

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Bernie Sturrock

INTERVIEWER: Aubrey Kerr

DATE: April 11, 1985

Tape 1 Side 1 – 45:00

AK: I'm Aubrey Kerr and today is April 11, 1985 and I'm in the home of Bernie and Ann Sturrock, 1258 Saint David Street or Avenue? Street, in the municipality of Oak Bay, which is the west extension of the general Greater Victoria area. I'm very glad to be here Bernie and I'm glad to have you give us some of your recollections so could we start off with where were you were born and a little background of your parents and your earliest education or where you if you moved around very much to start with.

BS: Right, I was born in Nordegg, Alberta, which is, you know is a coal mining town and I attended boarding school in Edmonton for my, prior to going to high school, and then went to high school in Nordegg, and then attended the University of Alberta. I graduated in 1941, I was specializing in geology. I joined the Navy and remained with the Navy on the East Coast till the cessation of hostilities in Europe. And came back to Calgary, got my discharge, and went to work for Dow for a short time.

AK: Could we just go back Bernie, to Nordegg, what were your, what was your father doing at Nordegg?

BS: My father originally was the accountant for the coal company Brazeau Collieries Ltd.

AK: Was that company funded by German Capital?

BS: The original company was, as I recall, the original company was a German development company and that was prior to WWI, and at the start of WWI, the general manager of the company was a man by the name of Martin Nordegg. And he, when the war started he had to leave Nordegg because of certain animosity and he so then the company was taken over by the British and it was named Brazeau Collieries Ltd.

AK: Was this any connection with Luskar?

BS: No, nothing to do with Luskar.

AK: Because that was a company with British money in it too, I believe. And what was the name of the school that you attended in Edmonton?

BS: It was a small boarding school, but the name of Westward Ho, and I was there for four years from grade 3 through grade 8.

AK: And was that kind of a total experience, lots of sports, and...?

BS: Yes, it was, they were very keen on sports and that sort of thing. I was a bit unhappy for most of the time because I hadn't really been used to regimentation as you might say, and so I... but I made a great number of friends there and it was an experience I certainly won't forget.

AK: Were any of those friends your buddies in the oil patch later on?

BS: No. No, none of those people ever, I didn't really run into them, well, I've run into them the odd time later on but not in the oil business.

AK: No, so what encouraged you or prompted you to go to university, was there was there any influence at all, external influence?

BS: I think it was largely because my father wanted me to, and actually I, on my return from Navy, I should have gone back to University too because in order to, when I when I arrived back in Calgary, there were all kinds of geologists and I should have really probably should have gone back and take my Master's or Ph.D. or some such thing. But by that time I was married and had a child and I just didn't feel like going back to school.

AK: Were you married during wartime?

BS: I was married in 1941 just after graduation.

AK: I see. Now you graduated in a science program or Arts program?

BS: No, a science program. I got a B.Sc.

AK: Right. Now you would have had a fair amount of contact with the late. Dr. Allan?

BS: Yes.

AK: Have you got any impressions of him?

BS: No, I didn't know him that well, and I didn't take that many courses from him as I recall. My, the people who I remembered mostly in the Geology Department were Rutherford and Warren, Dr. Rutherford and Dr. Warren.

AK: What about Charlie Stelk??

BS: Yes. I didn't know him that well, but I did, you know, I knew him to see him and so on.

AK: Right. Now during the summertime when you were attending University, what, were you able to get any summer student work?

BS: Yes. I was very fortunate in that I, I'd planned to go to Eastern Canada and work in the mines and this is, really I don't know why, but a lot of people were doing it.

AK: Now, you said that on your first summers' fieldwork that you were hired by Jog (Pete) Sanderson who then was geologist for home Oil and you went up and worked plane table in the Brazeau structure.

BS: That's correct.

AK: And did the results of that work help define the well site or did you think that Pete was on the right track?

BS: Well, I believe it was, he wrote a paper on it. And of course they, the whole area was mapped, and then sometime after that, of course, they went in and started drilling that well on the Brazeau structure, starting with cable tools originally.

AK: Yes, that's right. And then they moved a rotary ring in, and Jimmy Stafford recalls having to help Mr. Young who was an Anglo-Canadian contractor, I think it was, drilling contractor.

BS: Red Young.

AK: Well not Red Young but the other Young. Anyways, your second year you once again went to see Pete in Calgary. And he mentioned to you that Grant Spratt had just moved from the government to Anglo-Canadian. So you went to see Grant.

BS: Yes.

AK: And where were their offices?

BS: In the Lancaster building.

AK: Right. And what did Grant offer you?

BS: Well, he offered me a job in the office doing maps and well logs and this sort of thing.

AK: And you would have certainly run into contact with Tommy Hicks.

BS: Yes, Tom was in the same office.

AK: Who else was in the office there with you, do you recall anybody else?

BS: I remember the, there was a man by the name of Peaker, who was sort of a financial chap. And of course Francis Byrne was head of the company ???

AK: Phil Byrne, that's B-Y-R-N-E, and of course there's a very tragic story to that, which I have partly recorded, but it was something that happened, did that happen while you were there.

BS: No.

AK: No. So the following year after your summer with Grant, what did you do then? Do you recall?

BS: I worked one summer for Anglo, in fact, I took a year out and I worked in Turner Valley in the office in Turner Valley of Anglo-Canadian.

AK: Was that hooked in with drilling contracts pretty closely?

BS: Yes, they were the same, drilling contractors was part of Anglo-Canadian...

AK: Was that the office at Longview down in the river bottom?

BS: Yes.

AK: Well, then you'd have a lot to do with Ralph Will then.

BS: Ralph Will and Gene Denton.

AK: Who was Gene Denton working for then?

BS: Anglo-Canadian.

AK: I see. Now do you know the circumstances under which Ralph brought Gene and Cody up from the States?

BS: No, not really. Not really. I knew it had been done but I don't know, I didn't know the circumstances. I guess he felt that they needed a production manager, Anglo-Canadian needed a production manager. Ralph of course was drilling superintendent. And so Denton was the production manager and Cody Spencer was brought up to assist Ralph in the drilling business.

AK: Right. So Gene would look after the actual producing, going completing the wells, that sort of thing?

BS: Yes. Yes.

AK: Was there any sign of Clarence Matthews at that time?

BS: Yes.

AK: Clarence had come up too?

BS: Clarence...

AK: Or was Clarence a Canadian?

BS: Clarence was a Canadian, came from I believe Manitoba.

AK: Right, and he was I believe he was a University graduate.

BS: No.

AK: He wasn't?

BS: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. I'm not certain about that. But I don't believe he was a graduate.

AK: But he was part of all this package so you could see how the Denton and Spencer team, that was the nucleus of it there and they broke away from Ralph and the from Anglo and formed Denton-Spencer, well we'll get to that in a minute. So what was your job and who did you report to? Or did you report to everybody?

BS: I think pretty much everybody, but I took the well samples, we had a lab in the basement of the office and I took the well samples and examined them and labeled them and so on. And Grant Spratt would come down periodically and look through them. And so I, essentially I guess I was still under his wing.

AK: Did you see Jonesy come by and check your samples for you or did, or did you have much to do with Jonesy?

BS: Don't recall, no.

AK: You know who I mean?

BS: Yes.

AK: What about Bill Gallup? Was he floating around?

BS: Yes. It seemed to me that Bill Gallup started, he worked with Anglo also, did he not?

AK: Yeah, there was something like that, of course he went on with Royalite then later, but...

BS: Yeah, but I think I think he started with Anglo if I recall correctly.

AK: Yeah, because he was, he had a shack along with Jack Fulton and a bunch of others up at the north end on the Home camp.

BS: Oh...

AK: Well, that's a couple of years later. But there was the Longview, Longview was the kind of headquarters, the field headquarters. So, what was your, would you care to tell me what your salary was then? Or do you recall?

BS: I had a feeling that, I have a feeling it was around a hundred and a quarter a month, something of that sort.

AK: And board?

BS: Well, not really, I had a bed but I had to eat, I had to provide for, get my own meals somehow.

AK: Well, there were some restaurants around there.

BS: Oh, yes.

AK: Yeah, and this was really in the aftermath of the brown crude oil down dip discovery, I guess, there was a boom that was on that, drilling the down dip oil well.

BS: Yes, Anglo, I don't know how many wells are drilled in that south end, but there were quite a number, and they were all excellent oil wells.

AK: So after this one year being away from University, did what compelled you to go back? Did you feel that you should go back?

BS: Well, I felt I should go back and get some sort of education.

AK: Well, what did, did Grant have any influence on you?

BS: Yes, he, I'm sure he had quite an influence on me and I was, he was certainly well liked by me. You couldn't have found a finer man.

AK: No, that's right.

BS: And I'm sure that he pushed me some. And the other man who also was with Anglo at the time was Jack Webb, also a geologist.

AK: Right and Jack had been with the Feds.

BS: Yes. That's right.

AK: This is way back when... so Jack and Grant were, had some helpful influence.

BS: Oh, yes. And I, one summer I worked with Jack Webb in the Sundre area or Bearberry area, doing field, geological survey.

AK: And this was as an Anglo employee.

BS: Yes.

AK: Yeah right. Okay, so then came graduation and the war had started so you decided that you'd sign up and go in the Navy.

BS: Mmm hmm. But I had one, I was working at, I had got my job back with Anglo after graduation, in the office. And then I had a call from Pete Sanderson.

AK: This was before you signed up.

BS: Yes. I was in the process, but I wasn't actually accepted as yet. I had a call from Sanderson and he wondered, he invited my wife and I down to the hotel for dinner. And he was working for, he was on a job for Shell Oil Company in the Entrance area. And he, they were doing a geological survey in the Entrance, north and west of Entrance. And so he had two young geologists, one from Manitoba and one from California working with him. And these chaps had never been in the bush in their lives. So he was having a terrible time, he was afraid they'd get lost or something. And so he wanted to know if, he asked me if I would consider going up and working that summer with him. That would be the summer of 1941, as a plane table operator. And so I talked with Anglo and they said, certainly if I wanted to go that was fine with them and it was considerably more money as I recall, about double what I was getting with Anglo. So, and the only thing was that I had just been married, and I wasn't too keen about going off in the brush at that time. My wife wasn't keen on it at all. But Pete suggested that perhaps he could, after we get going, she could come up and live at Entrance and we could work out of there. Well that never happened. We never did get that close to Entrance that we could work out of Entrance. So...

AK: Well did Ann...

BS: She stayed in Calgary and wasn't too keen about the whole business at all.

[00:20:25] AK: Could you, if you'd care to just talk a little bit about Ann. Her maiden name was Corley, the daughter of Dr. Corley.

BS: No, sister of Dr. Corley.

AK: Oh, I'm sorry, sister of Dr. John Corley, right. And how did you meet her?

BS: I met her, I was staying at Sanderson's and, for a short time and Mrs. Sanderson introduced me to Ann Corley...

AK: They're on, eh...

BS: So they're on, and...

AK: Well, she was the matchmaker, eh? Not only were you getting jobs from Pete but you were getting girlfriends and a bride from, yeah. So you actually did do some plane table work then.

BS: Yes.

AK: Did these fellows that you worked with from the States, did they, did the names mean anything to you?

BS: No.

AK: They just disappeared. Yeah. Okay, and then what happened? Did you get the call to, that you were accepted?

BS: Yes.

AK: You had to drop your job, and...

BS: Yes.

AK: And you reported for duty.

BS: I had to go before a Selection Board, a Naval Selection Board, and then I was told I had been accepted and then I, for some time I still worked and went to classes at HMCS Tecumseh in Calgary.

AK: That was at 7th Avenue and 2nd Street?

BS: Yes, and then in December of '41 I was sent to Kings College in Halifax for my Naval training.

AK: And did Ann accompany you?

BS: Yes. Yes, she did

AK: And you set up a bit of a housekeeping there?

BS: No. Actually, when we arrived, after we arrived we realized that she should never have gone because the living conditions in Halifax were, living accommodation was very hard to come by. Fortunately, some friends in Calgary had written to friends in Halifax introducing us to them and these people took Ann in and she stayed there, which was very fortunate.

AK: But you didn't have anything approaching married quarters.

BS: No, no. I was in barracks and...

AK: That's right. So you'd have to have your leave, and...

BS: Yes. That's right.

AK; So, just to, now I don't want to cut your Naval career off, but what did you, when you were demobbed, at what rank was your...

BS: I was a Naval Lieutenant.

AK: Right. And you served in the North Atlantic?

BS: Yes.

AK: Right. What type of craft?

BS: I was in three ships actually, the first being an armed yacht, The Reindeer II, a frigate by the name of Wentworth, and the third ship was an Algerine, which is... we had, we kind of had built about 12 of

these Algerines, they were, there designed by the British as a fleet minesweeper, but the Canadians built twelve of them to be used as escort vessels, and I was in, the Fort Frances was the Algerine I was in.

AK: And you were on escort duty of the convoys.

BS: Yes.

AK: Did you get, you didn't get on that Infamous run to ???

BS: No, I was fortunate that I didn't.

AK: Yeah, it was what, to Liverpool or to...

BS: No, we, in the frigate, I sailed with a group, an escort group from St. John's, Newfoundland to Londonderry in Ireland and then, after taking the navigation course, I joined the Fort Frances and we were on the, what we called the western local run, which is from off Newfoundland to Halifax, Boston or New York. And I, at the end of the war, I took the Fort Frances to Sydney and decommissioned her.

AK: Right.

BS: And then I came home on leave.

AK: But you never served in the Pacific.

BS: No. Matter of fact when I was home on leave from the Fort Francis after decommissioning the Fort Francis, I was home on leave and the Japanese war ended.

[00:25:57] AK: Yeah. Okay, so you're back on civvy street and you were married, by that time, how many children did you have?

BS: One, one child, one boy.

AK: And did you have more besides that?

BS: We had a daughter later on.

AK: Right. And your son is...?

BS: Our son is in England flying for a company out of Gatwick.

AK: Commercial?

BS: Yes. It's an air cargo company called Trade Winds.

AK: Right. And your daughter is...?

BS: Daughter is married and living in White Rock.

AK: Oh, across the way.

BS: Across the strait.

AK: Right. So then you hit civvy street did you go back to Anglo?

BS: No, I ran into a schoolmate who had gone to University with Jack McMillan. And Jack McMillan was working with Dowell, and so he asked me what I was doing and I said, well, I'm not doing anything at the moment. I'm on leave, and he said, well, why don't you go and see Roy Graves, see if he's got a job, and he said I think they've got openings. So I went to see Roy Graves and got a job with Dowell, as a, on a cementing truck. And I stayed with them for just a short time, I'd say eight or nine months. And I ran into another friend, Russ Wilson, and Russ Wilson was working, was a salesman with National Supply Company. And Russ said that he was leaving National Supply to start a company of his own, and he said that I should, he suggested I go and see Tom Renner of National Supply Company...

AK: Right. So, can I just back up with Dowell? What area were you assigned to with Dowell?

BS: I was in several areas. I was in Brooks, the Brooks area for a while. I was in the Tabor area for a while. And my wife and son were living in Calgary, and of course I stayed there when I was at home.

AK: Yeah, now, you'd be, if you're working at Brooks, would Ed Tovell have been there at the time?

BS: Yes. He was with Dowell at that time.

AK: Yeah, I know he was. Yes, because he was down at Tabor when I was there. Who else did you work with? Hutchison?

BS: Ken Hutchinson.

AK: What about Bill Waterbury, was he...?

BS: No, Bill McKay.

AK: Oh, Bill McKay, the hockey player from Turner Valley.

BS: Yes. Goalie. He was the goalie for the Turner Valley Oilers.

AK: Yeah, and then he had a son, Bill.

BS: That's right. That's right. And Bill died of a heart attack and his widow Emily is still alive. So, Bill was with Dowell then.

BS: Yes.

AK: I see, and then did he go with Perforating Guns?? Well, he went with one of the other companies, he didn't stay with Dowell.

BS: No.

AK: So what prompted you to, did you feel that Dowell wasn't the answer to your career dreams or?

BS: Well I didn't feel that, I didn't feel that I was in my element with Dowell somehow.

AK: Did you have any incidents while you were with Dowell, hilarious or disastrous like blowouts, or any incidents that... like there was the one at Princess, but I think it occurred earlier in that... The Cal Standard well that...

BS: We had no real...

AK: Nothing out of the ordinary.

BS: No, nothing.

AK: What were you doing, mostly cementing and acidizing?

BS: Cementing. I didn't get into the acidizing business at all. We were, I was on cementing the whole time.

AK: Well, and you'd be on call and the hours were irregular so, you ran into Russ and then you were saying you went to see, what's that...

BS: Tom Renner.

AK: Yeah. Now, where was Alvin Geddes at this time?

BS: He was with, he was with National.

AK: He was, was he the stud duck there?

BS: No. Tom Renner was the was the head man, and Alvin was a salesman and Russ Wilson was a salesman.

AK: Right. And Tom Renner, was he from the States?

BS: Yes, but he lived out at Priddis. He had a farm out at Priddis.

AK: Is he still alive?

BS: No. No, he's long gone.

AK: He was an older person at the time.

BS: Yes.

AK: I see. Did he retire back to the States?

BS: No, no, he died in Canada. And he was he was a compatriot of Bob Brown.

AK: The older, Senior.

BS: Bob Brown Senior. Oh, yes, they were great buddies. I don't know how bad... no, Tom was, but he was one of the ones that went out when they had the, when they sort of turned on Turner Valley royalties, I think.

AK: Oh, I see. Yeah. Well he'd... because National had an office at Okotoks for years hadn't they, before that?

BS: No.

AK: When did National come up into Canada.

BS: Oh, I can't tell you that. I don't know but they had an office, office and warehouse in Calgary at 10th Avenue and 8th Street, right across the subway from the Albertan building, you know.

AK: But they did have a store in Okotoks.

BS: They had a, it was just a warehouse really.

AK: Oh it was, oh, I see. I guess I've overstated it.

BS: Oil Well Supply, their headquarters were in...

AK: That's what I'm thinking about, Wilkin, John Wilkin, he was down there.

BS: Yeah.

AK: That's it. I've got it mixed up. I'm glad you cleared that for me. So Renner sized you up and what did he, what did he offer you?

BS: He offered me a job in sales.

AK: What kind of a starting salary did you have? If you'd care to tell me.

BS: I'd care to if I... it seemed to me seemed to me was around \$200 a month.

AK: Yeah. Sounds about right.

BS: \$200, 250 dollars a month.

AK: So one of your first areas of concern was visiting the Lloydminster patch and you were saying that you'd established good contacts with the old Husky company. Now at that time it was controlled by the Nielsen family of Ready?? Wyoming. And what was your main sales to them?

BS: Main sales were pumping units.

AK: That's to complete the pump jack and...

BS: And the sucker rods and the bottom hole pumps as well.

AK: Now this was something new to you, how did, did you just get into this pig iron business, kind of thrust into it, and you learned as you went?

BS: That's it, that's it.

AK: And you had your composite catalog, and your National Supply catalog and you just...

BS: Yep. That's essentially, I didn't get any formal education I must say.

AK: And probably no training.

BS: No. No, none.

AK: They'd give you the keys to the car and away you went, from here.

BS: Yes.

AK: Well when you were going to Lloyd, would you drive all the way from Calgary?

BS: Yes. I occasionally I'd stop over in Edmonton.

AK: No, but I meant you wouldn't take the train.

BS: No, no. No, I drove.

AK: And at that time did National Supply have the blue cars, or they had started to have blue cars.

BS: They had blue cars and...

AK: Had they brought them up from the States?

BS: No. No, we got them in Calgary.

AK: You were able to buy them.

BS: Oh, yes...

AK: Because there was a shortage...

BS: There was a shortage, but we were able to procure cars and we were, as salesman, we were allowed to have a business coupe. If you know, you may or may not know what a business coupe is...

AK: I remember them very well, two-door with no with no...

BS: No back seat.

AK: No nothing. And there was no rumble seat either, just a big trunk.

BS: Just a big trunk, right. And that was what you were assigned.

AK: What were they Fords, or Chevs?

BS: Chevs. We always bought General Motors, well Chevrolets, that's all.

AK: Yeah. And there you were with the car and chains?

BS: Oh, yes...

AK: Always chains.

BS: Yes.

AK: Well would you get right out into the field at Lloyd, and visit the well sites?

BS: Oh yes.

AK: Where were their offices then, was it on the Saskatchewan side or the Alberta side?

BS: The offices were on the Saskatchewan side.

AK: They still are, you know.

BS: Still are.

AK: Yeah, they built a big building there on the Saskatchewan side. Of course, that's another resurgence you see. another opening up. So this would occupy quite a bit of your week then, you'd drive up there and...

BS: Yes.

AK: AK: And who were some of the people other than Husky that you dealt with? Was there Charlie Mills up there?

BS: Yes. Yes, Charlie Mills. and then there was an engineering firm there, Mitchell and Gray.

AK: Oh, yeah, Murray Mitchell and Gray, and I dealt with them as well.

AK: But I don't think they formed up till a little later.

BS: No. No, that was later.

AK: That's right. Well Scotty Murray lives up at Brentwood Bay, and Dave Gray lives in North Vancouver, and of course, Odelling?? is still in Edmonton, king of the castle. But you would, you would be selling them equipment which they in turn would use for their clients.

BS: Actually, I didn't sell them, I didn't sell them anything. I just, they recommended our equipment, like if I sold them on the machinery, why they would recommend it to their customer and the customer would buy it.

AK: Had you started to get into selling drilling rigs then?

BS: Not then.

AK: How about service rigs?

BS: No.

AK: Well did National ever make...

BS: We never made service rigs...

AK: You stayed with... just could you maybe summarize very briefly what your main stock and trade was in those days?

BS: Well, our, actually in Lloydminster, our main business was pumping units, but also pumping units, sucker rods and bottom hole pumps, and the drilling equipment came later.

AK: What about tubular goods?

BS: Yes, tubular goods, we manufactured our own tubular material, I'd forgotten that, yes, we...

AK: So that came from...

BS: Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

AK: I see and you had the manufacturing in California. What was that, Torrance?

BS: Torrance, California. That was where, that's where rigs were manufactured.

AK: The draw works and masts and everything...

BS: Yes.

AK: And the pump?

BS: Pumps were manufactured in, at first in Toledo, Ohio. The pipe was manufactured in Pennsylvania, and then they later had a plant in Texas, I think it was Midland. They started building pumps in Midland, well they moved out of Toledo, moved out of Toledo completely and then into Texas.

[00:39:52] AK: So when Leduc hit, Renner said get up there to Edmonton.

BS: Yes.

AK: And then you moved your family to Edmonton. And what did you do buy or rent?

BS: We bought a house.

AK: You bought a house, and this the one that Ann mentioned on 136 Street?

BS: 136 Street and 104 Avenue.

AK: You were out way past the Railhead, the Railhead...

BS: It was up towards your warehouse at the Railhead.

AK:AK: That's right.

BS: It was 142nd.

AK: Oh, I'm sorry. That's right. It wasn't 124th, 142nd, and it was right out in the bush.

BS: Yeah, and as a matter of fact a friend of mine who I'd gone to University with an Edmonton. He was an Edmontonian and he said where your living, he was surprised to see me in Edmonton and he said where are you living and I told him and he said, hell, he said I used to shoot ducks out there, and I'm not surprised, because come spring. it was like a duck pond.

AK: Right. So you built your first store, it was on the south side, wasn't it?

BS: Yes.

AK: One would have thought that you might have acquired a house maybe down in the university area, but...

BS: Well the new construction was going on in the west end and I was familiar with Edmonton of course and we felt that it was a good area, the university area was mainly older houses and you couldn't afford those.

AK: Well, that's right. Did the company help you at all?

BS: No. No help from the company. But I was able to scrape a down payment together thanks to parents. And then it was a National Housing scheme. So we had a 20-year, as I recall a 20-year mortgage and we were able to handle that.

AK: Sure, and was there a veteran's allowance as well?

BS: I had a, now the Veteran's Land Act did not apply to that, the Veteran's Land Act only applied to larger plots, but I of course got a settlement when I came out of the Navy but it didn't amount to much.

AK: No. So yeah, who is in the office with you then in the store in Edmonton?

BS: Well, I hired two men in Edmonton, and then Doug Foulds came up from Calgary. Doug Foulds, and he became store manager and then we, then we brought up 2 girls from Calgary. I remember there was Marge Brady and the other was... her brother was an engineer in the oil field of, oh dear.

AK: Well, that's okay.

BS: I'll think of it.

AK: So who else was on staff there, I think we mentioned Al, Alvin Geddes, did he come up...

BS: He never went and moved to Edmonton.

AK: He stayed in Calgary. What about that other fella not Brownridge, but the other fella you said you hired, who had just retired. Al Broomfield.

BS: Broomfield.

AK: Who hired him?

BS: I hired him.

AK: Right. And where had he been, had he been a roughneck or?

BS: No. No, I hired Al Broomfield and Bob Shaw and they were both just young chaps who...

AK: Off the street, eh?

BS: Yeah, right off the street.

AK: Yeah, well, that was the way it was with a lot of people. And then did your duties change when you were in Edmonton?

BS: Not really, I still was on sales.

AK: And of course the focus then was whipping out to Devon, well Devon hadn't even started.

BS: No, no.

AK: Most of the fellows were working out of Leduc. Did you have much to do with General Petroleums?

BS: Yes, we had, did quite a bit of business with General Petroleums.

AK: And that was Cody Spencer.

BS: Yes.

AK: Now there you were back with Cody again.

BS: Yes.

AK: Yes, I suppose he recalled your previous....

BS: Oh, yes. Yes, he and, I'd worked for him at Pincher Creek.

Side 2 – 43:00

AK: They had brought the steam rigs up from Turner Valley.

BS: Yes.

AK: So was there that much drilling equipment to sell them at that time?

BS: Not at that time, but there, of course there were bits and that sort of thing, and mud and general supplies.

AK: Oh, you handled mud, did you?

BS: Oh yes.

AK: What brand of mud was it? Was it that...

BS: ??? I believe, no it wasn't ??? Baroid.

AK: You were handling Baroid. And that was before Baroid set up there.

BS: Yes.

AK: So you were kind of a store for them.

BS: That's right.

AK: And then what did you handle, Hughes bits?

BS: Hughes or Reid bits.

AK: Oh, both?

BS: Yes. Hughes mainly.

AK: But old Claire Nabors had been the Reid bit salesman.

BS: Yes.

AK: And I thought they had started their own sales staff.

BS: They still, they still have their own salesmen, but we acted as, acted, we did warehousing for them. I'd put it

AK: Yeah, and then you'd take them out or they'd come in for them and...

BS: Either, one or the other, sometimes we'd take them out and sometimes they'd just come in and pick them up.

AK: Then the who else, was there, there was Can-Tex there, old dollar for Dick started that one.

BS: Yeah.

AK: Did you have much to do with him?

BS: I could never crack old Dick for a long time.

AK: Wasn't he an oil well man?

BS: Yes, he was. Yeah, but I finally, I don't know. I broke him down eventually and sold him a rig for Redwater. I finally broke him down and sold him a small rig for Redwater.

AK: A new rig.

BS: Yeah.

AK: How could he stand that?

BS: Well, he didn't really very well. He I think he rued the day because he was used to jaw clutches and this sort of stuff, you know.

AK: And he was used to barbed wire haywire and everything fastened together, no boilers...

BS: We sold him a, what we called a T25 rig with GM diesels on it and it had, it was a torque converter drive. And this old Dick wasn't too sure about that torque converter bit.

AK: Well, maybe it was something that was being introduced anyways, wasn't it, but fairly...

BS: Yes. It was new.

AK: Yeah, there was a tremendous Improvement.

BS: Oh, yes,.

AK: But he couldn't bear, he'd... yeah, I can understand.

BS: His rigs were all manual, there were no air controls or anything on the rigs. And so here this rig with the torque converter and air controls and old Dick Casing threw up his hands when the air supply would freeze off and...

AK: Yeah, because he probably hadn't looked after that properly, there was water getting in there.

BS: Yeah.

AK: Condensed condensation. What about McIntyre and Webster? Did you help them get started? You know Harry Webster left Imperial and... Floyd McIntyre, they bought a rig but I'm trying to remember who...

BS: It wasn't ours, it wasn't ours.

AK: What about Commonwealth?

BS: Yes, we did a lot of business with Commonwealth, Lloyd McCallum. We sold them a number of rigs and... got somebody else in mind... and of course Peter Bawden later on.

AK: What about old Paul Bolin, Northern Development?

BS: I was, we became quite good friends with Paul Bolin, but I could never sell him anything. Well, I finally, eventually I sold them a rig in North Dakota. They were, they had a, they had a contract to go to North Dakota and they needed a rig in a hurry and we happened to have one around...

AK: This would be several years later.

BS: Yes.

AK: Down the road, but Bolin...

AK: In the first instance...

BS: I remember the first time I ever met Paul Bolin was in Calgary and he bought some pipe from us. And that, that was the first time I'd ever met him, and he came out to the office and he paid Tommy Renner in cash for this pipe. And Renner, it was a Friday and Renner didn't know what on Earth he was going to do with all this cash over the weekend.

AK: Take it home, eh, and sew it up in a mattress. So we're getting up now to all this scrambling out at Leduc and the roads. Did you did you have to use Jeeps or did you use regular cars with chains, and...

BS: Regular cars with the, the business coupe with chains and lots of weight in the back.

AK: Did you, did you have a car for Ann at that time?

BS: No, she was on one foot.

AK: Out there. And she was mentioning that you had the only phone on the street.

BS: Yes.

AK: Now how had you acquired that phone?

BS: We talked to me the Edmonton phone company and we made a deal with them that they would run a wire into my house. It cost us some money, I can't recall how much it cost but...

AK: Did National pick that up?

BS: Yes, they picked that up.

AK: Yeah. They knew it was to their advantage.

BS: Well, yes, it was to their advantage and to my disadvantage, I must say, I couldn't get any sleep or...

AK: Well, the usual routine was that there be a taxicab would have a phone, and then somebody'd phone for somebody and then they'd send the cab over to that person's home. Dig him out of bed, get him, drive him back to the taxicab company and phone. I don't know whether you...

BS: We never used that system.

AK: I think Jack Sparks, do you remember R.W. Jack Spark, with Haliburton?

BS: Yes.

AK: When he first came out, yeah, he had to do that and he was just living around the corner from us. We were in Edmonton you know for quite a while.

BS: Where were you living on?

AK: Well, we started off on 107th Street. We rented a house on 107th Street, just south of the tracks. South of the Granite Curling Club, 8425, the house has since been torn down then we moved out to Devon and then when I left Devon to go with Home, we lived on 124th Street in an apartment and we rented a house on Saskatchewan Drive, which was pretty posh.

[00:07:54] But anyways, maybe we can move on now to Atlantic. And when was the first time that you heard that things weren't going right out there.

BS: I don't think, I don't recall hearing any rumors of an impending disaster and I didn't, I didn't hear anything that...

AK: Well you fellows were busy running around.

BS: Well, that's true.

AK: And you're doing your iron thing...

BS: Yeah, I hadn't I hadn't heard any rumor of a blowout or anything of that sort.

AK: When did you first hear that the well had gotten beyond the point of no return, and...

BS: Well, I guess I heard it almost immediately, but the thing, that they were unable to control it.

AK: So do you have any part to play in that big, that massive cement job that was done on the well to the west, you recall that?

BS: The only things that I can, that I remember that we had really much to do with is that, I know that we sold them, sold tons and tons of mud for the relief wells and so on, and I know that our mud sales were really up, and it was a case of night and day getting mud out, you know.

AK: Well, do you recall the circumstances under which the Conservation Board finally bit the bullet and took the well away from McMahon and Myron Kenley and Red Adair. That was May the 15th.

BS: I knew after the fact that, I knew but I...

AK: Did you ever run into Myron Kenley or Red Adair when they were out there?

BS: No, no.

AK: Dave Gray had quite a bit to do with it.

BS: Yes.

AK: So really, your activities with it was getting supplies out there and getting them out there fast.

BS: Yes. And I recall they put two large pumps down on the river and I'm not sure that we didn't lend them one, well, I think one was an Imperial pump, it was our, it was a National pump...

AK: That pump was supposed to go to Muskeg and it never got there.

BS: Oh.

AK: That they sidetracked it and they took it down, I guess it was one of your...

BS: It was our largest pump at that time.

AK: Right.

BS: It seemed to me they put two of them down there.

[00:11:05] AK: Now, we're back on and you mentioned Billy Oaks who lives here, his initials are W.E. and he's at 477-5858, and he was responsible for getting that water up to the relief holes, is that right.

BS: Yes.

AK: What was your connection with that, apart from that, was there any other...?

BS: Not really, no, and the only other, one other thing that I recall about the Atlantic situation was that there was some man from came up from United States and I'm not sure whether he was one of our men or who it was, and he wanted to, he wanted to go out to Atlantic to have, to see what was happening

and I drove him out there and we contacted somebody on the lease and we were allowed to walk in to the well, or to the well vicinity on, they had duckboards laid, and we walked in and I remember seeing the earth bubbling all along these duckboards. And when we got out again, this chap said that he was sure glad to get out of there, and I said, I wasn't too keen on being in there myself and, because I said if that thing ever caught fire we'd walk out in our bones, you know.

AK: That's right. Well, on the two relief holes, did you have any contact with any of the drilling personnel in there, like the tool push, Tommy Wark, and Ben Quarti?

BS: Well Ben Quarti, he was one of our one of our great supporters.

AK: In what sense?

BS: Well, he was a, he would buy from us when he could and, in other words if he needed bits and so on and if, he would, well he was a good customer of our, let's put it that way, a good friend of ours.

AK: And did you have any personal contact with him?

BS: Oh, yes. Yes. I knew Ben...

AK: From a social standpoint?

BS: No, not really. No. No.

AK: You were never at one of his famous parties were you, climbed the wall.

BS: No, I'm not surprised.

AK: But, were you aware that he was quite an innovator? He had a lot of patents.

BS: No, I didn't know that.

AK: Yeah, he was from Australia and...

BS: I knew he went on...

AK: But his big problem was... and he went on to work with Al Phillips, did you run across Al Phillips? Who went into the directional drilling business later on.

BS: I think I should know him, but I can't...

AK: He's still around but he worked derrick on the on the whole with Tom Wark. Then he got interested in the directional drilling. Now your company never supplied directional drilling.

BS: No, no.

AK: Didn't get into that.

BS: No.

AK: Do you have any recollection of that string of pipe that Home Oil had on their lease and the Conservation Board you might say seized it and...

BS: I recall something about that, yes. Yes.

AK: Well Gordon Webster remembers it well, of course you remember Gordon.

BS: I'm sure. Yes.

AK: And Jimmy Stafford, of course remembers it but Red Goodall wouldn't talk about it very much. But did you remember any of the Conservation Board people?

BS: I remember the Conservation Board people in Turner Valley.

AK: Yeah, but I was thinking about the ones at Leduc, like Nate Goodman.

BS: Yes. Yes. I knew Nate.

AK: Who else do you know was there with the Board? Ted Baugh?

BS: Oh, I didn't know he, I know Ted but I didn't know he was there...

AK: Yeah he was with the Board that summer.

BS: Well, who... and then there was another chap that, seemed to me came from up Vermillion way or something.

AK: McCaskill?

BS: No.

AK: No, it wasn't McCaskill, he'd, well Burt Corey, not Corley but Corey...

BS: Yeah, I know Burt.

AK: Yeah, he was with the Board up in Vermillion, but he was long gone to CPR by that time. Well, I'm just trying to...

BS: Well there's another man that I, whose name I'm trying to remember, it seemed to me he was, seemed to me he was sort of, well, maybe Ukrainian descent or something.

AK: Oh, I know Frank Manyluk.

BS: That's who I'm talking about.

AK: Yeah, did you have much to do with him?

BS: Not really, but I knew him.

AK: So who else was around there that you had dealings with at Atlantic Number 3?

BS: Well was Al Wright, was he connected with it at all?

AK: Well, he was the drilling superintendent.

BS: Superintendent, yeah.

AK: Then he had Jimmy Irwin under him, but at that time, I don't think they had built their building in south Edmonton.

BS: No.

AK: They had this yard in Leduc.

BS: Yes. Well Al Wright was quite an innovator too you know.

AK: Right. Could you tell me a little bit about him?

BS: Well we, found, Al was something like old Dick Harris in some ways. Al Wright didn't think that the, as I, it always struck me that he didn't think that National you how to build drilling rigs, that he could build them just as well and consequently he did build some parts for drilling rigs and they were, they were the ??? that sort of thing, you know and... But oh, I liked Al, he was a nice fellow.

AK: Well, the two rigs that were used for the relief holes, they were old steam rigs.

BS: Mmm hmm.

AK: Did you still carry parts for steam rigs?

BS: Not that, I think we had a few parts in the Calgary store, but we had nothing in Edmonton.

AK: So you were, at that time National Supply was rapidly moving to diesel and...

BS: Oh, yes. We had nothing against the...

AK: You know, innovating with the good modern equipment.

BS: Yes. Yes. They were very, they were very quite a bit ahead of their time actually in the drilling rig design.

AK: But really Ralph really cleaned up in Leduc with those old steam rigs that he converted.

BS: Oh, yes.

AK: He converted them and put the CAT engines way out... were they your engines, or... those CAT...

BS: No.

AK: You didn't carry CAT engines.

BS: No, our brand was Superior.

AK: Yeah, that's right. Superior Diesels. And he had that, you probably remember them, the ones with the sprocket chain that ran miles out to the end of the...

BS: Yeah.

[00:19:04] AK: Could you tell me any anecdotes or incidents about those rigs that were working around there?

BS: No, again I'm getting back to Dick Harris. We sold him this new modern rig and he had a, it had GM diesels on it and they had to, they had trouble with one bank of the GM diesel and they took it in to Edmonton, I guess it was Watrous handled them, they took it into to check it over and meantime, he could have, if he could start the engines, why, he could have worked with the remaining power that he had, you know just for drilling. But he didn't have any means of starting them, and in the old days with a jaw clutch rig, why, if you're travelling block was up in the derrick, you could put everything in gear and drop the travelling block and it would rotate the engines and start them. So old Dick, he was, I was out at the rig that day and he came driving up and so he said to me, he said, Al, the traveling box way up in the derrick, why can't we just start this thing with the blocks, you see. The driller was there and the driller, he didn't, he didn't really say anything and I said, well, you can't do it with this rig and he said well, what do you mean we can't do it with this rig, and I said, it's got a torque converter. And I said you can't spin that torque converter fast enough to rotate the engines. Ah shit, said Dick and walked off.

AK: Right, yeah. Well then getting onto the when the wells were drilling, did you have much to do with the relief holes themselves.

BS: Not other, not other than to supply them.

AK: And was there any... well, wait a minute, you couldn't have got out there without a permit, there was permits there. Did you... how did you get on the lease?

BS: This is what I don't remember. I don't remember...

AK: Yeah, there were permits issued. Yeah. I must have got one from somebody because I know I drove out there with this man and we walked in because...

AK: Sergeant Jimmy Muir, of the RCMP, he was a little short fellow, and he used to work for GP later in safety.

BS: Yeah. I knew Jimmy.

AK: So when it got down to the point where the well caught fire, what was the feeling then when the well caught fire, did you... Ann was mentioning that you'd seen it.

BS: Yes, from Edmonton. And, well the feeling was that it, my general feeling was it might last for quite a while. It might burn for quite a while. I didn't, I don't think that I knew at that time that the, I don't know whether I did or not, but the directional wells had made it, you know.

AK: Yeah, right. And Ann was mentioning that you'd had Charlie and Tip over to the house.

BS: Mmm hmm.

AK: What was your impression of Tip and Charlie? Could you give me a little thumbnail sketch of those two fellows?

BS: Well Charlie, I'd run into Charlie a number of times before when Imperial had bought National rigs and I'd run into Charlie when they'd rigged dragged them up or something like that. He was a great favorite of mine. And I know, I remember sitting him in the Leduc Beer Parlor one time with Charlie and a number of his crews and the crews were off work and listened to the stories that they told and so on which I really enjoyed. Tip Maroney, I can't, I must have met him before the Atlantic deal, but I don't just know when, but I was always, he was always very, very friendly to me and I always liked Tip very much, and I realized when I saw them out at Leduc that the both of them had been working night and day for a long time and hadn't had a decent sleep or meal for some time. And that's why I made the suggestion that if they could find the time we would like to have them in for dinner. So we set a date and they came in and we had a, had a long dinner hour. Ans then they went on back out again.

AK: Did Tip talk about his experiences in Peru.

BS: Yes. He did. I've heard those experiences.

AK: Well, I got that all on tape. Yeah, so you'd, would you characterize him as a man that had pretty strong leadership qualities?

BS: I thought so I thought so.

AK: Otherwise, I don't think he would have done what he did.

BS: No. No, no, I thought he was I thought he was a very strong character really.

AK: Did you hear any discussion about, why would they want to drill two directional holes? Why not just drill one. Did you ever get any...?

BS: No, I didn't.

AK: That was Tip's and I think Charlie's idea, and it was very sound because if one had failed they'd have been to square one again.

BS: Yes, true,

AK: So I just wondered whether there was any of that came through...

BS: No, I didn't hear any comments on the two wells.

AK: So when the thing caught fire you were figuring that it might be quite a little while, then it died down as we both know and the wells were, two relief holes were completed and cemented up and that was it. Were there any incidents connected with the completion of those?

BS: No.

AK: Did you ever hear about them running those suppositories down the one well? The welcome mats rolled up and chicken wire?

BS: Yes. Yes, I heard about those. And they had a lot of other stuff too, they put a lot of garbage down, did they not?

AK: Yeah.

BS: Walnut shells and...

AK: Yes, did you people supply any of that stuff?

BS: I don't know whether we did, I don't think so.

AK: Do you remember a fellow named Paul Moses from Wetaskiwin?

BS: Yes.

AK: He hired Lloyd Stafford away from GP and set up Devon drilling. And he was he said that he'd supplied a whole lot of equipment, you know, like sawdust and planks and that stuff because they were laid at Corduroy Road you see, you can just barely see it on this picture.

[00:26:39] So after the Leduc Atlantic Number 3 episode you continued in Edmonton and you, of course you had the Redwater boom and you had the Golden Spike. Boom. And was National Supply gearing up for expanded activity at that time or did they realize that really Alberta was is going to be a pretty major...

BS: Oh, yes. Yes. They were...

AK: Had they not thought in those early days of building something that eventually emerged at Red Deer? As the plant?

BS: Not at that time, no.

AK: They still felt that they should import their equipment, not try to Canadianize it...

BS: Incidentally another contractor who we missed was Parker Drilling Company.

AK" Oh, yeah...

BS: Who were great customers of ours.

AK: That's right and then of course Claire took charge of Parker. Well Claire was hired by Home and Parker. There was yet another outfit that, he's building an ammonia plant down at Pincher Creek. Well, we'll think of that name later.

BS: A former drilling contractor?

AK: Yeah, and he was very active in Saskatchewan. He had... But that was Maurice Palmer and he was an active person and he's building that ammonia plant down there.

BS: I didn't know that.

AK: Yeah, so he was another customer?

BS: Yes, very good customer.

AK: Right. What about Reiding and Bates we didn't talk about them.

BS: Reiding and Bates were customers of ours as well.

AK: They sold out though, didn't they? Charlie Thornton and they sold out their Canadian operations.

BS: Yeah.

AK: And then there was old Bob Brinkerhoff, was he a National...

BS: Yes, they were National hands too.

AK: Yeah, there's they're still active. I think Bob's still living part-time in Calgary.

BS: Is he?

AK: And then his son I think is running...

BS: I didn't know. Well they had a, at the time of Redwater and so on they had a man in Edmonton by the name Burr Redding, do you remember him?

AK: Oh yes.

BS: Yeah. He lived across the street from me at 136th. He was a diamond in the rough too.

AK: Oh that's right, kind of red complexion.

BS: Yeah, heavysset.

AK: Is he still around?

BS: I don't know. I don't know. I don't imagine so.

AK: So, it was just real hurly-burly and I imagine we could spend the rest of the day talking about all the different companies and outfits, but in 1952 National Supply decided to move you back to Calgary.

BS: Yes.

AK: And you were moved back as tubular goods manager.

BS: Yes.

AK: And you stayed there till?

BS: '57 or '58.

AK: Right, and during that time I guess the tubular goods requirements just kept getting bigger and bigger.

BS: They were still somewhat hard to get.

AK: Did you having to do with Ralph Well in his capacity as kind of Controller of pipe?

BS: Yes. Yes, I did. Of course, I had to had to get permission from him to sell pipe to various customers.

AK: He was ??? clearing house.

BS: Yes, yup. He, actually it was almost as if he'd issued a permit for them to purchase the pipe.

AK: Well it was that ??? it was tough. And different grades, and by that time had you started to get into metallurgical requirements that were special for the sour gas.

BS: No. Except that it seemed to me that Gulf had done quite a bit of work on the sour gas business in Pincher Creek.

AK: Yeah, well that was, and then of course Jumping Pound was sour too.

BS: Yes. And there were certain, it seemed to me that there were certain things you couldn't use but I don't recall the details of the...

AK: But they certainly, I'm sure National was gearing up for that too, weren't they?

BS: Oh, yes.

AK: To meet special...

BS: Yes because they did make specialized pipe, streamlined pipe.

AK: Right. So in '57 you went with Prairie Pipe. Was Larry Welsh with them then?

BS: Not then, no.

AK: No, he went with Ebsco afterward.

BS: Yes.

AK: And you, did you move your family to Regina, ???

BS: Yes, we lived in Regina for a few months.

AK: And that was it, eh. An you came back..

BS: Yes. Came back to Calgary.

AK: And then you got involved with Mannesmann.

BS: Right.

AK: And at that time they were manufacturing or starting to manufacture pipe in Sault Ste. Marie. They were rolling what, different sizes, or?

BS: Yes. They didn't have a great selection, but they had a, and they didn't, for instance, they didn't make tubing, it was all casing that came out of there at that time.

AK: I see. But where would they get their tubing from, ???

BS: Well they'd have to get their tubing elsewhere, Germany or one of the U.S. ...

AK: Was their quality acceptable.

BS: Quality was excellent, that, the mill to Sault Ste. Marie was one of the most, was the most modern pipe mill of its kind at that time, much more modern than anything that National or U.S. Steel had.

AK: But you were saying, without getting into a lot of details, that they'd set up a another company called Mannix...

BS: Canadian Mannix...

AK: Which was cutting, and they had their own sales staff?

BS: Yes.

AK: And here you were competing against them.

BS: That's right.

AK: And that was impossible so you walked away from it. And then you spent a bit of time looking around I suppose, and this was coinciding with a bad kind of a slump.

BS: Yes, there was.

AK: And then you hooked in with Bob Graves, who was Dresser Atlas...

BS: No, Dresser Clark.

AK: Oh, I'm sorry, Dresser Clark. And they'd bought...

BS: Clark Compressor Company.

AK: Right. And was this for pumping gas?

BS: Yes.

AK: Compressing gas and pumping oil and that sort of thing.

BS: No, just gas.

AK: Oh just gas compression.

BS: Strictly gas.

AK: And there were recipis or turbines?

BS: They, when I first joined them, their main line was recipis of up to 6000 horsepower.

AK: And of course was just at this time that we're getting ready to start building the pipelines to export gas. TransCanada was getting into business.

BS: TransCanada was built then, it had been built and we'd sold them units for the TransCanada line, but Alberta Gas Trunk became one of our large customers.

AK: Yes, you'd sell to them.

BS: Yes.

AK: Well with your knowledge of the people in the industry it wouldn't be too much of a difficulty to fit right in.

BS: It was a different business.

AK: Oh, yeah it would be.

BS: And I had to learn a lot to... in the gas compression business was different than anything I'd been into before, but it was a very fascinating business and...

AK: Where did Bob Graves come from?

BS: He came from Edmonton.

AK: I see. And you said he was a classmate of yours.

BS: Yes.

AK: Oh that was, you'd known each other then.

BS: Oh, yes.

AK: So then you stayed with them until when?

BS: Until about eight years ago. Let's see, this is '85...

AK: And you left them in '77?

BS: Yeah.

AK: And you moved out here.

BS: Mmm hmm, not immediately. But, and meantime, my wife was mixed, was in business in Calgary.

AK: In a business?

BS: Yeah, she had two bath boutiques.

AK: Oh, yes.

BS: One in Chinook and one in Penny Lane downtown.

AK: Oh, heavens. That wasn't the, what they call it, The John?

BS: No, no, this was just the Bath Boutique, it was, the one in Chinook was a very large store. And so she got into that business.

AK: Well did she sell out?

BS: Yeah. And when she sold out we moved out here.

AK: I see, well that must have been some decisions there.

BS: Yeah.

AK: Yeah, well...

BS: She was very successful at it.

AK: Yeah, I'm sure.

[00:36:41] So just going back, there's one outfit that's kind of intriguing because there's a lot of politics involved in it. And that was that Phoenix outfit, did you ever have anything to do with Phoenix Pipe?

BS: No. I know who it is.

AK: And they apparently rolled some pretty bad stuff.

BS: That was the mill in south Calgary?

AK: Yeah. Or in Edmonton, no, it was in Edmonton, wasn't it?

BS: Edmonton, that's right. Yeah, Phoenix was in Edmonton.

AK: And they rolled some bad pipe for West Coast in, up at Fort Nelson. There was some bad pipe for the Princess, that line from The Princess. Were you involved in supplying anything for that Pacific Princess plant?

BS: No. Oh...

AK: That was the one that stripped the ethane out.

BS: No, no, no, our big involvement out in that area was the Princess Compression Plant of Alberta Gas Trunk.

AK: Oh, the first one.

BS: Mmm hmm. We had six engines in there and a centrifugal, turbine driven centrifugal.

AK: Was that the one that blew up?

BS: Yeah the centrifugal plant blew up. Fortunately the engine plant didn't.

AK: Well, that could have been a real disaster.

BS: Well, you know, I, of course I heard about it immediately...

AK: Yeah, because you ??? you were out here, at least you were retired...

BS: I was out of the business. But at the time I thought, if that whole plant goes up, Eastern Canada's without gas.

AK: Well, that's right, it was the aorta...

BS: Exactly.

AK: If you want to compare it to the human body. All the gas. And I think what they were doing, they were shoving a little gas down around the header, there was a line downstream that they were bringing gas in, but not very big.

BS: Well, of course the Pincher Creek gas would still go through, you know, even if that plant went up they could still put the Pincher Creek gas in a TransCanada...

AK: Well there was very little gas coming from Pincher Creek... ??? down the drain, that Creek field...

BS: Yeah, not enough to do anything good to, for Eastern Canada.

AK: So that was a case of some kind of a failure there. It was a really a disaster because...

BS: It was a valve failure.

AK: Yeah, I guess it was.

[00:39:19] Is there any other thoughts that you have, Bernie, about your career, your life, any other anecdotes that you'd like to put on tape? Any philosophy or expound a little bit here and there.

BS: The only, I knew a great number of characters of course. And one of the one of the funniest characters I ever ran into was Frenchie LaRue, did you ever run into him.

AK: No, who was he with?

BS: He was with Can-Tex when I first met him. He was a driller for Can-Tex, and this was when I was with Dowell out in Brooks and I ran into this Frenchie LaRue, I don't know, on one of the rigs or something. And he then, at that time there was only one place to eat in the area and that was a Chinaman's place in Patricia, other than Brooks, and we were out of Brooks most of the time. And this Chinaman had a restaurant in Patricia, and they called the Chinaman Buffalo. I don't know how he got that name. But in any case, nobody could eat the stuff the Chinaman put out and so Frenchie LaRue and his brother, there were about four brothers, he and another brother put in a lunch counter in a poolroom in Patricia. And actually the food was excellent. They made very good food, but the surroundings weren't that great. It was kind of crowded and never knew when you were going to get a pool cue in the back or something, you know. But then I ran into him later when we opened the Edmonton store. We had an open house and Frenchie LaRue was with Can-Tex in Leduc I guess, and he came to the open house, and this Marge Brady, the secretary, she had a guest book that she asked everybody to sign. Well Frenchie came in and she was sitting there and asked them to sign the guest book, and he looked at it and there's some names on this one page. So he turned the page, took a fresh page and then he put a whole bunch of

Chinese characters up and down the page. And Marge Brady said, what's that? And he said, that's my name in Chinese. But he was quite a character.

AK: Right. Well, I think that's about it. I think we're just about running out of the tape there. I certainly appreciate the time that you've taken, Bernie, to relate some of these things and it's just another aspect. I, as matter of fact, you know, I might want to come back and get some more. But if you think of anything else that you think relates to Atlantic 3, please get in touch with me.

BS: I will.

AK: And I'll look forward to maybe another visit and have a, maybe a little more time with you. But thanks and I think this all, it's now 12:30 nearly and we'll say over and out.

End of interview