

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Jack MacCalder

INTERVIEWER: Aubrey Kerr

DATE: June 8th, 1994

Side 1 – 43:30

AK: Okay, it's Wednesday morning June the 8th, 1994, and I'm Aubrey Kerr and I'm in my office here in Home Oil Tower on the 23rd floor and I have with me today Jack MacCalder, who I want to interview about the early days of Turner Valley and particularly his background, and Jack, tell us where you were born, and what year you were born.

JMC: I was born in Orillia in 1916. And we come to Collingwood, Dad worked in the shipyard there in the early days and then we come up to Saskatchewan. And then we moved to Turner Valley in April 1930.

AK: Alright, let's just see if that's coming through. Okay, Jack, now tell us where your parents were born. Do you have any record of where they'd come from?

JMC: Yeah, Dad was born down in Lindsay and mother was born in Collingwood.

AK: Right. And their parents had come from the old country, or do you know? That'd be like your parents.

JMC: Yes. I think some of them did come from the old country.

AK: And your mother's maiden name was...

JMC: Morrison.

AK: With two r's? Morrison.

JMC: Yes. Yes.

AK: And were they both on farms? Like your dad and your mother, did they grow up on farms?

JMC: Yes, they did. Yeah, Mother was a schoolteacher.

AK: Oh she was? And she taught for quite a long time in her career?

JMC: Well, I think she was up at New Liskeard there and I just don't remember how many years she taught.

AK: Then when they got married, where did they live when they got married?

JMC: I guess they lived at Lindsay and then they went moved up to Orillia.

AK: Now, lets find out, what was your dad doing in Lindsay?

JMC: I think he was in a furniture factory or something like that. Then he went over to Collingwood.

AK: Yeah, your mother and dad moved from Lindsay to Collingwood.

JMC: No they went to Orillia.

AK: All right. Now this is the big question. Why did they go to Orillia? Have you any idea at all?

JMC: No, I don't know.

AK: No, and what kind of a job did your dad have in Orillia? Or do you know?

JMC: No, I just don't know.

AK: But they were there long enough for you to be born there.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Right. Well then shortly after that, are you saying that they went to Collingwood then?

JMC: Yes,

AK: But you went as a small baby to Collingwood?

JMC: Yeah, I suppose. Yeah.

AK: Yeah, and you said your dad worked in the shipyards?

JMC: Yes.

AK: Were these ships the war effort or what were they? I mean the war was still on, 1916.

JMC: Yeah, they were building them then.

AK: Yeah. Well would these be the steel ships or wood?

JMC: They'd be steel ships.

AK: Well, would he would be what you might call a boilermaker or was he a...?

JMC: Well, no, he was putting the ships together like, you know the hulls together.

AK: Right. Welding?

JMC: No, that would be no welding then.

AK: Bolts?

JMC: It'd be rivets. Yeah.

AK: And then how long did they live in Collingwood?

JMC: Oh gosh, I don't remember now. I think the war was over and maybe he lived there about six months after that. Then he went back to Lindsay to farm. And then...

AK: Oh, I see. So you lived... did you grow up in Lindsay?

JMC: No, I was out on the farm like, you know.

AK: Yeah.

JMC: But then I started school at about 5 years old.

AK: Right, in Lindsay area.

JMC: No, out in the country.

AK: Yeah, but I mean it was in the area.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Right. And then you carried on there in your school years.

JMC: No. I didn't pass out of grade one, then we moved out to Milestone, Saskatchewan.

AK: All right. Well now what impelled you to come to Milestone? There again you're not...

JMC: Well, Dad had a sister up there.

AK: Well, that's maybe the reason.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And that was your aunt.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And was she and her husband farming in the Milestone area?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: What year would that be approximately? Would that be in the 20s sometime?

JMC: Yeah be in the 20s, I guess.

AK: Yeah. Do you remember as a child traveling out...?

JMC: To Ontario?

AK: No, traveling out to Saskatchewan?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: On the train?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah, right,

JMC: But there was no trees there then.

AK: In Milestone?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: It was treeless?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: It looked pretty barren?

JMC: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we come out in the fall, I think it was, and there was snow on the ground and everything like that.

AK: Yeah. Well now, did your dad acquire some acreage there or what...?

JMC: No, he looked after his brother-in-law's farm there like, you know.

AK: Oh I see, so he was like a tenant?

JMC: Yeah. He was, well, he looked after the farm like, you know...

AK: Yeah.

JMC: That's what it was.

AK: Yeah, well he had experience in farming.

JMC: Oh yeah, he'd been out there in the early days.

AK: Oh, before?

JMC: Oh yeah, he had been out there about 1904, 1905 or something like that.

AK: Your dad was?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Oh, so this wasn't new to him?

JMC: Oh no.

AK: Okay. Well then Milestone, where would that be? Where would be the closest town to Milestone? Give us an idea of the geography here.

JMC: Yeah, well, it's on the Sioux line. Down east of Moose Jaw there.

AK: On the way to Weyburn?

JMC: Yeah. And then it'd be 30 or 35 miles south of Regina there.

AK: Right. Right. So then you stayed there for some time then and stayed on that farm?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Where were your aunt and uncle living?

JMC: Well they moved into Milestone and then they went into Regina after that.

AK: So then you were out on the farm, you and your mother and dad. You were living on the farm.

JMC: Yeah.

[00:09:58] AK: Right. Well then what was the next move then?

JMC: 1930 we moved to Turner Valley.

AK: And what was the reason for moving there?

JMC: Oh well. 1929 there, it was a really dry year. So then everybody was uh...

AK: You were burnt out, were you?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: No crop?

JMC: No crop.

AK: So did you just kind of walk away from the farm, just left it there and...?

JMC: Oh, well, yeah, but his brother-in-law wanted to come back to the farm again.

AK: Oh yeah, I see. And why did why did your dad choose Turner Valley?

JMC: Well, Mother had an uncle out west of High River there, you know.

AK: Yeah.

JMC: She was out the year before that.

AK: Scouting things out?

JMC: Yeah, and then, you know, it was a big deal there in Turner Valley, that was big, they were really drilling then.

AK: Yeah. Well that was after the Royalite 4 discovery.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So then when you arrived there, would be, what, about 10 years old or...?

JMC: No, I'd be 13.

AK: 13. And what did they do with you? Try to find you a job, or work around, or what were you up to?

JMC: Well, no, I went to school there. And then the next time I had chicken pox in the spring. I never passed out the exam.

AK: So what grade was that?

JMC: Eight.

AK: Uh-huh. What about did you go back anymore?

JMC: No.

AK: So that was it?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: What'd your mother... did she want you to go back or...?

JMC: Oh, yeah. I went over to my uncle's there and so I got out of that district, you know, out of Turner Valley there.

AK: Where did your uncle live?

JMC: Just west of High River.

AK: Oh. Was he farming?

JMC: Oh, yeah. Well, he was Mother's uncle.

AK: Yeah, right. So you were kind of a hired hand there, were you?

JMC: Oh yeah, yeah.

AK: You worked there for how long?

JMC: I guess till I was... I think I put winter in there and everything. And then next year, let's see, that was 1931, 1932 and I went, you know out for other farmers like, you know.

AK: Oh I see, hired hand here and there?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And in the meantime your father must have started to get into this rig building, was it?

JMC: Well, no.

AK: What was his first job in the Valley? Do you remember?

JMC: I forget now. He was down on a, I forget now what it was. He was down on a... I just, I just can't remember.

AK: Well that's okay. It's just that he was working right in Turner Valley.

JMC: Yeah.

[00:14:18] AK: Right. Well then when did when did this idea of rig building come to him? Did he develop that himself or did he just kind of work into it?

JMC: Oh no. Shorty Mann was there and everything like that. He got acquainted with him.

AK: So he kind of worked under Shorty then.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: I see and then that's this picture we're talking about here.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So your dad then continued as a part of Shorty's crew. Is that right?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Right. But when did you come into the Turner Valley workforce? When did you leave your farming chores and...?

JMC: Well, Eddy Thompson had bought a half section down there where Turner Valley Royalties was and he bought it in 1932 and then I went down there and he had a house there and I batched there. I would be 17 at that time. So they were digging cellars there, like, you know those over at Richfield. Let's see now, and then there was, up on the hill there, it was for Hovis Drilling Company,

AK: That was Mark Hovis?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: That was the fellow that was the driller on the Dingman well.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And by that time he had his own drilling company, didn't he?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: That was cable tools?

JMC: Yep. It was cable tools.

AK: Right.

JMC: I had a team there, you know, from Eddie Thompson for skidding stuff around. And then the next, that was 1933. In 1934 he had hay fields there, like you know, and he said, they're going to dig this well, and then so he said, well we'll build a haystack here. And then he built the haystack there. Then the next spring, 1935, his surveyor come in and he got me to help him to survey it out, like you know.

AK: Survey the well site.

JMC: Yeah, that was Turner Valley Royalties. Then he said he had to ??? there and he said, now, here's the stake; you drive the stake in where that pin is. So that's...

AK: At that time, did you have any idea who was behind that well at Turner Valley Royalties?

JMC: Well it was the superintendent here from the... Brown.

AK: Yeah, Robby Brown Sr.

JMC: Yeah.

JMC: And he was the superintendent of the electric, of the streetcar system, wasn't he?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Did you ever see him come out and...?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: Well now, that was a very historic thing that you did, you drove the...

JMC: Yeah, I drove the stake.

AK: ...the stake. That's wonderful!

JMC: And then we dug the cellar, you know.

AK: And how many people did you have working for you?

JMC: Well, it was Eddie Thompson that, he had oh, there was... I just forget now who it was but there was, I think there was Art McDonald. And I think maybe it was... I forget now. There was quite a few of them there, you know.

AK: All right. But your job was to get that cellar dug, was it?

JMC: Yep.

AK: Were you in charge of the group or?

Well? Well, I guess I was working for Eddie Thompson there.

AK: Yeah. Well, he was kind of the foreman, was he?

JMC: Well, he didn't come there at all.

AK: Oh? He just sent you out?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Right. Do you know who the name of the surveyor was that surveyed that? The guy that come up and told you to drive the stake?

JMC: It was... I just forget now. His name just doesn't come to me now, but we could go down and see who surveyed it out like, you know.

AK: Yeah, well maybe we could find that out.

JMC: But I know he had a truck, I think it was a Chev truck, and he had his deal on the back of the truck like, you know. The toolbox like, he had all the stuff in that.

AK: All the surveying equipment.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah, right.

[00:20:41] AK: Well then, when the well got started, did you stick around and work near the Turner Valley Royalties, or did you move on to other jobs?

JMC: Well, Tom Visser built the derrick.

AK: Tom Visser. Now that's Charlie's father.

JMC: Yeah, and it was a cable tool.

AK: It started off with cable tools.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: At that time was Charlie... he'd be growing up?

JMC: Who, Charlie?

AK: Yeah.

JMC: Oh hell, yeah, he was... there was a sentry in the corner here. And then this was over here and I was batching down there, you know and Charlie was drilling on that well. And I went over there and I'd sit there and talk to them at night like, you know.

AK: With Charlie?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: Did you ever get a desire to go and roughneck?

JMC: Oh, yeah, I did.

AK: Oh you did roughneck?

JMC: Oh, no. One of the Drillers, I won't mention his name, but he lived in Naphtha there like, you know.

AK: Naphtha - that's N-A-P-H-T-H-A. That's the name of a little town, no longer exists. Right?

JMC: Well, it's there.

AK: It's still there?

JMC: Oh yeah. Yep.

AK: Where is it? Near Hartell or...?

JMC: It's just 4 miles south of Black Diamond and two miles north of Hartell.

AK: Oh, okay, now you know. So he was a driller was he, this fellow?

JMC: Oh, yeah.

AK: That lived at Naphtha?

JMC: Yeah.

[00:22:49] AK: Well, then what's the story behind that?

JMC: Well, there was a town just to the west of us like, you know, he said he was going to give me a roughneck job. So I waited for two or three days and then I went down and he had his brother-in-law working for him.

AK: Oh, yeah.

JMC: And then I went... because I'd worked for Old Shorty a few times before that, you know.

AK: On the rig building?

JMC: Yeah. So then he said, well - he was sitting on his toolbox there - and he said, well, if you'll go and dig them anchor holes there, I'll give you \$4 a piece for them. I said I was going to head off out of Turner Valley there, like, you know...

AK: Well you were fed up with...

JMC: Oh, yeah.

AK: To go back farming or what?

JMC: Oh no, no. So anyway, he said, I'll put the stuff under the toolbox there, you know. And then I went down in the morning and I dug the whole four of them out in one day.

AK: Right.

JMC: And he come in there at night and he said, you all done? and I said, yes. So he walked all the way around and said, you come back in the morning and put them in. So that's when I started to work for him.

AK: Oh, and what did you fill them in for?

JMC: Well, he had to put some stuff down in the holes there like.

AK: Well, like the anchor?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Now what are these anchors that go down in the hole? Are they, got an eye bolt on them? And how deep would you drill, dig these holes?

JMC: Well, there'd be five feet deep.

AK: On an angle?

JMC: No, you go up like that, and then this here part would be... that'd be about 10 feet long. And then we had bolts coming out like this and then...

AK: There'd be eyes on them?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Which way are we looking? Are we looking down?

JMC: Yeah, this is looking down.

AK: Right.

JMC: And this is looking this way.

AK: Yeah sideways.

JMC: Yeah, and this would be about, be like that you know, and this would be coming up like that. And this would be, I think it was about five or six feet deep here. I think it was six feet deep.

AK: And the purpose of these was to hook on to the lines that were holding the derrick in place so they wouldn't blow over?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So that was your first introduction to putting in... what did you call them, "dead men"?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah. So from then on, did this fellow continue to employ you or what?

JMC: Oh, yeah. He said, you come back in the morning and fill them in. And he said you work with this guy - it was Vern Perry - you work with him and build that derrick and then they want to tear down another derrick and one of these guys said he hired somebody. And then he said, I forget now ??? in there at Home Oil on one of these wooden derricks, and he said could you go up there? And I said, yeah.

AK: So you went... now this was a wooden derrick?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: Well, was there a ladder?

JMC: Oh, yeah, you could go right up to the top.

AK: What'd he want you to go up there for?

JMC: Well, he only had three men up there.

AK: Oh, this was during the rig building itself?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Oh, and this was your first time at actually building a rig?

JMC: Yeah. No, this was tearing it down.

AK: Oh, tearing it down. Oh yeah, okay. Now, when you tore a derrick down, did you take care to kind of keep the timbers from being ruined?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: What would you do? Would you just throw them down on the ground?

JMC: Oh no. We'd tie them up with rope and then you'd let them down. You'd let the scaffold down.

AK: I see. You had what, a gen pole up there or something?

JMC: No.

AK: Or a pulley?

JMC: Yeah, well there was, you had one leg up like that, you see, and then you had a pulley on top of that. Then your scaffold was here.

AK: Right.

JMC: And then the scaffold would be up there.

AK: So then it was worthwhile, then, to dismantle these derricks then, was it?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Rather than just leave them and walk away from them?

JMC: Well, some of them, they'd saw off all the legs like, you know?

AK: And then tip it over?

JMC: Yeah. They'd saw this leg off here, this would be going like that, you know. Then they'd saw this leg off here. And then they'd go across from this corner and push up the jag, you know, and deal across like that. And then they'd jack it up like that, and then it would fall over. They'd take all the guy lines off it, like you know.

AK: Right. And then when it fell on the ground, then you could take it apart.

JMC: Oh yeah. Yeah. Well, it'd be a lot of...

AK: But what'd you have, a bunch of big, what do you call those things that you use to pry the spikes out?

JMC: We had, now this would be like that. And then this would be flat.

AK: Oh, like a... That'd be a matlock hammer?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Well, this would be, you'd pry with this... What am I trying to think of? What do you call those big things with a claw? There's a claw on the end of them.

JMC: Yeah, it'd be like that. Then you'd have a rope around your neck and you'd just put that inside that...

AK: Is that right?

JMC: Right. You'd go up to the top and...

AK: You had no fear of heights?

JMC: Well, I was, you know, the first day, you know, the first couple of weeks there, I'd be, it's be, you know, scary and then one night you'd go down to sleep, and the next morning you wouldn't be afraid at all, you know...

AK: You didn't have nightmares about falling off the...?

JMC: Oh well yeah, you did sometimes. And then another guy, a couple of years later, he said, I'm afraid of this height up here. And I kind of laughed at him, and I said, I had the same thing. And I said, now you go ahead and sleep.

[00:31:45]AK: And meanwhile, your dad was continuing to work on rigs, wasn't he?

JMC: Yeah, yeah. Well, he was digging the cellar and then he...

AK: Did you work with him or did he work separately?

JMC: No. I was working for Shorty Mann.

AK: Did he have his own outfit or what?

JMC: No, well he had his horses like, you know, and stuff like that.

AK: The Fresnos?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And digging cellars. He was more into cellars, was he?

JMC: Yeah. Then he went to work for Flanders, like, you know, and stuff like that.

AK: Oh Ralph Flanders?

JMC: Yeh. Not Ralph Flanders, but his father.

AK: Yeah, what was his name, first name, do you remember?

JMC: Earl Flanders.

AK: Earl Flanders. Right. Ralph just died about a year or two ago, didn't he?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So Flanders, he was a Royalite man though, wasn't he?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So was Earl a Royalite man, too?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: I see. So your dad actually was working for Royalite then, on kind of a contract basis.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So much a day or whatever? So much for the horses?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Any idea what he was getting for those?

JMC: Oh golly, I don't know.

AK: No. At that time, when you were working on the rigs, pulling these rigs down, what were you getting an hour?

JMC: Seven dollars an hour.

AK: That much?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: That's pretty good money.

JMC: Well, Shorty said,, you dig them holes, I'll pay you \$4 apiece for them.

AK: Yeah.

JMC: So I made \$16 that day.

AK: Right.

JMC: And he said, come back in the morning and I'll give you \$5 a day. So then I, you know, I worked, I don't know how much I worked for that. Then he said, I'll pay you \$6 a day, you know. It's come through. And then, I forget now, I think he paid me \$7 a day.

AK: That's \$7 a day, not an hour.

JMC: No.

AK: No, no, I just wanted to get that corrected, Sophie. So he advanced you up to \$7.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Right.

JMC: I was the youngest one in the crowd.

AK: What age were you then?

JMC: Uh, let's see, I'd be twenty I guess when I started.

AK: Yeah, well that's that picture there. You were... that was 1937 so you'd be 21 then.

JMC: Yup.

AK: Yeah. The one with Marjon Lundbreck.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So all this time, through these years, you were employed in either building or dismantling wooden derricks?

JMC: Yeah. I forget how many we tore them down.

AK: Then what, would you use all this timber over again to rebuild?

JMC: Well no, I think they just used it for boiler houses and stuff, on the...

AK: Oh, for fuel?

JMC: No, just for boiler houses, like.

AK: Oh, oh, to build a boiler house.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Oh I see.

JMC: And then they had the steel derricks coming in and we used them out for braces and stuff like that.

AK: Well, what year was it actually that the big steel derricks started to show up?

JMC: Oh, well, they brought them up from the States in 1928 and 1929 there.

AK: Oh, that early?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Well, then was there room for you people to build wooden derricks? Was there competition there or was it...

JMC: I think they built wooden derricks, they built wooden derricks first. I think the steel derricks cost more, and then...

AK: You know, with the derricks it would be easier to handle steel derricks because you could dismantle them piece by piece.

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: All the girds ??? you'd take them down and...

JMC: Yeah, well that's when they started putting them back in again. Well, Fin Lineham worked on the wooden rig there. That's first, when he started.

[00:36:57] AK: Right. Well now, getting back to the wooden derricks, what year do you remember, or can you remember, when these wooden derricks started off with rotary ??? or did they all start off with cable tools and drill a certain depth and then switch over to rotary? Do you remember any of that?

JMC: No. Well, the wooden derricks had to be quite high for rotary equipment, like you know. But the cable tool...

AK: Didn't need that much of a derrick.

JMC: No, it would only be about...

AK: Eighty feet?

JMC: Yeah, about eighty feet, seventy feet or something like that.

AK: Yeah, right. Okay, so then you carried on. When did you first get the word that you were to go down here to this Marjon Lundbrek? That was in 1937 you said. Yeah. Did you know beforehand where this was or who the promoters were or anything at all about it? The people that were going to drill it?

JMC: No, no I didn't know that.

AK: That was another world, was it, that the people wouldn't tell you?

JMC: Yeah.

[00:38:46] AK: Getting back to Bob Brown Sr., after you'd driven that stake and they built... did they build a wooden derrick there too?

JMC: Yup.

AK: And they drilled with cable tools.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Well then, um, during that time, did you ever go back and see Bob Brown around there when they were working?

JMC: Well, I think we hauled sand up there from the Highwood River with Eddie Thompson's team, like you know, and then I think I quit there about June, I think.

AK: Well, what did they haul the sand up for? What was the purpose?

JMC: They had to put it in under the beams, like, down on the ground, like, you know. Because the beams would shift, like you know, move up and down.

AK: Oh, you mean the whole derrick would shift, would it?

JMC: Yeah. The whole derrick...

AK: You mean where the rocking beam was?

JMC: Yeah. Yeah. Like see, the rocking beam was like that. [rustling papers] And then it was down like this. And then all these timbers back here, they had to put sand in under them. But the derrick, you know, the derrick wouldn't be... they wouldn't have to put anything under that.

AK: Well, you got the corners. Weren't they, wouldn't you have concrete footings there? Did you ever pour concrete footings for the corners?

JMC: Oh yeah, yeah. Some of them, they just had planks like, you know, like we had out there on that derrick.

AK: Okay, so how long did it take you when you, getting back to this Lundbreck thing; how long did it take you to put this derrick up? Do you remember? Any idea? Two weeks? Three weeks?

JMC: Oh no, no, no, hell! I don't think we were there in a week.

AK: Oh, less than a week, eh?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And you brought all your timbers down from Turner Valley or...?

JMC: Oh no, they had it all landed in there, you know.

AK: Somebody had trucked it in for you?

JMC: No, I think this, this deal here, I think Shorty Mann maybe sent a copy down to him or whatever.

AK: A which?

JMC: A copy of whatever the stuff was like, you know, what they needed for the material.

AK: Oh, so many spikes and so many... I see.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So, where would that come from then? That timber? Did it come from...

JMC: Well, I think McFarland I think was..., McFarland Lumber Company.

AK: In Calgary here?

JMC: Yeah. No, he was out around Turner Valley there.

AK: Oh yeah.

JMC: And then there was Skov Lumber Company from High River.

AK: That's S-K-O-V?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: That'd be Swedish, would it?

JMC: Yeah, well that's Harold Skov – do you remember him?

AK: No I don't. No.

JMC: Well, that would be his dad.

[00:42:56] AK: Right. Okay, so this picture was taken after the completion?

JMC: Yup.

AK: And you know, it looks like there's a sign on there. Do you see that? That looks like a sign on the derrick.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: I'm going to have that blown up and see what it is. Okay. Now I think what we'd better do is turn this tape over and it's just getting about the end of the tape. So we'll just stop it here.

Side 2 – 37:00

AK: When it blew over, what was your next move then? Did you go back out and rebuild the derrick?

JMC: Yeah, we went back out and rebuilt the derrick.

AK: Now this picture is the rebuild? Or is this the original, the first one?

JMC: That was the first one.

AK: And then it blew over?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Well then when they... did you go out and rebuild it?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: On the same crew eh? Shorty Mann....

JMC: Well, there wasn't uh... I guess Bud Williams was there. And Bill Spears wasn't there.

AK: Some of those names, eh?

JMC: Yeah. Harry Webster wasn't there.

AK: Okay. Well, that's all right. We got these names all recorded for the picture.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And this was spring 1937. Now this was intended to be a cable tool?

JMC: No, them's were ???

AK: And yet it was a wooden derrick.

JMC: Yep, yep. It was a ???

AK: Well, it would be a little bit taller than the...

JMC: Well it's 136 feet.

AK: Oh, that was 136 feet?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Oh, that was a big one.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Then why didn't they want to put a steel derrick out there? Have you any idea?

JMC: Well, I really don't know. I think the steel derrick would have cost more than the wooden derrick.

AK: Oh I see, even with the bow down, eh?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So did you continue, after the Lundbreck thing, did you continue to work for Shorty Mann?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: How long did you work for him?

JMC: Well, I worked for him for, well till I joined the Navy.

AK: Yeah. And that was what, 1940?

JMC: January 1940.

AK: Right. And I guess you would have... what about your brothers; did they, all this time I haven't talked about your other brothers. Did they get into jobs out in the Valley?

JMC: Yeah, well Don did. He worked down at the plants and stuff like that. Then he went roughnecking, you know.

AK: For whom?

JMC: For Royalite.

AK: Oh I see.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: He worked in the Valley mostly? He didn't work up in Leduc or anywhere?

JMC: Well, he worked down at, he was down at, what do you call it now? When I come home on leave in 1940, he was down at MacLeod there somewhere.

AK: Oh I see.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Well that was maybe on the Blood Reserve?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: There was a well being drilled there on the Blood.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah. Okay, and then he continued to work for Royalite or...?

JMC: Yeah, well then he, I think he was down in Saskatchewan there. And then he joined the Army I think in about '42 or '43, or something like that.

AK: Well then what about Morley?

JMC: Oh Morley was...

[phone call]

[00:03:49] AK: Okay, we're continuing. And you were going to tell me about Morley, and you said he was born in 1930, so he was younger than any of you. He wouldn't be old enough to..., no he was just a young boy then. Alright. Well then you said you had a brother who died? And his name was Al?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And was he younger than you?

JMC: Yes, he was younger, but he was a petroleum engineer.

AK: Right. Did he get his degree?

JMC: Oh yeah, yeah.

AK: And what, where did he get his degree from?

JMC: Here in Alberta, up in Edmonton. And then he went overseas quite a bit there for, he was over in Egypt and then I forget where else he was over there. He made two or three trips over there.

AK: Yeah. And then who was his employer?

JMC: He was going around with the rigs like, you know. He was down with Gulf when he passed away. Down in Pincher Creek there.

AK: Oh, he was working for Gulf in Pincher Creek, was he?

JMC: Yeah. No, I think he was, I don't know... I think they hired him, you know, paid him off, I can't just remember how it was.

AK: Well, it's alright. But he was connected with the actual drilling?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah. He was called a drilling engineer?

JMC: Yeah, I suppose.

AK: And what was it, some disease that he had or?

JMC: I don't know. I think it was a heart attack or something. He died in his sleep.

AK: Well then you had a sister, you said, that also has passed on.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Did she have the same complaint?

JMC: Well, I just don't know. I was down in Nova Scotia then when she passed away. Yeah.

AK: Did she live here in Alberta?

JMC: Oh yeah. She lived in Edmonton there.

AK: Oh yeah.

JMC: I was down in, went back to Nova Scotia there in 1952, and I was on my holidays, like.

[00:06:52] AK: Oh I see. Yeah. Okay. Then Morley, just to get back to Morley, his career was more in construction up in Edmonton then?

JMC: Yeah. Yeah.

AK: And he's carrying on his construction work.

JMC: Yes. Yeah.

AK: And he's helping very much out at the Leduc-Devon Museum. And well site.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And we're very grateful for that. Well now let's get back to Jack here. You have, after you come out of the Navy, you were discharged. Where did you go then? What did you do then?

[00:07:38] JMC: I came back to Calgary here, and then I was, I worked here as a carpenter like you know.

AK: Here.

JMC: Yeah. Yeah.

AK: And you were married then?

JMC: Oh yes.

AK: Some children?

JMC: Yeah, one child.

AK: So what got you to move up to Devon?

JMC: Well, I built a house here, and then I went out to BC there, like you know. I was working down in Victoria there, and I picked the paper up at night and I seen a big oil strike in Leduc.

AK: Oh is that right?

JMC: Then I said I would come back. And I went to work for Shorty Mann then. He was going to tear the derricks down. And then...

AK: Which derricks were those? You mean out at the Valley?

JMC: No, up at Leduc there.

AK: Oh, well then it'd be steel derricks?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah. Well that was all we had then.

JMC: Yeah. And then we moved it up to *Mayerthorpe*.

AK: Well that was the Discovery derrick, was it? The one that drilled No. 1?

JMC: No, I think it was No. 3.

AK: Yeah. Oh, that's right. It moved over to No. 3. The Discovery rig moved over to No. 3, and then it went to *Mayerthorpe*.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Right. So you were working on the dismantling?

JMC: Yeah. And then we built one out at Winfield.

AK: Oh yeah, that was Fin Lineham, wasn't it?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah. That was a deep hole.

JMC: And then...

AK: Did you build the derrick at Eeoth?? Lake? South of Leduc?

JMC: No. Then I built the one over in Winfield, Winterburn, just across the river from Devon there.

AK: Oh you mean at Woodbend.

JMC: Yeah. Woodbend.

AK: Well that was that rig that had been brought in from Cuba, I think.

JMC: Is that right?

AK: There was all this... they had quite a time rigging it up and I think Harry Webster was on that, wasn't he?

JMC: Gee, I don't know.

AK: But that was a standard derrick at Woodbend, wasn't it?

JMC: Yeah, well it was...

AK: It was Imperial Oil, wasn't it?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: It was the first well over on the other side of the river.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And it came in.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: You didn't follow some of these holes, I guess, after you worked on them.

JMC: No, that was the last one I worked on.

AK: Yeah. And then you set up shop at Devon and built my garage. Right.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And that was your getting into the, back into the carpentry work.

JMC: Yep.

AK: Well, you must have had a good handle for carpentry work. Did you feel that that was your real trade?

JMC: Well, I joined up as a stoker in Victoria there, you know, Esquimalt there. Then they drafted me to the east coast. And Bert Dunphy and I, we were together on, you know, so they drafted him up to Ontario on a ship there like you know, so I went up to the counter there and they said, well, your records didn't come through. So they said, we put you up there in the ??? up there...

AK: Where?

JMC: Just across Barrington Street like, you know. There was 500 guys in that block.

AK: In Victoria?

JMC: No, in Halifax.

AK: Oh Halifax. You got down there? What, did you take the train down?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: But you were a stoker, that was about the lowest level.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And they didn't know what to do with you.

JMC: So anyway, they said, I wanted to go with Dunphy, and they said, well, your records didn't come through, so they said, we'll put you up in that block there and you'll be a messenger. So I was walking down, they were building this building like you know. And that would be about two weeks later. And I stopped there and this guy was from Lunenburg there, you know, a chief shipwright, you know. So I said, boy I'd like to work up there, and a guy fell two days before, three days before, and he killed himself like you know. And they had him all tied on with ropes and everything like that. And he said, what did you do before? I said, I would like to work up there. I was building oil derricks out in Turner Valley. And he said, well, he said... so I went up to the office there and the guy said, what did you want to do? What did you say you were going to do? And I said, well, I'd like to go down there and work on that derrick. He said, go down there and never come back!

AK: Is that right?! Well what was it they were building down there?

JMC: They were building a big building, you know.

AK: You mean, what was the building? Was it a commercial building or...?

JMC: Oh no, they were putting up a big deal like that, like you know.

AK: What was the purpose of it?

JMC: Well, they had a deal inside where they were shooting stuff at planes and stuff like that like you know.

AK: Oh, simulating...

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Oh, so it was a war-time construction thing?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And this fellow that you talked to, this shipwright, was he in the Army, he was in the Navy?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Oh, so this was a Navy thing. It wasn't civilian?

JMC: Oh no, no, no.

AK: Oh. So then you went back up and you told them what you wanted to do and he says, never come back?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Is that what he said?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Is that right. So you went down and signed up. Did they give you a little better pay then? Did they raise your status?

JMC: Oh, I was a stoker like you know. He said, here, have a rope. I said, I don't want that rope. Just give me a hammer and a saw. And I went up on the stuff there like you know, and I worked, oh about three months like that. And they said, do you want a heavier trade test? so...

AK: Trade test? Still in Halifax?

JMC: Yeah. This was down in the stockyard there. And he said, well, you're going to have to put this stuff together, you know, like a paddle bower ??? and a dovetail joint and stuff like that. But I was really interested then. So anyway, he put all these tools out there, and I threw them all back in the box, and this guy was an Englishman.

AK: You threw them back in the box?

JMC: Yeah,

AK: You didn't want to take the test?

JMC: Oh no, I threw them all back in the box, and I said, you're going to sharpen them tools. And he said, yeah, what did you do with them? I said, I threw them all back in the box. And he said, okay, you passed your first test! And he said, well, come watch me. And this guy was from Owen Sound. And oh, he was a pattern maker like you wouldn't believe, all good tools and everything like that. So I know I had passed that test. And then went down...

AK: You mean a pattern maker's test?

JMC: Yeah. No, I had to dovetail joint and had to make a panel door.

AK: And this was all with sharp tools?

JMC: Oh yeah. And then I went down and... anyway, passed that. And then we had to go down and put a plank in the boat. And a fellow from P.E.I. was on that side of the other boat, and I was on this side of mine. And I was really sweatin'.

AK: What was this, a plank that you had to...

JMC: Yeah, I had to put it in the side of the boat like you know.

AK: Oh, it was a wooden hull.

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: Jesus! What were you messing around with wooden hulls for in those days?

JMC: Oh, that's what they had on the boats.

AK: Is that right?

JMC: Yep. And anyway, I looked back and he said, I can't talk to you, just sit down and think. And had a smoke like. Of course I knew him well before. So he said, just sit down and think. So then he went back to that side, and of course they had the windows up there, you know, they were looking down at us. Then I went back, and then I passed that. Then they said you had to go up for the...

AK: Examining Board?

JMC: Yeah, the Examining Board. And they asked, what did you ever do before you joined up? And I said I was working wood building, derricks and stuff like that. So anyway, the guy ahead of me, he was a ??? blacksmith like, so he said, no, no, out of your way. So then when I come up, he said, what did you ever do before that? And I told him whatever I did, and he said, Yup, away you go. You're a shipwright now.

AK: Oh, so you got elevated in rank, eh?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: So did you ever go to sea at all?

JMC: No.

AK: Did you stay in Halifax for the duration?

JMC: Yeah. They had twelve of us. The ship was overseas like you know, and they sent us over to Dartmouth to dock ships and stuff like that.

AK: In England?

JMC: No, in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, just across from Halifax. And then the first eight, they went over there and they didn't agree with them at all. They were fighting among themselves. Then the next four of us, we went over and we stayed there about nine months.

AK: Oh, and you were repairing vessels?

JMC: Yeah, well we docked them and everything like that.

AK: Did you get them up out of the water?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Dry dock them?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And these were all wooden vessels, eh?

JMC: Oh no, they were steel.

AK: You had to work with steel too?

JMC: Yeah, and corvettes and stuff like that.

[00:20:48] AK: Well then what did you do after those nine months? The rest of the time when you were during the war, what were you doing until you were discharged?

JMC: Yeah. They took us over and they gave us a diving course.

AK: Diving course?

JMC: Yeah. The other ones they couldn't... well, I was young and the other guys were young, too. But they couldn't pass the other ones because they wouldn't... some of them was over 35 or something.

AK: Oh yeah, well they weren't fit. Well, did you pass this diving test?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: Yeah. Then did you have to work underwater?

JMC: They couldn't give us a certificate, you see. So anyway we went down. we went out with, the last time we went down, we went down in about 90 feet of water. So anyway, the seven went down, the four of us went down, but then I went right down to the bottom. And then, anyway, we come up. And then they drafted me down to Liverpool, because we couldn't go overseas like, you know, they were bombing and stuff over there. So I went down to Liverpool about July 1943. And I stayed there right till the end of the war.

AK: And what were you doing down at Liverpool? That's in Nova Scotia, right?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: What were you doing down there?

JMC: They were bringing the ships all in there, and we had to go all through them to write them off, that everything was repaired.

AK: Oh there was repair work.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Did you have repairs on torpedoed ships? Ships that were damaged by shell fire or torpedo?

JMC: No, no they didn't come in there. It was, let's see, there was corvettes and mine sweepers and the other ones, I don't know what the heck you call them now. They were just a bit bigger than corvettes.

AK: So this was all maintenance work, shallow, there was no war damage to them?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: There was damage?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: So you had to repair that.

JMC: Yeah.

[00:23:56] AK: Okay. Well then, getting back to... that's very interesting about your career. Unfortunately, they used you to the best advantage. In other words, your skills were well used. Did you advance to shipwright during the rest of the time, or did you get an increase in pay, or?

JMC: Oh yeah, yeah. I was discharged as chief shipwright, and then old Miller there, he said, you know you could go up and write for your ticket, like pass an exam like, you know. So I just, the mathematics was all too good, you know, I couldn't get a hold of that. So I said, I couldn't do it. So he said, well okay, he said, he fired, some of the stuff come down there, like you know, somebody had one ring on and some had two rings on, like that.

AK: Oh, the ranks. The ranks on your sleeve.

JMC: Yeah. So then this was in the shipwright department. So he just fired them and he said, okay, you come down and go through all the things on the ship, he said, and I'll look after it.

AK: So you passed your test.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Good.

JMC: But anyway, some other fellow come down there from Quebec like, you know, and they marked all the rivets out. There was 25 rivets I think in one of the four-foot tanks. And I went inside and I twisted them all, you know. I come out and I said, they're all loose. And he said, what's that? I said, burn them out, they're all loose. And I said, you might as well burn that one out, too. So this superintendent of the shipyard went up to the Miller there, you know, and he was in the right next office to me there. And I was sitting at the desk and he said, we've been up that river, just down there from Quebec, he said, and your men marked them all out there. He said they're all loose. He said, who marked them out? He said, Ethan MacCalder, he said, you go down there and tell MacCalder I want all them rivets in that ship taken out. Fire them sons of bitches!

AK: Yeah. So you had to go through all the other rivets then, eh?

JMC: Oh yeah. Well then they had the thing on the side of the corvettes, like you know. The first corvettes they didn't come out with them on. So then they had them on the dock there, like you know. And ??? And I said, five or six of them are loose. And this guy ??? rivet, he slammed his gun down, and I said, well, you want to test them? I said, look, I've still got my test ??? I said, just go like that and put your finger like that. See, they're all loose.

[00:27:44] AK: Yeah, bad job. Well, let's just get back to Devon, and you worked on those rigs, and then you went into the construction. Well then did you continue in the construction work? Did you work on your own in Devon?

JMC: Oh yeah.

AK: Was it MacCalder Brothers that you and Morley...

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Right. And then, when did you decide to hang that job up?

JMC: Oh, yeah. I guess ??? we went out to Drayton Valley there and then we went north. And then I got, in Hay River there, then I went into that bloody sawmill business. We broke in that.

AK: The sawmill?

JMC: Then we went back in the construction business.

AK: You got yourself back on your feet again, eh?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And then when did you finally quite the business? Retire?

JMC: Uh, let's see. I forget what year that was. Maybe 1981 or 1982, something like that.

AK: And you just hung up the tools and that was it, eh?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: By that time, you'd moved to Calgary?

JMC: Yep, yep.

AK: What year did you, do you remember moving to Calgary? What year?

JMC: 1974, I think. Or '75.

AK: And Morley still carries on.

JMC: Yep.

AK: Okay, well I just wondered, let's see. Is there anything else you did after you retired?

[00:30:04] JMC: Well, I tried to sell real estate.

AK: Oh did you, for a while?

JMC: Yeah. But I wasn't no good at that.

AK: No, you were too honest.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Yeah, you'd be... No. It's interesting that Al Wright did well, you know.

JMC: Oh is that right?

AK: You know Al? You remember with General Petroleums? For one month he was the leader of that, for a particular month, in sales, but I think he had a certain way. But you know, he was absolutely true blue, just like you. I mean, no lies or anything. Well then, that didn't work out so good, eh? And then you packed that in.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Anything else you tried?

JMC: Oh, yeah, well we had an apartment house in Hay River there, like you know. There was six in on that, then we sold that too, ???

AK: So that was a little bit of real estate you had, eh?

JMC: Yep.

AK: You sold that. Well, looking back over your life, Jack, this is kind of a philosophical question. Can you sum up your very varied career - it was an interesting career and very worthwhile. Would you like to summarize, in maybe a sentence or two, your philosophy about how things went for you and how you see the industry going?

JMC: Well, I think that in Turner Valley there, you know, when I went to work for Old Shorty and I was going into shipyards on the west coast there, like you know, but then they didn't have plates in and stuff like that and then I went and...

AK: Was this after, that was before you joined up?

JMC: Yeah. And then I guess, during that deal there, I got married down there in Nova Scotia and everything like that.

AK: You met your wife there? Was she from Nova Scotia?

JMC: Yeah. She's passed away now.

AK: Do you have somebody in your house with you?

JMC: Oh yeah. I got married again. But she passed away in 1959.

AK: Right. So you got remarried to somebody local here?

JMC: No, it was up in Edmonton there.

AK: Oh. Well that's nice that you have companionship. That's important. So you've had a very wide career. Is there anything else that you'd like to try to summarize in kind of a sentence as to your life?

JMC: No, I think I had a pretty good life.

AK: You did! You did indeed. And you're going to carry on for a bunch more years. You just had the one child?

JMC: Oh no. No, I had four.

AK: You had four children. They're all out doing...?

JMC: Yeah. Well, I had three with the first wife and then one with the second wife.

AK: Oh did you, oh.

JMC: Faye's, she's an architect now. She 30 years old today, or this year.

AK: And where does she work?

JMC: She used to work here for...

AK: Where does she work now?

JMC: Well, she's home now. She's got a baby like, you know.

AK: Oh I see. So she's out of the workforce at the moment.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: And then your other children?

JMC: Yeah. Bill's here in Calgary. He's a musician like, you know. And Jeff's up in Edmonton and he's in construction now.

AK: Does he live with his uncle?

JMC: No.

AK: No. One his own, eh.

JMC: And Linda's up in Yellowknife.

AK: Is she?

JMC: Yeah.

AK: Is she married up there?

JMC: Yeah. She works for the government up there.

AK: That's the big industry up there.

JMC: Yeah.

AK: That's a big industry up there. Well, you sound like you've had an excellent family. And then your other little one from your other marriage, your second marriage, how old would that child be?

JMC: Oh yeah, she's 30. That's the architect.

AK: Oh. She's the youngest. Oh I see. Isn't that interesting. Well look, we're going to call it off here. And I wanted to thank you very much for sharing your life with me. And let's go upstairs and have a little bite to eat and we'll sign off here and thanks again. It's now 11:45.

End of Interview

