PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Don Seaman

INTERVIEWER: David Finch

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DF: Today is the 18th day of May in the year 2000 and we are with Mr. Don Seaman at his offices at Suite 500, 333 - 5th Avenue S. W. in Calgary. My name is David Finch. Could you start by telling us where you were born?

DS: I was born in Rouleau, Saskatchewan on July 26, 1925 and I think I was born in the middle of the afternoon so I didn't interrupt my mother's day.

DF: How do you spell the name of that town?

DS: R-O-U-L-E-A-U. It's named after a judge that was active in that particular area back some time in the early 1900's.

DF: And you're the youngest of four?

DS: I'm the youngest of a family of four. I have a sister that's the oldest, she'll be 80 this year and two brothers, Darryl and B.J., both of whom I've been working with for the last 50 years.

DF: Tell me about what your father was doing?

DS: My father basically came up to Canada in 1915, during the World War, he was from the United States. He worked in the farms with the harvest, because of the shortage of men because of the war and he met my mother, whose family had immigrated from Nebraska in 1913. It was in the Avonlea are of Saskatchewan. Then when the United States went to war in 1916 he went back and joined up and spent 1917-18 in the U. S. Forces and in 1919 he was in the Army of Occupation for a year. So when he came back he came back to Canada and re-met my mother and they got married in 1920.

DF: What part of the States was he from?

DS: He was from Wisconsin. Interestingly enough we were able to follow his family, the first Seaman that we were able to contact was born in 1805 in New York State. The family basically moved across the States as new land was opened up for farming, free land. The father would stay but the children would move to the next area and they moved right across the country. My mother's family had the same history. They came to Canada in 1770, around that time and the same thing happened, they moved west and they ended up in Nebraska and then her father, to get land that became open, he came up to Saskatchewan and made a bad choice because he got some heavy land.

#028 DF: Where was that?

DS: That was in Truex???, which is south of Rouleau.

DF: It's pretty dry land down there isn't it?

DS: It is dry, it needs lots of moisture, so he suffered through until the 30's and then he moved into another bad area that opened up. No, he had a hard time of it. But at any rate, my dad, he basically worked in farms with some people in the Rouleau district, the Weckman's and the Groober's, who became very close friends. And then he started up an earth moving business, he built dams and roads and basements and things of that nature.

DF: So this is the 20's?

DS: The lat 20's, early 30's.

DF: What kind of equipment would he have been using?

DS: He started with horses and hand buckets, that sort of thing and ended up with a Pioneer tractor and then he had a gas caterpillar tractor, one of the very first that came out, and that's what he ended up with. I guess he did that until about 1940 and he sold his equipment at that time. He did buy a combine during the war and did some contract combining, and he went all the way down into the middle of the U.S. and followed the harvest all the way back up. It was a self propelled combine, he noticed that these combines were coming up for sale and he put his name in for one and he was one of the few that got one of these things during the war. It was a Massey-Ferguson, they're not in business anymore. It wasn't the best piece of equipment but my dad was pretty mechanical, he kept it going and he did pretty well at it.

DF: Did you pick up some of those mechanical skills from your dad?

DS: Basically we all did. I guess that's why we became Mechanical Engineers. We all graduated from Rouleau and then my sister was the first to go to University of Saskatchewan and she took Household Science and she married an engineer there that was in ceramics and got married. He ended up going into the services and into the war. His name was Hugh Hamilton. My oldest brother Darryl, we call him Doc now, he started into university, he was still 17 at the time and he thought he should be going to war so he only went for a half year and then went to play hockey for Moose Jaw, Junior until he was 18, which is April the 28th, of 1940. So then he joined up and went into the services and went into the Air Force and he was on his fourth tour of duty, which very few people made it to that and they mustered him out early in 1945, because he'd had so many flights. In the meantime my brother B.J., graduated in 1945, just right after the war and I started to university in Mechanical Engineering in the fall of 1943. B.J. graduated in 1945, I graduated in 1947 and Darryl, he took two years in one and graduated in 1948, we were all in Mechanical Engineering, we used the same books.

#067 DF: One set of books.

DS: That's right. It's cheaper that way.

DF: Now what interested you in that particular course of study?

DS: It was a little difficult to stay. I guess it was mostly because of my parents basically. I knew from the time I was in public school I was going to be an engineer though I didn't know what that was. I guess we were all pretty good in math and we found that sciences were an easier thing to study, particularly with me anyway, English was a little tougher.

DF: How did your dad and mom manage to send four kids to university, was that a tough thing to do in those days. Not everybody did it right.

DS: It was their desire. It wasn't because they were very rich. We worked during the summer and were basically able to get enough money together to help. But they insisted and as far as myself and my sister and B.J., they insisted that they pay for the schooling. Doc of course, got the veterans' grants to go to school.

DF: So 1947 you come out of school with a newly minted degree, what could you do with that or what did you do with it?

DS: Well, at that time, there were people that came through the university and were offering jobs and I happened to pick CIL, which they had an opening in Shawinigan Falls, Quebec. I went down there, basically I went through graduation and took off the next day for Shawinigan. I remember getting there and taking a taxi to the hotel from the train. I had taken four years of French at school and I can still remember the frustration of the poor taxi driver when he said he wanted [cinq en sou]??? and I couldn't for the life of me think what he wanted so I reached into my pocket and held out some change and took the 50 cents. The teacher in school, I don't think he had ever heard anybody speak French, so he spoke French like you'd pronounce them the same as you would English words. So it took quite a while for me to sort that out, there was the difference.

DF: So it was all book knowledge and no experience.

DS: That's right. So I worked for CIL in Shawinigan for two years in Industrial Engineering, which is a real good training ground. Basically it's working on statistical quality control and maintenance control. Basically I was in school for two years again, learning from them and then they sent me to Kingston for a year. That was in their Engineering Department, they were having an expansion and I worked on the expansion. In the middle of 1950 they said they wanted me to move to the head office in Montreal. At the same time I was talking to my two brothers who had started up a seismic drilling operation here in Alberta. They had started that in late 1949 with the Warnke??? brothers from Wetaskiwin. So they wanted me to join with them, so I decided to do that.

#103 DF: Why? It sounds like a big change.

DS: It was but . . . it was just after. . 1950 not too long after they had found Leduc and the west was booming and there seemed to be a lot of opportunities, so I thought it might be a good change.

DF: But you didn't go from one engineering job to another did you. What was your first job in the oil patch?

DS: The first job in the oil patch. . well, at the time they asked me, they were just going from two shot hole drilling rigs. .they wanted to expand, the Warnke brothers didn't want to expand anymore, they wanted to pay off the two that they had before they did anymore. So they bought out the Warnke's and then they wanted to add another one, so they suggested that maybe I would like to join them as a partner. That sounded not too bad and I drove from Kingston through the United States, and I went to visit my uncles and what not that were still in that area. The one uncle offered me $600 that he had in Victory Bonds. He said, they're sitting there not doing anything, here, I'll loan these to you if you're going to go help set up a business. So basically that was my seed money that I used to get into business and that was the down payment on the new Mayhew???seismic rig

that the brothers had ordered.

DF: $600 was the down payment on a drilling rig.

DS: That's right. The total package was just a little over $10,000 at that time.

DF: Not anymore.

DS: No, that's right. And when I arrived, I arrived in late August and I was supposed to start to work on the 1st of September. I remember my first job was as a water jack on this new crew because I didn't have any experience. I went down to Seismic Service to help check out the equipment and to do that I had to drive the water truck to get some water. Well, I found it was a little difficult with the old square gears on the truck to get into gear. I wasn't too bad when there was no load on it but after I loaded the water up and was coming back, I had to go in third gear all the way back because I didn't know that you had to double clutch to get it into gear. At any rate I did get the load back and checked out and our first job was up in Wetaskiwin and that was for Accurate Geophysical. Mickey MacCallum was the Party Manager, the owner of Accurate at that time was Wes Rabey and who the heck was the other one. . .anyway it'll come back to me. Then my driller at that time was Jimmy Thompson, he was from Saskatchewan, from Alsask. I think he was my driller for about a month and a half and then I became a driller. I then drilled through the winter, that was a fair experience. I remember going through the States, one of my uncles was a police sergeant and I picked up one of his coats that he had, their extra coats that they had. And this had a collar that went up over my head and it was fur inside. Thank God I got it because that was a very cold winter. I don't think I looked that great. I learned something during that period that I like to tell on myself. I said I found out very early that timing was very good in business, I'm a little impatient type of an individual. Anyway, my water guy that I had, continually had trouble going to get water and this one day, if I got up to 1,000' I gut a bonus and he delayed and delayed and I was drilling with the water that was in the pit and it got heavy as could be. He finally came back and I got mad and I said, you SOB, you're fired. He walked in the truck and drove away and here I was with 300' of stem in the hole and no water and just muddy as heck coming out of the hole. So that's why I realized that timing was very important in business. I like to tell that story.

#154 DF: That's a good one. Can you explain what a water jack is?

DS: Water jack basically was a helper on the seismic rig and his job was to go with the truck and they had a system of vacuum loading and you'd go and get water and come back and then help you drill and set up and so on and so forth.

DF: Where did you get the water?

DS: Basically, out of ditches and farmers dug outs. . .

DF: Sloughs. . .

DS: Sloughs, rivers and what not, yes.

DF: Any adventures when you were driving that truck?

DS: No. It took me awhile to master the art of getting up hills, throttling down and what not, getting into gear, you had to double clutch. They were real square gears in those days but nothing real astonishing happened.

DF: How about the winter drilling, the cold had to affect both the drilling, but also the water, all those kinds of things?

DS: The water truck had a tube in the middle of the chimney, through the tank, which you build a fire in to keep the water from freezing. The pump on the rig was encased and the exhaust went through the case, so that it wouldn't freeze. You made sure that at night that you drained all the lines and everything so that when you started up in the morning. . . At night we usually found a garage in town where we could start off in the morning with the truck warm.

DF: How about the drilling itself when the soil was really cold?

DS: Basically it didn't bother. No, it was nicer to drill in the summertime but it really didn't slow you down to that extent. They would bulldoze the roads and what not and bulldoze locations where you could back in. Getting out of road ditches sometimes, that's where we normally drilled, some of the higher ones were fairly difficult to get in and out. You had to get towed. The water trucks always had a winch on it so sometimes you would have to get winched out of the ditches.

DF: Were these trucks all two wheel drive?

DS: They were all two wheel drive, yes.

#182 DF: And you had chains and so on but still you weren't. . .

DS: Chains, but normally pretty good tires on them.

DF: But no four wheel drives at this point?

DS: No.

DF: Now when it was really cold, did the machinery itself, like the drill, were there any problems with it, pieces shearing off or anything.

DS: No, I guess these trucks were mostly new at the time that I was drilling. Sheared a few pins in the rear end where you had to take it apart and put a pin back in, that only happened to me once but it happened to other guys fairly often.

DF: And Mayhew was an American company, Texas or something.

DS: Yes, a Texas company. It was probably the predominant drill that was up here at the time, there were Failings??? as well but not quite as many.

DF: Yes, I've heard of Failings. So even though they were built for the American situation, they worked fine here?

DS: There was basically no problem. We winterized the equipment so that we could get by.

DF: It's my job to ask the stupid questions, but you say you built a fire in a tube in the water tank, what do you mean you built a fire?

DS: Basically just some wood and you would just build a fire in the tube that was built right into the middle of the water tank. It worked well.

DF: So your water tank would have smoke coming out of the top of it?

DS: That's right yes.

DF: That's amazing. Now where did you go next?

DS: From Wetaskiwin we worked there until the spring and then we moved with the crew down to southern Alberta, to Claresholm and we worked there for I think, until about the middle of June. At the time we had decided that we should be in the seismic business

ourselves and we should have our own seismic crews and we approached a friend that B.J. knew. I should go back a little bit, with Accurate, my brother B.J. was the observer. He had worked for Imperial through his summer holidays and then after he got out of school he worked in the seismic so that was one of the ways that we got the drill on with Accurate, if B.J. would be the observer on the crew because that talent was. . .because everybody was so busy, it was not that easy to acquire. So this friend Mac Baker, was working with a company that doesn't exist anymore, I forget the name of it but it was a fairly large company and he was working out at Peace River. So we asked him if he'd want to join us in forming a seismic company. And he did, he became a third interest holder of our operation and Seismotech, which was the company we formed.

#220 DF: So you got out of just drilling into doing the whole thing now?

DS: Yes. Our first job was with Tidewater in Saskatchewan out of Bengough-??? area and I went with my drill down to join them. The Shaw's, Shaw Trucking here in town, they had a drill on and actually Gardie??? Shaw came down on that job, he's the owner of Shaw Trucking now. I drilled there as the driller for maybe a month and a half and then went on to the seismic crew as . . I guess the terminology was the computor. Basically that consists of writing up when the seismograms come in from the field you write them up and you pick the traces and do the plotting on maps and also on the cross sections. I did that I guess for about six months and then I became Party Manager because we had added two more crews so we were expanding. We ended up with some fairly well known names in the seismic business working for us, Hal Godwin, who is pretty well known, he was one of our Party Managers at the time, and then an interpreter. Norm Klinck???, another one that was one of our interpreters. We had one real interesting chap, Morris Murtack, he was a half Cree Indian. He was the Party Manager for some time. He left us and went into some mining exploration and what not. He lives out in the Vancouver area at the moment. Another one that was an operator, Party Manager for us was Dick Kelly, he stayed in the business, he went foreign with a bunch of companies in the United States. I still see him every once in awhile.

DF: So how did you learn the geophysical end of it, at this point you were just drilling?

DS: Basically Mac Baker was a seismologist for a long time and he was my teacher. He's a very clever individual, he really loved seismology.

#254 DF: So you're still working with paper records at this point?

DS: Paper records, yes.

DF: Dynamite, not any more modern technologies. And it's a booming time so getting contract work isn't hard?

DS: That's right. We started off at Tidewater and I think we ended up with two crews with them. Hal Adams was the head of Tidewater at that time and Acy??? McGhee was the geophysicist that we worked with. I can't quite recall why, but Mobil Oil took over the Tidewater concessions in Saskatchewan and we ended up working on two 4 x 6 township plats in southern Alberta. Then they wanted another crew and the crew went to work up north of Regina in the Imperial area. So we had another large township plat up there.

DF: The instruments you used, were they specific to the company you were working for or did you just have one that you used?

DS: No, we were using portable instruments that were very well thought of at the time. In fact, Mac Baker considered that most of the new advances didn't improve on what they were.

DF: The reason I ask is that from other people I've heard that Imperial had one kind of instruments it preferred and Shell had another kind and different companies preferred different. . .

DS: That's right. But these particular instruments, when we first got them and all the crews had the same ones, we didn't have difficulty selling them to any companies.

DF: Was there a lot of competition for work, did you have to pound the pavement? It sounds like it sort of came to you.

DS: Early there was not any difficulty. Because the history of the oil company is, it's boom and bust eh. So starting out we had no difficulty whatsoever. But I forget what catastrophe occurred in Saskatchewan, it was probably they changed the terms of the leases and what not but anyway all the oil companies pulled out. So we basically left Saskatchewan and came back to Alberta. I remember writing the final reports for Mobil Oil, it was quite a task with the large areas that we had and all the shooting that we had done. So that took quite awhile after the crews had left. On interesting thing that we did during that time when things were slack, was do some participation surveys. There was four of us I guess, Ben Earhart, myself and Floyd Peterson went out and I drilled the holes and I helped survey and I helped load the holes and shoot them and we did a participation survey and then sold it to people. Not long after that was when they discovered some of the oil down in southeast Saskatchewan. Before that it had been pretty bleak, there had not been much oil found. So this participation survey was basically trying to follow up that new discovery.

#303 DF: So who'd idea was it to go into that?

DS: That's Mac Baker.

DF: Okay. So he was kind of holding your hand and teaching you a lot eh, in the early period?

DS: Yes, that's right.

DF: How big did Seismotech get?

DS: It ended up with six crews I think at one time. But that comes a little later. I myself moved back to Alberta in 1956 and worked with Seismotech for about half a year and then took over our seismic shothole drilling work. And we also had what we called slim hole, which was also a geophysical tool that they used in those days. And that was drilling shallow holes from 300-400' down to 1,000' and logging them, electro logging them to get near surface markers that would correlate to the deeper horizons if the horizons were because of some uplift lower in the structure. When I started I guess we had 3 rigs, those were Mayhew 2000's and there were quite a few other people in the operation when I first started. That was actually our first venture into the geophysical business. We started that after the. . well, the shotholes. . .

DF: But before you set up Seismotech.

DS: Yes. So we did a turnkey operation, we did the surveying and the drilling and the logging

and the abandonment of these wells. So I took over that and then shortly after took over the seismic operation as well. Prior to that there was Jimmy Thompson that I mentioned, was my driller, he was looking after the shothole drilling. And my brother B.J. was looking after the slim hole. We sent Jim Thompson with an operation in 1960, I guess it was, to Australia, when Bow Valley had two big rigs that went there and we also sent two shothole rigs and a Mayhew 2000 down there. So he went down to that operation and I took over the shothole and the slim holes. In 1960 when Bow Valley went public, we made a deal where Mac Baker took over the whole of Seismotech and we took over shares in the drilling side of it.

#342 DF: So you got out of seismic as such, in '60?

DS: Except for the shotholes. We kept the shotholes, kept expanding them right through into the 70's. At one point in the early 70's we did branch out into vibrators. We were the first contract vibrator operator that there was. We supplied the vibrators to. . .I think they called it Olympic, it was Ed Rutledge formed the company and Joe Little.

DF: Tell me about those early vibrators. I mean we know what the vibrator trucks look like these days, they're the size of a small airplane but in those days what were they like? Were they truck mounted?

DS: They were truck mounted, the very first ones that we did. We had 3 I think on a crew. I haven't seen the ones recently but they were huge trucks, yes. But then we did supply two track mounted. . the very first track mounted vibrators. We lost one of those in the muskeg one time. The guy, fortunately he had a hold on the roof so he was able to get out and we recovered it out of there without. .

DF: So what happened to it?

DS: It just sunk into basically the water and the muskeg.

DF: Where was this?

DS: Up in the Territories, south Territories. Peter Makarowski??? was the operator fortunately. He got stuck with the tough jobs.

DF: What was the name of the company that did that part of, the vibrator part, was that still Seismotech?

DS: No, not Seismotech, Sedco. Sedco Drilling. That's what the drilling operation was under.

DF: And other things that you did vis a vis the seismic industry, any other services or supplies that you offered to them? Mostly field work isn't it?

DS: Mostly field contracting work yes. At the same time . . .about 1953 we got our first drilling rig and then proceeded to expand that side of the drilling for oil. Started with a Failing 2500, which didn't prove to be too successful. But we introduced the first trailer rigs that were used here in Canada, we bought Cardwell trailer rigs from Wichita, Kansas and went to work in southeast Saskatchewan. It was an innovation as far as Canada was at the time. They were 6,000' drilling rigs and we were able to move and set up in a few hours. Where the equipment they had there would take two days or more. We'd almost have the well finished before they had got their surface casing in. So that really was the start of real success in Bow Valley was our choice of the type of equipment we had in drilling.

#397 DF: So that's pretty early on, were you involved in that too or was one of the other brothers doing the set up?

DS: Doc and B.J. Doc to start with and then B.J. when I took over the slim hole operation. B.J. basically looked after the. . . we merged with Hi-Tower Drilling in 1960. It was a public company and that's when we went public. It was known as Hi-Tower Drilling at that time and we changed the name to Bow Valley Industries.

DF: So did your seismic work continue then, after Hi-Tower and Bow Valley and everything?

DS: I continued to look after the seismic and the slim hole rigs. The slim hole rigs basically. . that type of exploration just gradually petered out. There were very, very few people and at the end I guess we were the only ones that were supplying that service. I got more and more call on people to drill shallow gas wells or shallow oil wells. So this led me then, into going back into shallower trailer rigs than we had before. These were 3,000' capacity ones. There was one other, Wardine Drilling, basically with Failing 2500 were about the only other people at that time that were supplying that service. So it expanded from there and there are more 2,500 or 3,000' rigs right now than there are anything else in this part of the world. That's with the advantage up in Lloydminster and shallow gas and what not, created that market. Whereas at one time there was no real market for those materials.

#432 DF: When did you get out of the seismic industry as such?

DS: It would be about in the middle 60's.

DF: It doesn't matter the exact date, but just tell me about the end. Like, why did you get out of it?

DS: Because we were having so much success in the shallow drilling side of it that it was a much better business to be in and the seismic also started to go from almost no Mayhew type of drilling to all auger drilling. So that cut down on the use of them. It was getting to be more and more hit and miss so it was becoming a difficult one to run. We were up to 40 some shothole drilling rigs at one time. Plus these vibrators.

DF: At Bow Valley were you doing your own seismic work. Like, were you an integrated company, I mean, you were drilling, you were doing shotholes, were you also doing your own seismic.

DS: Basically it was. . I guess, when was it. . .in 1978 we split the oil company from the service companies. In the meantime in Bow Valley we picked up a whole bunch of other types of businesses. We had helicopters, we had a manufacturing plant that had a foundry, machine shop, fab shop that produced heating and ventilation equipment, climate master equipment. We had a supply store, we even had. . .we had a supply store up in Resolute that ended up being a hotel for people. We had a pipeline company. At one time we had an interest in an air company. . airplanes that serviced the north. We had diamond drilling equipment, we produced diamond bits.

DF: So you got out of the seismic about the time that the digital was coming in didn't you?

DS: Well, as I mentioned, Mac Baker took over Seismotech in 1960 and I don't think he ever got into digital. I think he stayed with his portable ECI, I think it is, or EIC. And he eventually did a leverage sell to his employees, who ran it for the next few years. I think they finally quit operating in the middle 80's. No, I have occasion to look at the results of

the seismic shooting now, their cross sections and maps and what not. It's sure a heck of a lot different than the tedious work we had to go through, picking records and plotting them and drawing maps and cross sections.

DF: Did it surprise you in those days that you could get anything with those, what now seem to be kind of primitive records?

DS: There was a lot of oil found with those primitive records. It was tedious and I would say, take a heck of a lot more interpretation than it does now. The 3-D shooting and what not, the incidence of dry holes has gone down considerably on exploration. A lot of that is due to the geophysics. Geologists wouldn't probably accept that. They would say that. . .

DF: They're getting better.

DS: Well, they have more to work with than when you first started out. You didn't have the back log of wells and the data that you got from those too to help you with what you're doing. One thing that we used to do and that was do well shoots they called them to basically put a recorder down the hole and you would shoot just to make sure that the formations that you were reading on seismograms were the right level against that well log. So we had one crew that basically did that in Seismotech.

DF: Just correlation then of the data.

DS: That's right.

Side 2

DF: So what do you recall from the seismic industry, what really stands out for you, what did you enjoy about that part of the business? You certainly did almost everything else, drilling and service and supplies and all those other things.

DS: It's like anything that you're doing, as far as discovery is concerned. Back in the days when I was starting you were working on virgin territory. There was never a map before so you really didn't know what was going to occur down below. Basically as an interpreter you did the mapping and you presented that maps and also you would give them a theory of what you saw. Our first seismic was correlation shooting. We would shoot every corner eh, every mile corner and then if you found something that was interesting you would go in and do some detail shooting. So it was really exciting. I didn't. . .unfortunately where our areas were I don't think anyone has ever found any oil in that particular area of Saskatchewan. I worked on a couple of projects here in Alberta where they were basically extensions of oil fields. That's interesting, but not nearly as interesting as virgin territory.

DF: In those virgin areas, did you find any areas where there was oil?

DS: To my knowledge no one has every found oil in those areas.

DF: Because they haven't drilled?

DS: They drilled considerable holes. There was fantastic structures but they were in an area of Saskatchewan that there was salt that had been eroded away, which caused. . that was in the deep horizons in the Winnipegosis, that's where the salt was and it caused massive structures that were really interesting to map but. .

DF: Beautiful and exciting but. . .

DS: Yes. Didn't create anything. Well, there was one small find of oil that Mobil found but it wasn't . . I don't think it ever became commercial. It was interesting that Arnie Nielsen, in Saskatchewan was the manager of the Regina office and Ernie Creesey was the head of the geophysics and Hank Rivers was the supervisor that supervised our crews directly. That was very good, very interesting. I'm really sorry that the Saskatchewan government had them about because when we moved out it was just about at the point where they started to find oil. I probably would have stayed there in seismic for quite some time.

#030 DF: No, from your story it sounds like you brought in quite a few new technological innovations like those trailer mounted rigs and so on. What gave you the idea that that might be a good way to go?

DS: Basically I guess the same process is appearing today. You take a look at the elements of moving and setting up and drilling and the depth that you have to drill, you basically try to get your drill packages into the fewest number that you can. So it's actually my brother Doc and B.J. that came up with the concept to start with and it worked.

DF: But if it was such a good idea I would think that there would be a hundred other people that had it too, but you guys were first, how come?

DS: Basically here in Canada anyway. I don't know if there were any in other places but there was two things that had to happen. You had to have the idea but also you had to have somebody in the oil company that would believe that your idea was right. Fortunately I guess we came up with the idea at the time that there was a need for rigs. Rigs were hard to get because of the activity rate. So somebody gave us a try and we did a good job so away we went.

DF: Back to your idea about timing eh?

DS: That's right.

DF: Good timing. What have you enjoyed most about your career, obviously you say the discovery is awfully exciting. Anything else?

DS: The actual activity. The mind stretching, what you need to do running the business. We had varied amounts of businesses so there's not just one basic industry but we encompassed quite a few wide industries. I'm still doing somewhat the same. I've got a kitty litter mine and I got into real estate and I'm drilling for oil and gas and things of that nature. So a lot of interesting things.

DF: Any regrets?

DS: No regrets, no. Maybe I regret that I didn't retire a little bit earlier and start doing things on my own but no, no real regrets. I enjoyed my career. I've worked in the oil business with my two brothers for, as I say, 50 years and that's sort of outstanding. I like the people in the oil business, they've got a forward outlook. You have to because you're always looking for the next find. It's a good way to be, it's better than to look back and say, this is old stuff that we're doing. It's always new.

DF: Wonderful. Well, on behalf of the Petroleum Industry Oral History Project, I'd like to thank you so much for spending this time with us and we'll end the interview at this time. Thank you very much.