core bit more than a . . ?

BL: Well, if you were doing something like that, you would use a core bit to bring it in. But that could be done. That's far fetched because nobody's going to . . but small junk like the cones that come off of that you could go down and get. Because of that we could work in a small hole because the pipe was small too. And we cleaned the holes out and then we could drill. .we mostly used diamonds and you could use a core bit, you normally used a core bit if you were using a core bar and wanted a sample. If you were just going ahead drilling you used what we called a regular plug bit. Now the diamonds that were used were industrial diamonds, were black, they weren't the white diamonds that you think of. You didn't really need them unless you were in the limestone, which was hard drilling. But the core bit you see, you don't have very much clearance. With a core bar you probably have 1/32, your bit would only be 1/32 bigger in circumference than your bar would be and 20' behind it. But when you used this other plug bit, the diamonds at that time, the bit was say, a 3 3/4" bit, there would be probably worth \$10,000. Not the bit itself, the bit itself was only soft metal but the diamonds set in it would be that. While diamonds will cut anything almost, they're hard, they're brittle, you have to be very careful running it. You can't go slam, bang like you can with the rotary, with chains banging and all that. It's a different sort of drilling. It was useful for those things. We could drill even when the well was producing, we could drill in it. We used oil, this is when we got know a formation better. ??? was inclined to freeze up in the stuff down there, I suppose it was the pressure or the gas passing in the small area caused that, but if you used oil, and then they got better still, we used hot oil. It was in tanks and we'd keep steam heat in it and warm it up, which seemed to help. We were experimenting, we tried a lot of things. And we did clean out and finish quite a number of wells. And up till about the summer of '30, we were probably following the rotary, if they got to the lime and set their casing, we would drill in the limestone. But then they got to where they . . with more experience the rotary got to where they could put 6" casing to the lime and then they could run a 5 5/8 bit inside that,

#092 so they got on to where they didn't need a diamond to finish those wells. But up till that we had drilled in, most of our work was drilling in wells in the limestone. And we got used to knowing it, it helped a lot when we were back drilling in rotary again, because we knew all those hard streaks and soft streaks. There was that in it, after you drilled a few you knew pretty well, you'd hit a soft streak then you'd hit a real hard streak and maybe it was only a foot or two, maybe it was more but you got pretty well to know what those streaks were. And that if you could baby your bit right through one of them hard ones, then you could go and make quite a bit more hole before you'd have to pull out again. You see, it was sort of lost work to have to pull your pipe out for to change your bit and back in again. The only time you were making something for the company is when you're making hole. Starting sometime in 1930, Calmont??? Oil Company had come in with Home. Now, they were drilling on section 20. They were an Oklahoma company as I recall. Not the company, but the drillers they brought in from Oklahoma. And they were used to drilling soft. . softer drilling down there, it was a different thing. And they were using water for circulation. They couldn't believe there was any reason to use oil. Whether that had anything to do with killing that field, I don't know, maybe there just were too many wells in there. But it seemed like they did because the Home wells were just in the same section, just a little ways north off the Calmont and the Home #1 came in on section 20 in March of 1929 and it made 800 barrels a day, high test naphtha. Then #2 was brought in some time later, 400 barrels a day and later on, their #3 well came in and it was real good, it was 1,000 barrels a day. And that was that high test naphtha and of course, making a lot of gas, dry gas too you know. Although it wasn't dry gas until you ran it through the separator. But by the summer of . . must be early in '40, when that #2 what they call, froze off. There was enough solid apparently, down there, that coming up, mixed with this gas, it plugged the hole, the well died off. Well, I was drilling down on the Highwood River at that time and they brought me up there. I was one of the first diamond drillers you see. They brought me up there to be on that well because it was something none of us knew anything about. I do recall that the crew that was on there, the two crews had been on, were rugging up and they pretty well were ready to go. When I looked it over, some things were needed. One of them was a valve that the only thing, we would ??? a valve that if we hit the production, the pressure would be all there. So we should have something where it could automatically go out. We didn't have automatically, what we did, we'd just unbend the flange and put a piece of tin in there that would blow out at about 700 lbs. pressure. But we didn't have any valve on that line to do it. So I ordered that and also the gauge that was on the line where the production would be was only a 500 lb. gauge. I brought that to their attention and oh yes, they would get it. The pipeline??? man even come around to see what we needed and so forth. But I was going right along drilling when suddenly there was just a dry thud like that and the pressure was all on, at 700' we broke through the plug. Of course, the pipe was anchored, we always had it anchored to what we called the chuck, this hydraulic, this chuck let you. . you'd go down 2' and then you'd run your chuck up and hook on and go 2' more with it. So it didn't cause any damage but the top valves to the separator and on the other line. . . I guess, the fellow that was on the separator, it was a nice sunny day, the

people working on the rig right close to there of course, when all this racket of this well blew in, they were all out, as I said this one fellow. . . I had told him to watch the gauge. I thought it would do the same as drilling, it would start, the gas, you would see the needle go up and I said, when you see it you start opening that valve when you see that gauge come. But suddenly I guess it being a nice warm day he was sleepy and suddenly this thing nearly bounced the

#160 separator off its foundation. ??? Anyhow, these props are going and the only way we could. . there was one of my helpers in the derrick and he and I opened the valve so that it was all, it let it clear to the field. But if it had the pressure expected it would be much worse than that. Pop vales makes a lot of sound and there was a lot of pressure built up. But they called me into the. . .this P. D. Moore was the local geologist at that time and he called me in to give an account of what it acted like and I told him how it banged and the way it hit all at once and everything. I told him about this gauge, that it hadn't come and is there anything that you might know what pressure it was on and I said, I can't tell you because the gauge was only a 500 lb. gauge and of course, that needle went right up, right now, just as high as it would go. Well, he said, guess on it and I guessed it at 1,200 lbs. Oh, no, no, it couldn't be right. Well I said, the pressure you're wanting is not there. Well, ??? , I said, remember I was standing on top of that thing when it hit and I'm still here so I said, there's no danger to anybody, you can close that well in any time. So they thought it over afterwards. I told them then, I said, on #1 we had compounded our pumps, we had the two ordinary pumps compounded and then we had a high pressure pump compounded, two of them and they put out 2,700 pressure to the inch on those lines. And when that happens you can just feel that derrick creak, you're just sensitive to it. But I said, there wasn't anything like that on this thing, we didn't have that. Well, when they put the gauge on, when they decided to close in, that thing put pressure on 1,400 lbs.

#187 JW: Oh, so you were right on the money.

BL: Yes. But if there had been . . that's what makes me think that maybe Calmont wasn't all to blame for that thing, I think maybe there were too many wells being drilled so close to each other and they were taking the pressure down. Because there were many other places later that went higher than that. I know Mayland 1 when we went in to clean that out again, I think the pressure was 1,640 lbs. or something and there were probably others higher. That was the start of . . they'd close them in you see. Prior to that, that's why they burned so much gas, wasted so much really, burning flares all over the place. They didn't believe they could close in, they thought it was too dangerous with all that pressure. After that, once they closed that one in and everything was okay then the wells didn't freeze up any more because they worked all their pressure was only going from their well head out, where they closed them down. You see, they would close them down with a little pin in the orifice or something they called it, in the valve, maybe a 64th or . . and if there was any freezing it was right there. The pipe going away out to the flare used to be covered with frost, white it looked. And in a few years they got on to just putting more pipes. Instead of having one pipe there were four or five. Then there was no more of that frost on there. So everybody learns as they go along.

JW: You mentioned rotary drilling had come in in 1925, what would you say the impact, or was there on of the transition from cable tool to rotary drilling in Turner Valley?

BL: The trouble with it, I think probably that worked maybe in Oklahoma or . . I wouldn't say. . they had probably worked them in California but California was harder drilling than Oklahoma and they were using what they called fish steel bits. Now that's a bit, just a blade, just an ordinary steel bit and it just flared like you can imagine what a fish tail. Well, that wasn't any use here when you hit these hard streaks. And they had difficulty I guess, trying to keep the hole straight. You didn't have so many things to tell you, to run down to see whether the hole was straight or not at that time. So they didn't ever get #5 down. And #6 they got down further, we finished it with a diamond drill in later years, a year or two later. But they company still thought that they had a place and when they got these huge bits and ??? bits, steel bits, then that's what helped the rotary. From then on they could do more. Of course, it took time. I remember when they drilled Royalite #7. They were all thrilled because they drilled the hole in 6 months and just think of how fast the drill them today.

#228 JW: Two weeks.

BL: Yes, and before that was taking up to two years. I suppose everybody has to creep before they walk maybe.

JW: Who were some of the rotary drillers that came up from Oklahoma?

BL: I recall there was. . I don't remember the man's name that was the first tool push. There was a Bill Applegate but he was field superintendent for years, head of the drilling for years for them but he was a cable tool man. But Floyd Walker, and Woodrow Wilson who later were both tool pushers. Actually Floyd went on in later years to be head man for Imperial in the drilling there for awhile. And then there was Max Bell in the 20's and Hilary??? Head, known better to everybody as Jigs. He was head of the rotary when I knew it. He didn't come in as a driller, he came in to be tool push there. At the moment I can't think of others, that they didn't probably stay very long.

JW: Charlie Visser or Micky McNeill.

BL: That was later. They were native sons. No, the Oklahoma bunch came in but you see, I didn't know them. Actually there was one of them, another I should name was Jigs. . Head's brother, we called him General, what his name was I don't know, we knew him as General. He and I drilled opposite each other for years. I think that they worked 12 hours or started to. . I know we got to 8 hours, that's something I should mention. There came an agitation for an 8 hour day. And it didn't come from the men, and the smaller companies they were fighting that. The word at the time was that they went to Imperial to help them out on it, they had the most rigs at the time. They said no, they had it all arranged. It was the government was bringing it in I think. They said as soon as it becomes law we will go on 8 hours and they did do that. Of course, then in later years still, they went down to a 5 day week, which meant that you run an extra crew on two well, what they called the swing crew, which took care of it. These things can be accomplished you see. It doesn't mean that they had to shut the well down at all. They had enough men to keep it run 24 hours a day just the same.

#273 JW: Did that have an impact, they had to hire a lot more people then?

BL: Oh yes. But by that time more people were in the valley, there were more people coming. There was the pipeline work and they didn't have the ditchers in the early days so they dug a lot of things by hand. And there was more people. . times were pretty rough. The oil field was about the only thing that was paying good wages.

JW: I was going to ask, come 1929, what was the impact of the Depression or the stock market crash anyway and then ultimately the Depression on Turner Valley?

BL: I suppose about the only thing we felt about it. . quite a number of us had got into it, well, I think probably it started with Okalta. The Okalta stock were selling for about \$2 a share when their well came in. That started such a boom, that stock actually sold up to \$350 a share. By that time a lot of people were seeing how easy it was to make money and people who had never invested a dime in their lives were there. And Sullivan Mills had an office out there in the valley so it was easy for people to go in there and sit there and watch the board and do it. But a lot of people lost money from that company because things were dropping, the prices were dropping so much and so many people were trying to sell that the stock, like they're selling small stock for \$1.35 when you put your order in, you'd be lucky to get 85 cents for it. And then you were probably lucky you got that. It did break a lot of people because with that sort of investing, when things were going up it seemed so easy that you put everything you had into it. And remember people weren't wealthy then, even in Turner Valley like they are today. The trouble with us, everybody's got too much money, back in those days people didn't have very much money. Their wages were smaller and even with people working . . anyone outside the rigs were not getting the wages, I think \$4.40 a day was what the ordinary labourer was getting on pipelines or that. And that was an 8 hour day of course.

#312 JW: What was the role of the promoter in Turner Valley, with respect to these stocks and these companies?

BL: Well, they were in Calgary. I think I should have mentioned there that in about '29, the only affect it had on us was that the stock was. . we all still had jobs. About the middle of 1930 a lot of people were being laid off. But we were still drilling, you don't miss the water until the well goes dry so it didn't hit us. It was the middle of '31 when Royalite. . in '30 Royalite had 26 rigs running and that was rotary and diamonds. By the middle of 1931 there were 2 rigs left working.

JW: Oh, no kidding.

BL: Both rotaries. And on those two wells, we were all drillers that were on, they tried to keep their drillers if they could you see, but we were roughnecking. We were just the helpers, they were down to that and of course, a lot of them had been laid off even besides that. Because there would be a lot more drillers than that. And it was an ordinary rig I was on we were laid off Stampede Week, in July and the other rig run I think, 3 weeks later. And then the Royalite didn't have any drilling crews at all working. And for several years about the only work they did, I do recall in the spring of '32, they had a number of their men, on relief really they were giving help. They wanted to put them to work for a little

so they wanted to take two rigs and put them on the rack. Now at that time as long as your rig was on the derrick floor you paid tax on it but if you put it out on the platform, on a storage rack, you didn't pay tax on it. I was a councillor on the municipality at that time. So they called me in as a driller for to take a crew and tear down these two rigs. And I think we worked a couple of weeks on it or something and put them on a rack, the storage rack. I just happened to be close, I was living in the south end and I happened to be there. Royalite did drill the Arco well out of High River, they were working on that in '35 I believe.

End of tape.

Tape 2 Side 2

JW: You had mentioned the Arco well Bill.

BL: Yes, that was just west of High River here. Incidentally they didn't get production, but I believe that they started up in '35. But then in the spring of '36, they started to drill a well for Stirling. That was in the south end. I went to work on that well, in the spring of '36 and then I worked with them in '37 and the fall of '37 I left Imperial to go down to work for a company from the coast that was trying to finish an old well down south of Fernie, right on the border almost. But that's getting away from the Turner Valley.

JW: Yes it is. Talking about production a minute ago, you had mentioned I think that a lot of the drilling had stopped short of production during your time down there. Before reaching production there you had oil shows but people didn't drill down far enough.

BL: Well, that was before my time, that was prior. That was why some of the original wells didn't get production, because they hadn't been deep enough but they didn't have the equipment in those days. There's one fellow Ab McPherson that had a mine at Black Diamond, a coal mine. He was the instigator, I think it was called the Old Midwest, that was south of Turner Valley. People probably maybe regarded him as a crook or something because they lost their money, but I guess he was conscientious trying to get something and it was all right, he had the right idea but they just didn't have the equipment to go deep enough. There was other ones that were similar to that. I think that was the problem. When you can see people starting with 500' wells down in Petrolia, you know, by the time they got here, drilling 4,000' deep. But those first wells that did get production from 1914 and from then on in the valley, they were probably getting what they call the McDougall sands and that was maybe 2,300', give a few hundred feet either way. That was altogether different to when they went much north. You see, the old cable tool outfit, when you had to pull, you had your big bull wheel and your ropes coming and it would take a long time to bring tools back up if you were drilling a mile down. Even running down. . it was the coming out, they didn't come very fast. When you look at the equipment they have today, the equipment and the derrick is much different to what it was then.

#032 JW: What was the role of geologists during that time in Turner Valley would you say?

BL: Well, Dr. Luke was one of the Imperial men, he wasn't actually in the valley but the valley was one of the places he was scouring the hills and that. There was others with him, I do not recall the name of some of the others, P. D. Moore was a resident geologist. Their job, when you were drilling you took samples all the time, you'd wash the mud as it came and the cutting would be in the mud and you'd save a little sack of these cuttings and put the depth on it. And you'd do that every 10'. Well that went into the office and the geologist would look that over. And of course, he could put one well against another and get some idea of where you were. And when you had a strange formation something different, it was a marker for him. You spoke about the drillers, probably I should speak of that. Imperial had actually wanted to put their own drillers on. You mentioned Charlie Visser and Micky McNeill, they were brother-in-laws incidentally. Well, they had grown up in Okotoks and they were in the field right to begin with so naturally they were agitating to get drilling. They knew they could do it if they could get the companies to do it. So in 1928 when I went drilling on the diamond, actually our first work on that when I went drilling was on a well where we went down to the lime, I think we were taking over from cable tools. So we run rotary tools on it til we got to the lime and I went drilling that, it would be September of 1928. I had been drilling with other, on the north end with the diamond bits. But Charlie Visser, at the same time was sent down to I think, Skiff, I'm trying to think of the name of the man, it escapes me at the moment that had the leases and Imperial were going to drill them for him, Devenish I believe was the man's name. That was Charlie's first start in the drilling and I think Micky McNeill started in the valley about the same time, on the rotary. That was the first two people, native sons here that started drilling in Turner Valley. And of course, Charlie, in later years was the head push in the drilling. Micky, he unfortunately didn't live too long so he wasn't as much. But at the same time Spiller???, the man who drilled the first well, Vulcan Oil Company, there was Vulcan and then Spiller, they were intermingled because they were the same people. The reason they called it Vulcan was because this man Spiller, who had grown up in Turner Valley was running a store in Vulcan and he got other men there interested in this lease and drilling and that's where the name comes from. Sid Bagley??? and Clarence Snyder, Clarence at least was one of those who had drilled on #4. But they were the drillers on that Vulcan 1 and also probably on #2 but they set up some of their helpers, their tool dressers as drillers. And they were men, if not local, at least grew up here in Alberta. So they were doing something for it and later Clarence's brother, George I think it was, he was pushing tools for them and he carried on. It was either he or Clarence that set these men up and some of them were later well known. Lloyd Styles??? was one of them for instance. But they drilled 1 and 2 Vulcan and they drilled Spiller 1 and 2. Clarence at least had an interest in the Spiller wells. Later on he and Head. . they run what they called the Snyder and Head Contracting, that was back about 1937 again. They were contracting rotary drilling and Woodrow Wilson was pushing tools for them. I think that was the start of, as far as the diamonds were concerned. . where I was the first, that winter again or on in the early spring they set up another of their own men and he did all right too, so from then on they didn't import anymore diamond drillers. People thought that if you were a diamond driller how could you drill rotary, if you were on the

rotary . . the California people had a little different system stacking the pipe to what the local ??? people had. And people got in their head that you couldn't work one if you were working the other but of course, a hoist, it didn't matter which system, diamond or anything else, it's only a hoist, anybody can measure on a hoist. And as far as your stacking you pipe, I came back from this job I was running down in the south and I went drilling again and I drilled for Chandler, so he said, but how can you drill, they run Oklahoma style, I said, I do what I always did, I do my job and let my men do theirs. There was no trouble. It was just the idea people had, it makes no difference whether you stack the pipe here or stack it there. It was foolish thinking.

#101 JW: Had you gotten laid off then, from Imperial Oil or Dalhousie?

BL: When I went down there, I left Imperial to go down because I was field superintendent down there. Actually I was everything, I did the buying all in the States.

JW: Down where?

BL: It was south of Fernie, almost on the border and in very rough country. In earlier years I guess they could go in from Fernie but in our time they couldn't and they came in from the U.S. side and I done all the buying in Kalispell, so I had to buy everything for the camp, the cook outfits and everything like that as well as running the other part of it.

JW: Was that Frank McMahan's operation?

BL: Yes, he had been on that earlier, that is correct. When he was on it was pretty haywire because it was short of money. When I went on though, they had been shut down for a long time for one, and this Bob Wickerson, which you have heard of a lot there, he got quite a name you know because he was quite a promoter too really. But these people from the coast, they contacted him as he told me about it. The shareholders wanted some action, this hole was there and they wanted to finish it or do something. So he couldn't go down there himself and he come out to the valley to wonder who he could get to go down and do it. And somebody give him my name and I thought it was all right you know, it was a field job. So I went down there to do it and the only thing he told me when he left, he said, the shareholders are crying to get this thing going, they've got \$100,000 on the barrelhead, he said, go down there and spend it but put that hole down to 8,000' for them. And that's exactly what we done. Now \$100,000 then remember is just similar to what a million would be today. So that's how I got to go there. Imperial were slow getting going. The other companies were going. . maybe I shouldn't have quit them you see, but naturally there was lots of other men quit them too. The companies don't like their good men to quit them but sometimes they get along with other, if a company appreciates a man that will stay with them even if he isn't so good they don't expect him to be at the tops. The trouble with their better men, they get ambitious. Some of them went out to starting their own companies and that. But I was maybe one of the first to move away from it, of the gang. Imperial, I will say, they were very good to their men, they were very good people to work for.

#133 JW: Well, especially during the Depression too, Royalite, they were very helpful. . .

BL: Yes, they were very good to their employees that were living and staying there.

JW: That was a bit of a crooked hole down there south of Fernie wasn't it?

BL: Oh yes. Well, to begin with, it's all on edge. But they went down, cable tool fellows. . I knew some of them were down there and I suppose they were pretty much by themselves. It's late in time to tell but it shouldn't hurt anything. I think what happened, they would go out shooting. .you know, they weren't supposed to be shooting elk but I'm sure there was a little shooting being done. And they probably would leave the thing for a time and go somewhere else and this caused it to go so much on edge. But they got that hole so crooked that they couldn't get even smaller casing down. But they did put it down, well then they went ahead and then when they got ready to run another casing and it didn't need casing because once you got down into that it was limestone almost from the top and they could go all the way. By the time we took it over the ??? stone. . the cable tools got as far as they could go, ??? stone outfit, the brought in a ??? stone, this was the one's McMahan was with, but they got the same thing, their hole got so crooked. I think maybe that their drillers weren't used to working in that sort of formation. So by the time we took over, I don't know where the hole was. Certainly it was a long ways from going down. It was 5,600', something like that when we took it over and we had to go to 8,000' and we were coring all the way. So if you started on an angle you were going to go on that angle. But there was no fault with caving or anything with anybody because that was hard formation, just kept repeating, repeating itself. And I think a lot of that repeating was ??? but we put it to 8,000' where they wanted it. But when I first went down there, one of the officials had come out from the coast but the man that was in the company there, one had a hardware store and one had a grocery store, they were those sort of people. McMahan, he was quite a promoter, he had formed a company by them talked into it. He was born and grew up down there near, what do you call that lake just past Lumberton, the name will come to me later. . Boyer Lake, yes. There was a little man and this is where he started. When they were there that man came out and Wickerson and I didn't know I should have known, asked about it but I hadn't, when I looked the book over and saw what it was I said, you were doing a lot of drilling here for nothing, why don't you start a new hole right form top. Oh, they threw their hands up, they had 5,600' of hole, they couldn't lose it. Well, I said, I don't know, if you start from top you'll have a hole you'll get somewhere. No, no, we're going to finish this hole, that's what our contract is to do. I said, okay but I also heard them say, the only thing that will drill this is diamonds. Well, I said, if you start with a rotary bit, we can drill that, I'm sure we can and we can drill it straight and I could have done that but that wasn't what they wanted so we had to do what they wanted to do with it. But the formation is on edge all right.

#177 JW: How long were you down there?

BL: We went down there in October and came out of there in April.

JW: Of '37?

BL: Yes. That's when I come back out of course, I didn't have any job, I went working for Newell, Newell Chandler that time.

JW: You had part of that though, worked for Mayland at maybe Miracle #3?

BL: Yes, but that was working for Royalite, Royalite was doing the work.

JW: They were.

BL: Yes, that was prior to the layoff. That would be sometime in '30 that we were doing that.

JW: So through the early 30's you were basically back roughnecking and that sort of thing?

BL: Oh no, up till the shut down in '31 I was drilling right through. Because even in the diamonds, they shut down the diamonds I went on drilling rotary just with them. And then in 1933 I drilled for Mayland then, that was for Bob Cameron, that was when I actually drilled for Mayland themselves was in '33. And '34 I was testing gold property over west of Cranbrook, west of Lumberton for the Consolidated Mine and Smelting, CMS. That was a different kind of work altogether. '35 there wasn't very much doing anywhere.

JW: What did you do?

BL: I done a little work for Royalite, for Dalhousie on #1, you know, we called it Royalite but it was Dalhousie. And the people from Cranbrook got in touch with me, I had come back, I was married by that time and they said they had a house waiting for me and come down. I was working for Dalhousie, I couldn't very well quit them to go on the other and I didn't know how long it was going to last. But two weeks later, they decided. . we were fishing there you see, doing a fishing job, trying to get casing out that was collapsed. We could have kept on going all right but they decided not to do any more with it so I was out of a job then. And I didn't have this other one because I hadn't gone. And I didn't do anymore that summer. Of course, I had the farm but I didn't have very much land then and there wasn't much money in farming at that time anyhow. Which turned out to be all right later though.

#210 JW: You mentioned the farm, when did you pick that up?

BL: When the first layoff came in 1931, in July of '31. This place was just a little east of the oil field and it looked like maybe a fellow could bid and the price wasn't high. So that's when I started. Back in '28, '29 I had no thought of every going farming. But when the layoff in '31 there wasn't any use going to town, there was no work anywhere. It wasn't a case of. . good men you'd think they could work anytime, they couldn't. No, they were riding the freights, some going west and some going east and by golly, a tremendous lot of people on the move. Oh, that was tough times for a lot of people, it sure was. They talk about this depression, this depression isn't anything to what the 30's were. There's a lot of money around nowadays. There was no unemployment insurance, no baby bonuses, none of those things at that time. Those who lived through it are the only people who know it though, other people can, til this depression came no other people could picture it you see.

JW: Well, had you guilt a little bit of a house on your. . ?

BL: Well, the Turner Valley people were moving out of there and some shacks burned and some were sold and I bought one of them that was there. Actually a fellow I knew told me, he said, why don't you buy it. He wanted the job of moving it you see, he had a little truck and he wanted the work. He said, I'll move it for you with the truck. So we bought it and it was just like all the rest, it was a shack, most of them were. Nowadays there's a lot of good buildings in Turner Valley, good homes, but not then. And we put it on there

and it was just a place to stay. That's what most of us thought you see, it was just some place to stay until things picked up again. We didn't know it was going to be five years before that would happen. But that's what's happening now you know, things boomed and they slowed up.

JW: Well, when did you get married?

BL: November 28th, 1934. Here's the plaques, this is our 50th.

JW: I saw that, from Peter Lougheed, the Golden Wedding. . .

BL: There's one from the Lieutenant Governor, Stonton??? and another one from our MLA, Harry Alger. It's not quite to 50 yet, it will be on the 28th you see.

JW: What was your wife's maiden name and how did you . . .

BL: I think we better let the wife answer that. Is that the way it should be or not.

#249 JW: No, not really, just for the record here a little bit, how you met?

BL: She was ???, she had started her nurses training in the Holy Cross and finished down in what do you call the place, ???, Idaho. She had a sister living down there and when she got her RN then she took a lab course in Portland, Oregon. And when they health unit opened here in 1931, health units were something new you see, there was Dr. Saunders and Ethel Jones ???, they opened this health unit here and that was the start of the health unit here in High River. And it was 1934 when I met her and she was born in Nanton. Her people had come up from Washington state and homesteaded east of what is now Vulcan. There was no Vulcan at that time so Nanton was the town and that's where she was born.

End of tape.

Tape 3 Side 1

JW: Today is November 21st, 1984, my name is Jim Wood and I'll be interviewing Mr. Bill Lockhart. This is my second interview with Mr. Lockhart and begins tape 3, side 1. I'm at Mr. Lockhart's home in High River, Alberta. Bill, last time as I was leaving, you had mentioned sometime in 1930 about a lot of rigs blowing down.

BL: Yes, that was the winter of 1930. It was a mild winter, very little snow if any and some of these rigs, you see, how will I put it. The rig was still there, there may not be any machinery in it. Some of them still did have. If you're in a rig drilling and a real wind storm comes up, I don't know what they do today but I know when I was in it, I would just come up and put the weight of the drill pipe, just hang that on the derrick and that helped to hold it down. Or you could also, if you had time, you could anchor, if there wasn't any drill pipe and you had time you could anchor it down to the foundation, around the basement or even the top of the casing or anything. But if you didn't do that, the wooden derricks especially you know, caught so much wind. And so I forget how many we saw drop down around us that one day.

JW: Weren't they anchored in concrete, the feet of these things Bill, or not?

BL: Oh yes, they were anchored in concrete, but that doesn't stop you know. And there was one the drill pipe was still in it, was an Illinois-Alberta well. And that didn't help things,

you think the weight of that might do something but of course, it was small drill pipe. But it went down and what a mess it made. No, that was pretty strong wind. We haven't had strong winds like that in recent years.

#023 JW: What other kinds of ways would you accommodate the weather, especially in winter, did you winterize those rigs or were they heated inside?

BL: Well, if you were drilling, like early when it took two years to drill well of course, when you started up you had your rig all sheltered around. But in 1930, what we were doing on the diamond crews. We were going from one well to the other cleaning them out like I mentioned before, they were freezing up. And we had our machinery pretty well unitized so that we didn't have any shelter when we worked, the rigs were open. And we could move so easily. I've known them to send the trucks to the rig before we got word to tear down, [but we would]??? unitize it. You take a diamond drill you know, you could just unanchor from, the standard was on and the hoist, you'd go down on the rig and it would lift itself and carry itself around. Like one man explained it, he said, lifting it up by its bootlaces you see. So that, you lift it up and drop your sled or something or you could pull it out to where it was going to be pulled like a sled on the trucks. So we got that down to where the moving and setting up was very little work, we could do in fancy time but then we were moving every few days or every week to one or another. But to those who were drilling, in 1930 they were still sheltered.

JW: And what, get heat off the boilers in there or. . ?

BL: Oh yes, they was always steam heat in the rigs. Of course, the fellow up on the top. . .but he was only there when they were pulling out or going in. He would have been colder but oh, young people didn't mind the cold.

JW: What did they do with the wooden derricks then, once they were through drilling, they couldn't move those could they?

BL: When the Depression hit, they just junked them. There were so many spikes and that it didn't hardly pay to go in there and tear them off board by board. There was a few that done that, like Roy Whitney I believe got a derrick or two and he had a farm down east. . . oh, down around Mossleigh somewhere and I believe he built a barn out of it. Roy was, I didn't know him but he was one of the early drillers that was in I see the picture where he was even drilling around 1908. He was Harry Alger's father-in-law, you know who Harry Alger is, our MLA. But in most cases they just tore them down. And remember a lot of that drilling was contract drilling and many of those companies by that time were broke. They'd run out of money so that there wasn't too much care taken about tanking those things down.

#051 JW: Did they just pull them over sometimes or just leave them?

BL: They had a crew put them down, clean the rigs up but I don't remember just how they did put them down. But I assure you they didn't take them down piece by piece.

JW: In your experience in Turner Valley, between about 1926 and 1941, did you ever encounter any attempts to unionize the oil fields?

BL: There was probably once or twice there was talk of it but not universal. The crews, the

people working there were against it and if one or two would agitate they didn't get anywhere. Remember we were getting good wages, far better than what I got anywhere else and when I speak of it of course, I'm referring mostly to the men working for Imperial or Royalite because that was the ones that I was most connected. But I'm sure that they boarded us better than we could board ourselves. So there was no reason to even think of going. But the type of people that were in there weren't the type of people that would be agitating for that.

JW: But it did come up once in awhile?

BL: Well, you would expect, with so many people working there would be one or two agitators. But it was nothing to even mention hardly, very little.

JW: At that time were you acquainted with Royalite's Industrial Council?

BL: I don't know there was such a thing was there then?

JW: Yes. Later in the 30's perhaps.

BL: If it was there we didn't know about it. You know, another thing was at that time, that was the time the election came up and R. B. Bennett, the leader of the Conservatives, the Conservatives got in and then it went around that the company had told us all to vote Conservative. As far as I know that was all rumour, none of us that talked about it had any word from anybody and I don't think the company ever did see us. That's just one of those rumours that get around. That must have been about 1930.

JW: Was Earl Flanders working at that time for Royalite, did you encounter Earl Flanders?

BL: Oh yes, Earl was the head of the pipeline at that time. I guess its his son, the Flanders that. .

JW: Ralph.

BL: Ralph it is. Well, I expect he's Earl's son. Yes, I knew Earl. You see, we didn't really have much association with the pipeline people, we probably knew them but we were on the rigs, it was different people we were meeting with.

#082 JW: You've made some little notes here that maybe we could go over and one of them is the flow at Royalite #8?

BL: Yes. That was one of the wells that we had to clean out. #8 was over near to the ??? wells, which was about a mile north of Turner Valley and about half a mile west. When we would clean it it would make 60 million cubic day, that's per day, but it took 3 separators to handle it. Remember it wasn't . . it was big for gas more than it was for oil but it was making fairly good gasoline too but at the moment I can't remember how many barrels it was making. But it would plus up and we cleaned that one out several times. I remember one time, I believe it was #8, that the word come down from headquarters to run tubing in there against pressure. Put all the pressure on the well and run the tubing in to see if that would stop the freezing. It was an idea. I and another man were on to do it, we had the cable tool engine that was there, as we referred to is, Old Maude, for to pull them in. So this other man he would pick them up with the diamond, we had the pipe in the hole, we had it under control, we had clamps to hold it and I would get the pressure on to hold it, they would release this clamp and I would pull it in. They'd clamp it again and they would. . but what we were using there was diamond drill rods, the diamond drill

expression for pipes was rods because they had used these little ones on the mountains for so many years to tear them up but actually they were pipe but small pipe. And we pulled that in and oh, when we got down a ways the pipe then was able to go all right but we put it down where they wanted it. It was only in the first thousand feet that was really serious to do it you know, ??? watch everything we were doing and not let it blow out. ??? because you see, you don't have the formation, probably a good formation. . you see, when I speak about blowing out you would sometimes wonder how tools as heavy as cable tools, how a flow of gas could blow it. But remember when you're drilling there you break through a bridge. Well, naturally you haven't drilled it all out, besides you've got cuttings in there where you've been drilling. So that stuff when you hit it will actually pack around the side of the bit and that caused, made. . the tool is really a piston, you had all your pressure behind it. And that was the same with the rotary or any other pipe. If you got rid of that plug down there then there wouldn't be near the pressure on the bit because the gas, some of it would be released past there. But when we were going in that way, we didn't have anything against it, it was clear. So we didn't have to go so far till the pipe went on its own. It was, I'll not say how successful it was but it was at least a try anyhow.

#121 JW: Was it a fairly common occurrence for the drilling tools to blow out or up and out?

BL: Yes. . . This is something we were watching and you didn't let it happen. But accidents do happen. Sometimes they will say that all accidents are caused by mistakes, that's probably true, everybody's human. But if you were drilling you just come in gradually. Naturally it didn't happen, when you hit a hard. . with rotary pipe and mud it didn't happen there. It did happen with the diamond drill on one. . it was a shallow hole, it was in Turner Valley. I wasn't on the rig I don't know too much of the details but it did blow the pipe out. There was two men killed there at that time and that was something unusual there at that time. Because they happened to run to get away from the rig and this pipe when it blew up the derrick fell right lengthways down on this trail that they were on. If they'd been a foot or two to either side they'd have been all right. But it was human nature to follow the path and to run away from there. But it wasn't very . . . But with cable tools when they were drilling I think it was. I think I mentioned earlier about how the pipe, when they blow the tools up, the drilling tools of the cable tools, the line would kink because it would be all snarled and turned. ??? you'd go to fish it, you'd have to watch when you went in to fish it out that you didn't get too deep in it and plug yourself worse than ever. It happened more in the earlier days, not after people got experience and knew what they were up against.

JW: You had mentioned a couple of times the Illinois-Alberta Company.

BL: Yes, Ian??? Jennings and his brother Grant, they made a living on that for a number of years. I don't know exactly when they started but I would guess it was back in maybe 1914 when they were going and they were still going up to 1930. They had two wells producing for a time but I think they finally lost production anyhow, maybe there were just too many wells got in there because there were a number of them close. But they did

produce and they were a company that the people in the city buying the stock, they all wanted some Illinois.

#154 JW: Was that originally I wonder, Illinois investors that . . . ?

BL: Maybe they came from there originally I don't know. There was a hyphen you see, Illinois and then a dash and then Alberta, that's the way it always was. It was a small independent one but like I say, sure they made production and they made work for some people for a few years.

JW: Maybe you could just talk about some of the other companies that were around?

BL: Yes. Like McDougall Seger??? was running fairly good there for a number of years right beside Illinois. This #8 Royalite I mentioned was also in that group. But there's one well I should mention. I got an order one time to try to put some of the gas back in the formation. Royalite, they drilled a well, I was going to say 20 but I'm not sure that was the number but it was just a little north of Turner Valley and a little west. But whether they went deep enough or didn't work too hard at it, it wasn't a success at that time but it was the government got the idea to do it. They did I guess, later they could do that all right but maybe nobody was trying too hard. You see, those wells I mentioned were in direct line between Turner Valley and the Springer and Vulcan wells. So that was a main street it was on right there.

JW: May you could just talk then a little bit about the history of expanding exploration in Turner Valley. Is that too general a question?

BL: Define it a little bit.

JW: I just wonder if it grew from a quarry of drilling and spread out north and south or how you could see the evolution of drilling going throughout Turner Valley?

BL: I suppose that's what you would do you see. If someone had a lease that was close to where a well produced, well, naturally either they or some company that had the money, they would try some way to get it drilled because it was worth drilling. Till they got far enough away that there would be a dry hole again. Actually I don't remember that ??? too much managed to get dry holes in those times. I think I mentioned earlier, maybe it's not on this that I wonder why they didn't go east more than they did. But maybe the geologists had it figured that it was too deep there. Because in those earlier years remember, anything below 5,000' was pretty deep, was considered deep. And in the north, now those wells, the first Dalhousie 3, which was one of the ones drilled earlier years, that was a good mile north of Turner Valley and going west from there, you had the Springer and Vulcan wells and they didn't go much north of there but they went a little west and north. I suppose that's the way it would run though because they were going the same northwesterly direction that the mountains were. That's why they didn't go north of what was referred to as Christy??? Row, where these wells that I just mentioned were. If they went straight north they were getting further away from the hills, so that was probably why they tended to go west and then north. You see, Millarville??? is northwest of Turner Valley. And as far as the south was concerned, well it was the fact that they tried to follow it a little further south that finally brought in. .that they discovered down there in Royalties then, what was later to be Royalties and Longview, was because you continually keep, well, you get production you go a little further. You think it's south or

you think it's west. It's not too hard to know because when you went west the wells got deeper. And when you're getting down 8,000', 8,500', at that time, then it was time to go further south rather than go further west. The same thing would apply east. It wasn't too wide a stretch but it would be running from 1-2 miles in places.

#217 JW: Maybe you could talk a little bit about the growth of Turner Valley, the valley in general. You saw it go, it was fairly cyclic wasn't it?

BL: Oh yes. Perhaps the one that I think of most that had spectacular growth was Hartel???. It was a little spot just 6 miles south of Black Diamond. There wasn't a thing there before oh, 1928 and then that was where the East Crest wells were. But one fellow come in, he started a store and it wasn't very long till the wells were drilling, there was at one time in its boom, I have to stop here and think. . there was two garages, two stores, a pool hall, a barber shop, a restaurant, there was probably others, a drugstore. But it all disappeared or most of it, after 1931. The rigs were moving away. Well, there wasn't any drilling. . when the drilling died that died too. But that store still runs today, one of those grocery stores is still there today. It doesn't do much business but it's there. This of course, applies to Royalties, it was Little Chicago when it started. But it was because there was gas there and the people would build their little shacks and the work was close by but when the days came when they had to drill up around Millarville, they just picked those shacks up on a truck and hoisted them away. All they had to do was be close to a gas line you see. Now, little Philadelphia was west of what is now Longview but that also disappeared but Longview stayed. And even today, it's a thriving little place. There's a good machine shop there, has been, there was a machine shop there all through the Depression. Homer Hayden and his son have been running it for years and still have it. It's far enough away from the ??? that it will last. The other ones there were just too many in one clump. And of course, it's far enough away from High River too.

#257 JW: Had Barbers started up at that time too as well, Barbers Machine Shop.

BL: I remember them well and I know they moved to Calgary when the Depression hit but they must have been there for 3 or 4 years. But the machine shop that had been in early was Hector's. The boys were the ones that I knew, there was Sam and I'm trying to think of his brother's name. Sam is dead I believe now. But their dad had started it, just a little small outfit in earlier years. But they were in Royalties and there was a lot of work went on there in 1930 and they were quite busy. And later you see, they moved from there to Calgary when things were bad. I was trying to think of the brother's name but. . I know he went to California when they sold out.

JW: Oh, I did.

BL: Yes, I can't remember his name. But then they were people nearer my age you see. But that was the main welding shop in there in those days. Maurice was the brother's name, Sam and Maurice, that's right. Surprising how it will come to you when you just forget about it for a minute.

JW: I think you mentioned, it has been mentioned that one of the reasons people built, quote, shacks, was nobody expected it to last. Did people just think they were going to be in

there a couple of years and then. . .

BL: Well, that was the thought you see, because that's generally the way oil fields go. The only fact that they didn't move so much in the earlier years was that it took longer to drill a well. Once they get drilling wells in 6 months even, there was no use having anything very permanent. It was better to have something on skids and have it where you can move it and that's what they done. But it did seem funny to see a little small shack and a big expensive car. But that's also true of coal mines, if you've been through coal and they're pretty steady, they don't disappear overnight. But if you've been through there you've often seen that.

JW: That's true I have. Were you in the valley and still working when the Conservation Board came in?

BL: Yes, I was.

JW: When was that, about '38?

BL: You know, it seems to me that they were there earlier than that. But being that we didn't have much connection with them. You see, that was more connected with the office than it was with us. So I just can't put a year to it but I'm sure they were in there earlier than that.

#301 JW: All right. So they didn't affect your job particularly?

BL: Oh no. They came in for the gas. I mentioned earlier that Home 2 being the first that was closed in. And that was in nineteen twenty. . . I think I came up from the Highwood to that and that would be '29. Yes, that would be in the summer of '29 that that was and the Conservation probably came in soon after that. I'm not just definite on that but they would you see, where they got where they could close oils in. And something had to be done, I think maybe their idea to come in was to try to prevent all this waste of gas. So they could have been just a little earlier as I say, but it would be about that time, yes.

End of tape.

Tape 3 Side 2

JW: Did you recognize at that time in your position that there was a waste of gas or just that was the way it was and you didn't think about it?

BL: You didn't pay any attention, there was gas everywhere, yes. Looking back you think, it was too bad there was such a loss and perhaps there was but things come gradually on you like that. And we really didn't, all these flares all over, you know really, looking back it was foolish but the idea was they wanted the gasoline and the only way they could get the gasoline was to let the naphtha flow through the separators and they didn't have anywhere to put the gas, there wasn't a market for it. Like I say, they weren't too enthused about putting it back in the ground at that time.

JW: Most of the early drilling, as I understand anyway, was done by the oil companies.

BL: Yes, not contractors yes.

JW: When did drilling contractors come in?

BL: I better go back, there was a company called Drilling Contractors but I think you mean general contractors.

JW: Yes.

BL: Yes. I would think that possibly 1935. No, no, I'm wrong, 1938.

JW: Fairly late then.

BL: 1938. Because you had Newell and Chandler, Snyder and Head and then Anglo Drilling. That was some of the first ones.

JW: Sherman and Bowler.

BL: Sherman and Bowler, yes. I should go back on that. Sherman and Bowler came in late '28, early '29 and they were contractors.

JW: Were they then perhaps the first?

BL: No. It's coming to me now. George Muir was a driller, I guess he'd been a cable tool driller in the early years, he was around that valley from the same time as Sandy McNab and Roy Whitney and those fellows. So that he worked in to the contracting and they got work. . he contracted for Joe Pugh and Bill Livingstone on the Mercury, the first wells they drilled were Union Drilling. These. . I believe Livingstone. . Mayland. . I think they were in on it, on this Union Drilling. I suppose they put up money with him. But the Union Drilling was contracting those wells to start with. But George Muir had contracted in 1926, he was drilling a well there, down from the rock cut, near the river. So he was in the contracting early but that was cable tools though. But I'm not certain he was contracting but I think he was, I think that well was being contracted, yes. It's just hard to recall all of them. You see, they were doing the drilling but we didn't always know what the conditions were. That's right. The main line of contracting was after the crude was discovered in Royalties, the Turner Valley Royalties. The groups started to come in after that. It would be well into '38 when the real bunch of wells were being drilled in that south end and they really went to town then for awhile on them.

#040 JW: Why do you think there was that transition to using contractors?

BL: Perhaps the fact that maybe they were getting more and more small companies owned the leases. Now that I think of it, the Home Oil Company, where they were drilling, Royalite??? contracted a lot of the wells in section 20 and that was in 1929 and '30 they were drilling those wells. You see, I don't know whether I mentioned, I did in the book but I don't know whether I mentioned it to you, the names of the wells that were in ??? the wells I'm going to mention were all drilled by Royalite, on contract for the companies. On the northwest, as you enter section 20 from the north, on the northwest 20 or 40 whatever it be, probably LSD, there was ball??? type wells, there were two. On the southwest corner of that section, A. P. Conn??? had 2 or 3 wells, that was not contracted by Royalite. But you come back north again to the east side from Baltac???, there was Associated #1 and 2, these I mention now were all drilled by Royalite, Associated 1 and 2, a little further south and east were Hargill 1 and 2. Then from the north again but a little east there was the Home 1, 2 and 3, all drilled by Royalite, now south of there, the Calmont??? drilled. I'm not sure of the exact number but I would say there were three anyhow, but that was Calmont were doing their own drilling. They brought in Oklahoma

drillers to do that. You got down on the southeast and there was the Wellington, the Wellington was parked way up on the east side, just west of the highway. And further north, into the north quarter, that's 160, there was the Freehold and the Freehold would be one that was drilled I believe, by Union Drilling. I'm guessing on that but I believe that's correct, that they drilled that. Both those two wells produced some for quite a number of years. And of course, the Calmont and the Home and the Associated, those were all fairly close together and could be one of the reasons that that was drilled out so. .it didn't produce so long as the rest, there were probably too many stuck in there. But that was high production right there to start with. I don't know how successful Calmont was with production, I can't recall that. But certainly before Calmont started drilling, Home was doing well in it, they were really getting production. And then you see, the Mayland wells were on the section immediately south of that. And they were good wells too. There were two of them almost down at Hartel, one was just a little north, right just immediately west of the highway and the other one was west of there, near the south end too. And then further back in the coulee, maybe half a mile west of the highway or close to it, they had a producing well there also. I think that was maybe their #1, the one near the highway north of Hartel was 6 and the one. . no, 3. . 3 was in there somewhere I believe. But then there was also Alberta Southern or Southern Alberta. I think they were in that Hartel district also. There was one just catty corner southeast from the corner store there and there was another one south of the store and one in the same half section or quarter section on the west side. So that was the continuation of the streak that was coming all the way from Turner Valley down. At that time that was the south end of the production. But when Turner Valley Royalties come in, the Stirling was also drilling. Now we're getting to 1936. Stirling was being drilled by Royalite and they were on, as you go south past Mercury. Mercury must have been drilling back in '29 anyhow. It was later. . there was. . the road didn't pass Hartel going south till after '29. So it would be into '30 when Mercury and Miracle were drilling those wells. Miracle were the wells owned by Mayland. Mayland had a big interest though in Mercury as well. But you get south from there, Stirling, they drilled #4, #6, they had two if not three wells and that was on the east side of the highway, #4 was almost at Royalties. That was the reason Royalties started up there because those wells were there. Then you had to drop over the hill from there and one of the first ones there, it was drilled by Royalite for Davies. And that turned out to. .

#108 JW: Would that be Maynard Davies?

BL: Yes, it must have been. It must have been because it was Davies. And I was working on that one, not to the finish of it but I understood that that came out to be a real well. But when we went down to drill that there was no road. We just drove in around the hills there to get to it. And that's just immediately south of Royalties, up on the hill north from Longview. You see, that's where they were extending the field. As it dropped over the hill then, and 1938, they were spotting the rigs from there right to Longview. And then Anglo was going strong there and they drilled them all around there and right on across the river. So it was the old story, go a little further every time you hit it. Now there was some people that I guess, were at it just a little too early because there had been a well I

believe, spotted south of Royalties many years before that. But probably poor equipment and maybe short of money and they didn't get anywhere. But they weren't too far off the right place. I don't know if there had been any wells right immediately close to there but they weren't so far out on it. Some of these early fellows you know, people probably thought they were crooks and that when they went broke but they were doing the best they could. Ab McPherson was one of the ones a little too early also and I know some people gave him a hard name but he wasn't trying to hurt anybody I'm sure. I didn't know him personally, he was before my time but seeing where they had started these old wells some time prior to the 20's I would think, or in there, they were on the right place but they just didn't have the equipment or the money to do it. You see, they didn't expect wells to go 5, 6 thousand feet. No, oil is where you find it.

#133 JW: You mentioned on one of those rigs they brought up people from Oklahoma as roughnecks and so on.

BL: Yes, it wasn't. . Dallas, Jack Dallas was in charge for Calmont. I don't know too much about who the Calmont people were. But he thought it would be great to bring these drillers in from the States. Many other drillers came in from the States but the people who came from California were experienced in formations similar to Turner Valley. But the people from Oklahoma were in a different formation all together, they could drill them in a few days and they were just lost when they come to drill this slanted formation and hard formation that we had. They probably made a mess of a lot of wells for that reason. Everybody has to get experience. And I think they were too sure of themselves also. Naturally as time went on, like anyone else they would learn, people learn by mistakes. But there's no doubt, when the California men came in they had the experience that the people from Oklahoma didn't have.

JW: Was there any animosity by more or less native Canadians or Canadian residents?

BL: I would say there was more animosity between Oklahoma people and California people than there was otherwise. I think the Canadians realized that this thing was new and they were bringing these men in. . to start it was all right. But when the Oklahoma came in, you see, there were a lot of roughnecks. Maybe some of these so called drillers were roughnecks I don't know, but there was enough men come with them roughnecking also. That might have caused problems because there was lots of Canadian boys roughnecking. There's nothing to learning it, you know, there was no reason they have to bring roughnecks from the States up here. You could have an argument to bringing drillers up because at that time the driller had to know what he was doing. Different from today, it's all written out for him. That's what they tell me, when they want to drill today everything is all written out before they ever start the well. But in those days the driller had to do his own thinking. I don't think there was too much animosity but after a little time, naturally the Canadian boys didn't see why they should be bringing drillers when they were quite capable of drilling. I was one of them. Only I got in on it pretty early. But there were others just like me, a man working for \$6.75 a day and seeing another man getting \$14 a day, naturally he would like to get in on it. Most of the young fellows made out good when they got a chance to go. And you couldn't altogether blame the companies, if they

could get men they thought were experienced, well they were putting out a lot of money on what was probably, maybe looked on as a wildcat. So there was a little to be said for both sides. And I think when they realized that the Canadian boys had the experience they were quite willing to let them go ahead and drill. Now you see, in recent years those boys from Turner Valley have worked all over the world. And using the experience that we learned the hard way, back in the 20's. That is correct. But somebody has to learn it. And pass it on, that's the way the world is.

#178 JW: All the land within Turner Valley, up and down the valley, was that owned, was that farm or ranch land prior to it being oil land?

BL: From Turner Valley north for a ways, a lot of that was owned by old Southern Alberta. I'm never too sure when I say Southern Alberta whether it should be Alberta Southern or Southern Alberta. But it was really Joe Pugh and Bill Livingstone, they were the ones in it. And they did own a lot of land. But in those early days if a company didn't have the land and they had the lease. . you could have the mineral rights and not own it, but if you wanted to drill they bought it. But then back, later, say, from '38 on perhaps, they leased. . they made a contract with the farmer and leased it rather than buying it.

JW: What were your relationships with the local ranchers and farmers?

BL: I think very good, as far as I'm concerned it was. The ranchers were pretty easy people to get along with if you treat them right at all. And you take a bunch of young men like we were there and they get a lot of money that they'd never got. . a higher wage than they ever got in their life and driving big cars and that, they might seem to be arrogant, maybe to these ranchers that had to work a little harder for their living, it could have been. But a lot of them people that I met then were my friends and still are today so I think that people are pretty much the same. If you treat them as they should be treated they'll treat you back in return. No, I don't think there was really animosity there.

JW: I've heard and I don't know if it's true, that there was some prejudice in the oil patch against say, hiring somebody with a foreign sounding name or something like that.

BL: Well, if it was I didn't know of it. But thinking back there wasn't much. I recall one case, we were in the store in Turner Valley and this young man, I think he was probably from Holland and he asked this girl behind the counter for. . he wanted to buy some soap and he said, pamoleeva, well Palmolive soap does look like that. Some of the boys standing there, you know, roughnecks, started to giggle. I said to them, by gosh don't be so harsh, this boy can manage on two languages, you've got only one. And I told the girl right away, I saw that she didn't understand him and I said, Palmolive is what he wants and these others I turned and told them. And that's the only incident I can remember I run across. But you know, people are inclined to do that but actually those people that come from Europe or Asia or that, I respect them because they come where the language is different to them. Now I know some of those people from Sweden and probably Holland or the Netherlands also, they learn a certain amount of English before they come. Many of them get that in school as a second language but that doesn't mean that they can get by when they come here, things are different from what they expect. No, I admire those people. So I don't know that there was that much real animosity.

#228 JW: Okay. You mentioned in the earlier days that especially relative to now, that the drillers would use their judgement. Maybe you could talk a little bit about that.

BL: Yes. I mentioned earlier that they started with these blade bits that was just steel, just cut out like a fish tail but then these Hughes bits, people know who Hughes was anyhow, I think that's why he made his fortune, and they started with a two cone bit. They were steel bits you see, later they had three cones. Reid Bit Company also put out a little different type of bit but it was also a steel bit. Now, though Hughes put out these bits, some of them were short cones, with the idea for real hard formations, some were longer cones where you hit softer formation and they cut faster, you see, they wouldn't plug up so easy, the short cone might plug it. So it was the driller that was putting the bit in and would decide what sort of bit he was going to run on formation. But if you had been drilling on there in a well or two, if you remember back you pretty well remember. Now everybody don't do the same thing but that's the way I looked at it. I could tell. I even knew the bit that the other fellow had ahead of me as well as the bit I run myself so I would know what I thought was best. And I think that's what most of them did. There would be several. . more the length of the teeth and the cones than anything else. And then the speed that you turned. It's easy to tell your revolutions you know, just like counting seconds in a minute. I think probably there was more real thinking to fishing junk as we called it out of these old holes, to actual drilling. You see, when the drilling got going good. . many of these people drilled for years and never had to fish anything much. And if they did they were in a bigger hole where they could use bigger equipment. No, I think there was more real thinking, more chance to use their brains than there was in the actual drilling.

#266 JW: Often though, there would, especially in Turner Valley you'd get in crooked holes, how were those dealt with?

BL: Well now, to go back to the cable tools. If they got off you could tell when you pulled your bit because the way it would be worn on one side. So they would pull up and they would put rocks in down there and go down and drill and if that didn't work they would throw old cable or anything else down. So that's. . when we had to go into well, that's the sort of junk we had to clean out if they hadn't been successful in getting it. You didn't want to do that with rotary though because you could see, you could get stuck in the hole with those rocks if they got in beside your bit, in beside your tools. And besides the cable and that, you couldn't use stuff like that. With the rotary you would pull up and do what we called ream, not give it much weight and turn till you got it straightened out again. Or in a real serious thing you could run cement down there and cement and start over again, just for a few feet. But by the time you know that you are off you need quite a little bit from it you know, with that. However when they got better they knew the weight to carry and the speed to give it and they weren't so apt to go off. Sure no hole was absolutely straight. There came a time when they allowed us to go three points off. Now that doesn't mean much for weight but you were carrying. . there was a gauge on your cable and we referred. . if you were looking at the gauge in the store today, where you go to weigh

something in the grocery store you don't know whether it's kilograms or pounds, you can go by either one but on this we didn't call it pounds or anything else, we called it points. And if your gauge . . . you swing. . . you know the weight of your pipe, when you're sitting right off the bottom and you could give it up to three points. If it was hard drilling you see, you want to give it a little bit. And you weren't supposed to give it any more than that. So it didn't matter what weight you were putting on, you went just by points. And it was more controlled drilling, you were using better judgement. But that doesn't mean it as absolutely straight you know, I don't think there's anything absolutely straight but that doesn't hurt a little bit.

#310 JW: You'd sometimes I guess, put down a bottle of acid wouldn't you, to see how it etched?

BL: Yes, that was an idea but I don't know how long they kept doing that. I do recall when you used that.

JW: You have a note here on cable tool drilling, left and right handed twisting.

BL: Yes, have you seen these cable tool bits?

JW: Yes.

BL: Well, you know, you wonder when you look at them how they drill a round hole. But every time that that bit hit bottom it turned a little. And your line was an inch and an eighth. Now you probably looked at it where it's like so many, say 8 strands twisted around each other, but those strands are all twisted also. Each strand is made out of wire that's twisted. Now on the left, here's your bit hanging here, here's your bit here and here's your tools above it, you're screwing in you see, you're turning to the right. That means that bit will tighten, it will turn this way wouldn't it. So you see, the cable, that bit, every time it hit it moved, turned a little bit, turned a little bit and it would be turning to that right. If you had the other sort of lay to the bit maybe it would turn the other way too but it would have to be turning off you see. It would be going away from the way it's screwed on. And when you set those bits up, you set them up tight. Because you didn't just twist them you had a circle in the floor with a big long pogy handle they called it, and you really set them hard. The shouldering??? of the bit seemed to mean more than the threads, you see, I don't believe that you counted on the threads, it was shouldering it tight. You'd think you would screw it off the threads, you'd put it so hard. And that was way they run blocks for casing for the cable tools or for the hoist for the rotary drilling, naturally you had the other.

End of tape.