

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Helen Turgeon

INTERVIEWER: Nadine Mackenzie

DATE: September 1983

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking. Today is Thursday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, 1983. I am at the office of Mrs. Helen Turgeon, Northern Energy Resources Ltd. in Calgary. Mrs. Turgeon, you are the Regional Director Elect for 1984 for the Desk and Derrick Club. Can you tell me about the Desk and Derrick Club, when and where was it started?

HT: The Association of Desk and Derrick Clubs was started in 1951 by a woman. Her name was Inez Ottie Schaefer. She was from Louisiana and she felt at that time that there was some need for the women who worked in the petroleum and allied industry to have some kind of an organization whereby they could learn more about their industry first of all. And I guess women in the industry, perhaps working women were not as common as today, they also needed some common bond and . . .

NM: So they were a bit isolated?

HT: That's right. So I think that was primarily her reason for some. . .you know, not just on a social level but more on a business level and as women in a new industry.

NM: So how did she start it?

HT: If I might I could just quote a little bit from our history. It says a desire on the part of Inez Ottie Schaefer, Humble Oil and Refining Company, New Orleans, to meet other women in the oil and gas industry brought together, in April 1949, a group of women to form the first Desk and Derrick Club. I did say 1951, that's when the association of Desk and Derrick Clubs actually was formed. Anyway, to go on, news of the formation of the New Orleans club which appeared in trade magazines sparked the interest of other women in the oil centres of North America. In June 1949 a club was founded in Jackson, Mississippi followed by Los Angeles, California and Houston, Texas. Then these 4 clubs formed the Association of Desk and Derrick Clubs of North America by signing the following articles of association in July 1951.

NM: It spread very fast.

HT: Yes it did. So then this was the articles of our association. Know all men by these presents: the Desk and Derrick Club of Houston, the Desk and Derrick Club of Jackson, the Desk and Derrick Club of Los Angeles and the Desk and Derrick Club of New Orleans, acting through their duly authorized officers do hereby associate themselves into a group to be designated as the Association of Desk and Derrick Clubs of North America. We are no longer known as the Association of Desk and Derrick Clubs of North America. I would say about 6 years ago the North America was dropped because we have been in fact, liaising with women in other countries, namely Australia, I believe Sweden, England.

#040 NM: So it has become international.

HT: International yes. At this point we do not have any clubs other than in Canada and the United States but we're working on getting more.

NM: Were a lot of women interested at the beginning?

HT: Yes, I believe so. I don't have any figures on how many women were say, interested at this level in Los Angeles, California, New Orleans, at that level, but I know that at the first meeting in Calgary, the first organizational meeting that was held, there were over 400 women attended. Only last year, in 1982 did we exceed 400 women membership in the Calgary club so you can see how there was this great interest at the very beginning, straight away and of course, not all of them then became members but certainly there was an interest there.

NM: Can you tell me about the lady who started the Desk and Derrick Clubs?

HT: As I said, her name was Inez Ottie. She was working for Humble Oil Refining Company. With the encouragement from her boss, Mr. John Bricker of Humble Oil, she felt that women who were employed in the petroleum industry should have some organization whereby they could learn more about the industry and so she had this dream and she went on to organize the Desk and Derrick Club. Now, she sounds like a very interesting lady, I have never been fortunate enough to meet her, although she is still living. She has many hobbies, one of which is impressionistic painting, which she does on oil paper and then mounts. She's also quite involved in martial arts, the Japanese martial art of Tai Chi, which she teaches twice weekly to senior citizens, or at least she did do back in 1978. I'm afraid I don't really know, she is getting old and just what she's doing right now I don't know. But she did not stay active in Desk and Derrick Club. There are still members who were members when Desk and Derrick Club was first formed by Inez Ottie and they have continued to be members of Desk and Derrick Club. Now Mrs. Schaefer has not continued to be a member.

NM: Do you know why?

HT: No, I don't really. I think she just probably had so many other interest. Perhaps she didn't even stay working in the industry. I would have to read more about her.

NM: Was she a secretary?

HT: I don't know whether she was a secretary or not, I don't think she was. She did stay with Humble Oil for 9 years until she met her husband Paul and married. Then she resigned 2 years later and she said, from then on she devoted her life to her husband and her marriage. So that's sort of all I know about her.

NM: So she started the Desk and Derrick Clubs and then ???

HT: That seems to be about it. She did that. That was one of the wonderful things she did in her life. She seems to have had a very interesting life.

#074 NM: What do women do in the Desk and Derrick Club?

HT: Our main purpose is education. Education of ourselves as women employed in the industry. The reason we seek this education is so that we can be better members of the industry that we serve and perform a better job for our companies. We gain this education in many ways. We've become quite streamlined over the years. We in Calgary, and I

think most of our clubs in the Association, incidentally we have 127 clubs in the Association of Desk and Derrick across Canada and the United States. We have monthly meetings at which we have industry speakers who come to speak to us on just about any subject related to the industry. We have field trips, again, we get industry support for this, companies offer their facilities, we got out and see drilling rigs. At our convention here in Calgary over 100 of our members went to the Arctic to see Pan Arctic's operations there. We've had trips to coal mines, we've had trips to, you name it, offshore drilling rigs, just about any aspect of the industry you can name. We've taken the trip or had the opportunity to take the trip to learn more about. . .

NM: Do you receive a lot of support from oil companies?

HT: We've had very good support from the oil industry. I believe I can say this is very general across Canada and the United States. We certainly rely on this support, particularly for speakers and again, for being able to view the facilities. Without support from the industry we couldn't do this kind of thing. But I think because they realize that we're trying to further our knowledge about the industry they're only too happy to support us. And of course, in line with furthering our education we have developed some interesting programs, not only for our members but for other women who want to pursue a career in the petroleum industry. One of them is our fundamentals of petroleum technology course, which is now available as a correspondence course through the University of Austin, in Texas. This course can be taken in 10 correspondence installments and it's actually graded by the University of Texas and it's a certificated course.

NM: Is it a one year course?

HT: Yes. Well, you can take it at your own time but I would think that 1 year would be a good measure of the time it would take. And it's all about the basic fundamentals of petroleum and all aspects of it.

NM: And who is behind this course, who has organized it?

HT: Actually this was a dream of some of our own Desk and Derrick members again, and it was developed then with these members and the University of Austin. Dr. Cruise is with the petroleum extension service in Austin and he has been very instrumental in helping us develop this to be suitable for a university course.

NM: Is this course restricted to members only?

HT: No, it is not, it is open to all people who would like to take it whether they be men or women, who just wanted to learn more about the petroleum industry.

NM: Is it well recognized?

HT: Yes, it is. Especially since it's connected with the petroleum extension service. If you know anything about them, they are probably one of the major services that tries to teach people about the petroleum industry. They are world widely known for this. So we're very pleased to be connected with them and to have them kind of promote this for us.

#123 NM: So what else do you do at the Desk and Derrick, it is educational, is it also networking, all women helping each other?

HT: Yes. I think certainly that we have a very good. . . we have very good fellowship among our membership. Last year we reached an all time high in the association of 12,000

members across Canada and the United States. We have our annual conventions, which we had in Calgary here just this August. At our conventions we generally get about 1,000 ladies from across the association. We've got this really neat fellowship you know, where you look forward to meeting women you've already met, meeting new women at the conventions. And of course, we've always got this common bond of Desk and Derrick. I think it's a very unique organization, I don't know of any organization quite like it. Because although our organization comprises women in every aspect of the petroleum industry, from geologists to legal people, secretaries, clerks, accountants, you name it, we can still come together in this common bond of Desk and Derrick in our thirst for knowledge and education about our industry.

NM: And the bond being you are all women in the oil industry.

HT: That's right. And we feel that that's unique as well in that it was formed by a woman for women.

NM: And who knew the problems of women.

HT: That's right. I think certainly we're not discriminating against men or anyone. Men have their organizations also but I think that we are kind of unique in that we are all women. And very well recognized as such by the industry.

NM: Do you have a convention every year?

HT: Yes we do. The Calgary Convention in '83 was the 32<sup>nd</sup> convention. We've had 4 conventions in Canada in our 32 years history. We've had 3 in Calgary, the first in 1954 which was actually a Calgary convention but it was held in Banff. We had one in 1969 which was held here at the Westin Hotel, then the Calgary Inn. And now the one in '83 and we've had one in Edmonton in 1979.

NM: Who organizes these conventions?

HT: It's usually the hostess club, which this year was Calgary. Out of our membership of nearly 400 this year we had probably about 120 of our members very actively involved. I was fortunate enough to be selected as the general arrangements chairman. I had some very capable people working with me, many past presidents of the local club, even past regional directors.

NM: That must have been huge work?

HT: It was a lot of planning but it was really well worth it. It always is well worth it because convention is not only a learning time, it's our time to . . .

NM: Get together.

HT: To get together and also that's where all our business of our organization is conducted. We have a pre and a post convention Board meeting, which lasts 3 or 4 days. It's about 3 days prior to convention and then the Sunday after convention. And we have one other Association Board meeting, which is held in February. And that's the only 3 meetings we have to sort of conduct and administer all the affairs of this Association, which as I said before is 12,000 strong. So we put a lot of work into a few days because we don't have the time to take from our companies and we do this on our own time. Many of the girls do this entirely on their own time, they take holidays to do it. In some cases of course, companies are very supportive and allow time off but. . .

#175 NM: But you got very good results this year.

HT: That's right.

NM: Can you tell me about the Desk and Derrick Club in Calgary?

HT: Yes. Our first inaugural meeting was held in 1950. It might be interesting to note here that Mr. Carl Nickle, who is a very prominent industry person as you know, was at that first meeting and he applauded the women there and said, your club will bring you greater knowledge of the important industry of which you are a part and will contribute to a better understanding of the oil saga. Just to go on, it is interesting to note that Mr. Nickle has continued to be a great supporter of Desk and Derrick. So much so that he has spoken to us at every January meeting since that first inaugural meeting in 1950.

NM: So he was really interested.

HT: So I guess if we were to say we have one male member it would have to be Mr. Nickle. Now as I said earlier, I don't know if I said it on tape or not, last year we reached an all time high in membership in the Calgary club. We had over 400 members. This year we're down a little bit which is probably due to the economy, a sign of the times. But we've always had a fairly active Calgary Desk and Derrick Club. We have been holding our meetings for the past 8 or 9 years at the 400 Club, which in case you're not familiar, the 400 Club is a men's club but they have . . . I guess they recognize Desk and Derrick as being a group of industry businesswomen so we have been allowed to meet there. I guess I told you earlier what we do at our meetings, we have speakers that come in.

NM: Who can become a member?

HT: Yes, now that's important. In order to become a member of Desk and Derrick you have to be working in the petroleum or allied industries, actively engaged in the petroleum or allied industries. We do have what we call associate members. It's just as the name implies. A person who has been a club president for instance can then become an associate member even if she should leave the industry if she wishes. We've also got honorary memberships, I believe we have 3 now that have been bestowed on Calgary members, which are bestowed because of some remarkable feat that that person has done. 2 of them are bestowed on women who have attained the honour of being association president. We only have 2 ladies like that in our organization from Canada. One of them is Marguerite Flood-Mosher???, she was 1966 association president and she is still active in our club today. The second one is Polly Holden who was our 1981 president and of course, Polly is still active in the association. You're probably aware that Polly was named Oilwoman of the Year this year, which was an inaugural award created by the Canadian Petroleum Magazine and will continue from now on to be awarded to some deserving Oilwoman of the Year who has done some pretty great things. As Polly has. I think you'll probably be interviewing Polly, you'll get a lot of that from her, her background, that kind of thing. And I think the third one is a person who is still active in our club and that's Joyce Dunn. Now these are honorary memberships I speak of. So basically what's involved to become a member is that you have to be actively involved in the petroleum or allied industries.

#232 NM: When somebody applies does your . . . ?

HT: When someone applies for membership, we apply every year for membership, it's not kind of a continuous membership. So in effect if I'm a member this year I'll still have to fill out an application in January to continue my membership. But when you apply then your application for membership is scrutinized if you will, by the Calgary Board of Directors and they approve or disapprove memberships.

NM: And if it's approved do you have to pay fees?

HT: Yes.

NM: And are they very high?

HT: Our fees are \$25 a year to belong. So certainly our fees are not going to break anyone.

NM: Very reasonable.

HT: Very reasonable. I would almost defy anyone to come forward with another organization that you can belong to with all the advantages that we have, for those kind of dollars.

NM: Do you meet once a month altogether?

HT: Once a month altogether. The Calgary Board of Directors meet once a month. So that if you happen to be on the Calgary Board of Directors then you would meet twice a month but only those people who are on the Board.

NM: And when all the members meet what do they do, do they have dinner, do they talk?

HT: Yes. I think in different clubs the format is different. Not all clubs have a dinner meeting, in Calgary we do. We have a dinner meeting and then we have the guest speaker at this meeting. Sometimes we have entertainment as well, not always and of course, we conduct our, it's a general meeting in effect so we conduct any business that comes before that meeting.

NM: How do you find your guest speakers?

HT: You mean interest wise? You know, if you're kind of looking at 8 or 10-12 guest speakers a year, we generally only have 10 because we have 2 closed meetings. Our November meeting is our election meeting so we don't generally have an industry speaker. We have an educational program generally, maybe films or that kind of thing. And then our December meeting is almost strictly social. So if you're looking at 10 speakers a year, and they're not always speakers, sometimes we have films, you know, different things, you're going to get some that maybe are not going to appeal to everyone. But certainly all of them have educational value. I would be remiss if I said otherwise. Certainly I've heard speakers that I wasn't totally turned on by but I learned something.

NM: But here in the oil patch you're bound to find a lot of people that are willing to talk.

HT: That's right. And those very same people that may not appeal to one person will appeal very much to someone else because that person is perhaps seeking knowledge in that area. And most of our speakers are very gracious and allow us to ask questions. We have been commended on the calibre of question that our women ask. I think sometimes we have had, not often but on occasion we have had speakers that have thought of us as just a ladies social club and they were very impressed and surprised and have told us so. So I think that has a lot to say for it.

#283 NM: Can you tell me about the organization of the Desk and Derrick Clubs?

HT: You mean the structure? Okay. Basically the structure is the same at the association as at

the club level. We have a president, of course, the immediate past president serves on the Board of Directors, we have a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-presidents, a recording secretary. We have a corresponding secretary. Now at the association level the corresponding secretary is appointed by the president as opposed to being elected as she is at the club level. We have a treasurer and then we have directors. Now at the association level we have 8 directors.

NM: And you are one of them

HT: Yes, I am one of them. And the reason we have 8 directors at the association level and maybe in future years we'll have more, is because we have 8 regions. So in the 8 regions we have the 127 clubs which I spoke of before. And over each region there is a regional director and I am the Regional Director of Region 7. Now I might just tell you a unique thing about region 7 which is unique to any of the other regions is that it's the only region that has clubs on both sides of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. So we have clubs in Canada and the United States. And we're the only ones at this time to boast of this.

NM: It's important then.

HT: It's important and it's a very unique situation. It has problems too, as you can imagine, even with currency, banking, that kind of thing. But it's still interesting.

NM: Do you have to travel sometimes as a Regional Director?

HT: Yes, there is considerable travel involved. Not necessarily need to be involved. Of course, there's the travel to your convention, which is a necessity, that's where you have your Board meeting and then your Board meeting in February and that's a necessity. It's nice if a regional director can visit clubs in her region. Certainly in my region there's 13 clubs and while I would like to visit them all I'm sure that my time won't permit. But I think what we try to do as regional directors, we try to assess what clubs may need your visit. Maybe clubs that received a visit last year I wouldn't concentrate on visiting this year. And so we work on that basis.

#326 NM: What about the funding? Do you receive grants from government?

HT: No.

NM: Nothing at all.

HT: No, we don't. We're totally self sufficient in that we exist on our dues, from our dues structure, which sometimes is a little bit lacking as you can imagine. Of course, we've had support from industry, just as for our convention, we had very good support from industry. Not just monetary but you know, otherwise too. At this convention we had industry displays that were all donated by companies in the industry for our members to learn about the various things that were displayed there.

End of tape.

Tape 1 Side 2

NM: You have publications too, haven't you?

HT: You mean Association publications? Yes, we do. We have what we call our Oil and Gas Journal and that is the publication that's our means of communicating with our members. It's published by the association and distributed from our. . . I didn't tell you before but we

only have one paid member in Desk and Derrick and we maintain an office which we call our distribution office in Tulsa, Oklahoma. So our publication is distributed from there to all the member of Desk and Derrick across the association. So when I said 12,000 members last year that meant 12,000 copies of our journal. And as you can see it's very nicely done. Then we also have club publications. I think most clubs have them. This again, is a means of communicating your own news to your members.

NM: Who is in charge here of putting this publication together?

HT: We have a different committee each year. We usually have an editor and her committee and they put it all together and then we have it printed by a commercial printer. Much the same as the Oil and Gas Journal is of course, printed by a commercial printer.

NM: What type of topics do you cover in this publication, the one in Calgary for example?

HT: The one in Calgary we first of all of course, try to cover our club news and what's happening at our club level. Then we try to encompass in there, we have a monthly newsletter from our association president, from our regional director and we cover our speakers. We do a summary of our dinner meeting speakers, any field trips we've been on. So in other words if a member did not attend that particular meeting she can still get the lowdown if you will, on what's happening in the club or at the association. Now the association journal is published 4 times a year presently, we hope to up that in 1984. So of course we have to cram a lot more good stuff in there. But looking through it you will find profiles of people in Desk and Derrick, profiles of people in the industry, just many industry stories about what governments are doing as related to industry, new projects, just about anything. Again, of course, focussing on the education aspect of the industry.

NM: You have a speakers bureau, can you tell me about that?

HT: Yes. We have a speakers bureau which is at an association level, and many clubs are of course, involved. We have it in the Calgary club. This is very good because it teaches women first of all, to get up and talk about their industry, or talk about anything actually. It gives us an opportunity then to talk about our industry to other groups. We like to go and talk to young people in schools and just anybody that wants to hear about the industry. I think this is sorely needed, not only in our industry but all industries, to educate the public in general rather than just our members I think, sometimes. Over the years the petroleum industry has suffered because of misconceptions, that kind of thing. So we have an opportunity here to tell about our industry and tell it the way it is.

#045 NM: You have an educational trust, what is it?

HT: That is a fairly new thing in our association and we're very excited about it. What we intend to do with this educational trust is to give scholarships to people who are wanting to pursue a career in the petroleum industry. Now it can be Desk and Derrick members or students who want to pursue a career in the petroleum or allied industries. So in other words, if they're attending a university or some learning establishment, that now they are able to apply for a scholarship which will be granted through our educational trust. It's really taken off very well in the time that we've been in it. People are very excited about it. We just in the States, have received a tax exempt status for this and so now we are able to proceed with taking donations for it and we really see this as a real viable instrument of

encouraging people to pursue careers in the industry.

NM: How are you going to choose people to give them scholarships?

HT: That's interesting. I think that's just a ways down the road. We haven't given the first scholarship but I'm sure that we will come up with a panel of very knowledgeable people who will be able to deal with this and decide. I'm sure we'll have a lot of applications and it will be difficult decisions but there will be guidelines set up which are being worked out.

NM: What about the awards, you are giving some awards every year?

HT: Oh yes, you're speaking of the Amy Awards. We give the Amy Awards, this for our members. It's like the Academy Awards and believe me, we get about as excited and as competitive as they do for them. These are given for the best program of the year. The best bulletin contest, the bulletin being our publications which we talked about before, like the Calgary publication, Black Gold. We vie for the best bulletin, the best all round bulletin, the best news story that kind of thing. Then these awards are given at the regional level. We have 3 awards given at the regional level for each category. The of the 3 awards, the first one goes into competition with all the first ones from the association, then these awards are given away at the annual convention. Believe me, this is an exciting time. And also speakers bureau, for the best speakers bureau presentation.

NM: So it's quite competitive.

HT: Yes, we get very competitive. And of course, which means that our members are achieving some pretty excellent material in the energy field.

NM: Can you tell me about your president this year?

HT: Yes. Our president this year is Lureen Buck and Lureen is with Pan Arctic Oils Ltd. I have to just interject a personal little note here that she's certainly been very helpful to me this year as being the hostess club for the convention. Of course, you work very closely with your president, with your local Board of Directors and she has been very capable and helpful on this score.

NM: How do you elect your president and your vice-president?

HT: We have a nominating committee each year and the nominating committee of course, makes suggestions and approaches people to run for the various offices. I've served on the nominating committee and it's a fun and games things, trying to sometimes twist wrists and elbows and whatever. But I think your nominating committee is generally people who are knowledgeable about the members. So we try to come up with a good slate. We always try to have a double slate where we can to give the members . . .

#092 NM: Mrs. Turgeon, can you tell me about your involvement with the Desk and Derrick Club here in Calgary?

HT: I've been a member since 1970, for 13 years. I think right from the time I joined I got involved with committees, committee work that kind of thing. My family was pretty young at the time, I have 6 children so of course, I probably didn't get involved right at executive level right away. But I was the club president here in 1980. Prior to that I had been on the club board for 4 years. I had served as recording secretary first, then I served as 1 year director, 1<sup>st</sup> vice-president, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president or the other way around and then I

became president and then of course, immediate past-president in 1981. Then I thought I would take a year off but it didn't quite work that way. I immediately got appointed as general arrangements chairman of the convention which we have been planning for 2 years. And before I even got that over with, I am now 1984 regional director elect. So I think you might have to say I've been a little involved.

NM: And for how many years?

HT: Well, as I say, I joined 13 years ago but I did become very involved starting about 1976.

NM: This is the end of the first interview with Mrs. Helen Turgeon.

Tape 2 Side 1

NM: Mrs. Turgeon, when and where were you born?

HT: I was born in a little town in Saskatchewan that probably no one's ever heard of. It's just about 90 miles northeast of Regina and it's called Lesstock, Saskatchewan.

NM: Which year was it?

HT: In 1932.

NM: What did your parents do?

HT: My parents were farmers in the area. My dad farmed in that area for something like 35 years. He retired in 1968 and moved to Regina and lived there until his death in February 1982.

NM: Are you the only one in the family to have gone to work in the oil patch?

HT: Yes, I am. I have 2 brothers and 1 sister and I'm the only one who works in the oil industry.

NM: What about your education, where did you go to school?

HT: I took the first years, elementary school in the country, up to grade 8, and then in grade 9 I was very young and I went away to the convent for 2 years in a little place called Lebret, Saskatchewan in the Qu'Appelle Valley. I took grade 9 and 10 there and then I came back to my hometown Lesstock and took grade 11 and 12 there and graduated from there. Then I went to Regina after that and took my commercial course at the Belford Technical Institute there.

NM: And what was your first job?

HT: My very first job was with a firm called Insulation Industry. I worked there for 6 months. It was quite a junior job, I typed invoices and answered phones and that kind of thing. But it was my first job and it was quite interesting. After that I went to work for the Imperial Life Assurance Company. I worked with them until after my marriage, when I got pregnant with my first daughter. Of course, the policy was not to have married women on staff but because I was with them before I got married they did keep me on until I became pregnant and then I left. Then I didn't work until, this would have been in 1953 when I left the . . . no, what am I saying, 1954 when I left Imperial Life and then I didn't go back to work until December 1958 at which time I went to work for Prairie Gas Ltd. which was a brand new company. It was very interesting. It was a company formed by 4 gentlemen who were sort of pioneers in the propane, liquified petroleum gas industry in Saskatchewan. One of those men who is now deceased was Tiny Thompson. The other

man was George Hefter and there was Elwood Percy and Bob Watson. George Hefter's father-in-law as a matter of fact, was A. W. Hugh, who is still alive and lives in Calgary and he really was one of the pioneers in the propane industry and bringing the propane industry to Canada. Regina. And I went to work for them as I say, at the end of the year, December 28<sup>th</sup> in 1958. Prairie Gas was kind of out in the boonies in Regina and I remember applying for the job and they were quite impressed and they said they would like me to come and work for them. I started working for them at \$200 a month, which at that time was really quite good. The only problem was that the bus connections out to it were absolutely horrendous and so my various bosses, as you can see, I had 4 right off the bat, they said, don't worry about that, we'll arrange to transport you to and from work.

#046 NM: That was very nice.

HT: And they did for at least, just about all the time I was there, I got a ride to and from work which was good. I was picked up by the president and general manager of the company every morning and that was pretty impressive.

NM: Going to work in style.

HT: That's right.

NM: Were you always interested in the industry?

HT: Yes, I think in Regina of course, the industry was not as defined certainly as in Alberta. You know, Alberta, by then of course there was Leduc and Turner Valley and all those things, but prior to . . . I neglected to mention this, prior to working for Prairie Gas I did work part time in the summer, just to make a little extra spending money. I remember working for Imperial Oil just on a part time basis in Regina and I was very intrigued with my job there. But it was just a temporary thing and I knew that and they knew that and I would just come in and help out. So I was a little intrigued with the oil industry at that time and just what was happening. It seemed to be kind of an exciting industry to be in, even then. But then of course, my first real involvement was with Prairie Gas. I worked then with Prairie Gas on and off for 5 years. I say on and off because in the interim I had 2 more children. Of course, back then there was no pregnancy leave, no nice things like that. So if you found yourself pregnant then you just told your boss about it and you agreed when you might work till and at that time you sort of severed relations with the company. Then if they wanted you back of course, you came back when it was mutually satisfactory to both you and your employer, which is what I did. So I think out of the 5 years I may have had about 16 months off altogether.

NM: But at the time women who had children did not work. So you must have been a pioneer.

HT: That's right. Especially married women, or women with children you're right. I can remember when I first went to work my dad saying to me, but how can you go away and leave those little children. And of course, it wasn't easy, it was very difficult to go away but it was for financial reasons. I also think back and I think, I went to work for 1 year because we needed certain things. My husband was apprenticing as a printer so he wasn't making that much money at the time. My intentions were to work for 1 year at the most and here I am 25 years later.

NM: Still working. How long did you stay with this company?

HT: Well then in 1963 we moved to Calgary. My husband was offered a job here and he was by then a journeyman printer, so we decided to make the big move to Calgary. We had 5 children, we had a home, I was pregnant with the 6<sup>th</sup> one and it was quite a decision to make to move away. But anyway we made the move to Calgary and I didn't go back to work right away because again, as I say, I was expecting a child. One of my bosses from Prairie Gas had to move from Regina to Calgary in 1961 and that was George Hefter, I've spoken of him before. By that time he was with Canadian Industrial Gas Ltd. here as a vice-president of the LPG operations. He phoned me shortly after he heard that we had moved to Calgary because I guess he had been in touch with some of my co-workers there, and wondered if I'd like to come and work for Canadian Industrial Gas. I said, no, I wasn't too interested because of my situation at the time. But anyway I did come back to work for Canadian Industrial Gas in January of 1964, after my youngest boy was born. I came back on a part time basis at that time, I came back and worked from 9-1 and I was working for Stuart Dikeman and Mr. Dikeman was vice-president of finance and services for Canadian Industrial Gas. Of course, almost from the time I started working this part time basis I was being urged to come and work full time. Mr. Dikeman and I seemed to hit it off very well. But I was kind of hedging because my boy was so young and all my children were young. So I think I worked on this 9-1 basis for about a year and then I relented and I did start coming in on a full time basis. I worked for Mr. Dikeman for 10 years until his retirement.

#100 NM: What was your job there?

HT: I was his personal secretary. I also worked during that time, for the treasurer of the company who for awhile was Tim Shears. Mr. Shears now is our vice-president for Norcen in Toronto, he's our vice-president, treasurer, you know, that area. Then after he was transferred to Toronto I worked for his successor, Mr. Ken Davies, who also retired last year. And Mr. Davies of course, was the treasurer of Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil. Now you're probably wondering how Norcen comes into this picture. In 1965 there was a large merger. This merger involved Canadian Industrial Gas and Midwestern Industrial Gas, Medallion Petroleums, ??? Oil and that were some other smaller companies. All these companies merged to form what then became Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil Ltd. So now we've gone from Canadian Industrial Gas Ltd. to Gas and Oil Ltd. Mr. E. A. Galvin became the president of this new entity, Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil Ltd. Mr. Galvin had been with Medallion Petroleums before, he had been the president of Medallion. And of course, with this big take-over, merger, he then became our new president. He also retired 5 years ago. He was our president until 5 years ago, then he went on to form his own company, Poco Petroleums, which is still a very active company and he's still very active in the industry, although I believe he's now in his 70's. Then I have to get my dates right on this, I think about 8 years ago, we became Norcen Energy Resources. That kind of came about in a way that . . . by then we were owned by Northern and Central Gas Corporation, was our parent company of Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil Ltd. But Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil Ltd. at that time was making some major acquisitions and so for certain reasons that I'm not into all this financial jargon, the

company had to be reorganized. Under this new reorganization we became Norcen Energy Resources Ltd. We have our head office in Toronto, which we always did, even as Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil Ltd., we had a head office in Toronto. But that's how all of this evolved, from my involvement with Prairie Gas to the present day that it's Norcen Energy. But I really in effect, just continued with the company under different names if you will.

#138 NM: How large is the staff in Calgary?

HT: Gosh, I think we've got to be around the 400 mark in the Calgary office now. Of course, Norcen has field offices. Then Cigas Products Ltd., Cigas now is the propane division. I talked about Prairie Gas in Regina. Well, there's no longer Prairie Gas in Regina, it later went on to become Cigas Products. So that division of our company is Cigas Products and that's the liquified petroleum division.

NM: Who was the first president of Norcen and can you tell me about him?

HT: Mr. Galvin continued to be president of Norcen after Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil Ltd. Became Norcen, until his retirement. Then Mr. E. G. Battle became president and he is president to the present day. Mr. Battle was with Medallion also when the merger in 1965 happened and he went on with a very impressive career to become our president.

#153 NM: With this type of work you must have learned a lot about the gas industry?

HT: I was very fortunate because I worked in so many aspects of the industry. Like I say I started out in the propane division, propane liquified gas division then I worked in the finance and service division. Service is sort of your administration end of it. Then after Mr. Dikeman's retirement, I didn't tell you this but I went again to work for Mr. Hefter who you probably recall was my first employer in Regina and I worked for Mr. Hefter then from 1973 until his retirement in 1980. So I've retired several of my bosses. Then of course, when I worked for Mr. Hefter then I was again, working for the propane division of the company. He was president of that at that time. Then after his retirement, or just prior to his retirement I was very fortunate to be able to go to work for one of my present bosses, Mr. Bill Hennenfent???. Mr. Hennenfent at that time, I believe in 1979, was transferred back from our Toronto head office where he had been vice-president of corporate planning. They transferred him to Calgary when he became vice-president of production. So he needed a secretary so because Mr. Hefter was so close to retirement he was very gracious and said, I think you should be kind of looking out for yourself and maybe Mr. Hennenfent could use your service and I'd be happy to share you. So I did that for about a year, I worked for the 2 of them. Then when Mr. Hefter retired there was another move from the east, Mr. Gordon Singer was moved in here as our controller of the natural resources division and he needed a secretary. So it was at that time that I started working for Mr. Singer. So then I had Mr. Hennenfent, who was vice-president of production and Mr. Singer who was at that time, controller. Since then, just a year ago now, Mr. Singer was appointed vice-president of accounting and services and Mr. Hennenfent, just about a month ago, got another new appointment, vice-president in charge of exploration. So you know, I'm certainly widening my area of expertise.

NM: Did you ever take a course?

HT: Yes, I have taken the basic petroleum technology course. I've gone to several seminars on various things, 2 day seminars, weekend seminars, too numerous to mention here. To kind of better myself. And a lot of my knowledge about the industry I find that I learned through the Desk and Derrick and a lot of reading and just being kind of embroiled in these different kind of job descriptions at different times.

#195 NM: You have seen the ups and downs of the industry in Calgary. What do you think about it?

HT: Well, we've certainly had them. I think back to I believe it was in '73, I was working for Mr. Hefter for Cigas at that time and I think of the government regulations, public utilities board and how the industry started to be so regulated by governments. I'm not sort of here to say that that was the start of problems but it certainly enhanced problems for the industry. I sometimes think that the industry is not properly understood and maybe part of the problem is we have not been projecting the right image. But I think that this is being certainly rectified in today's times where we're being more vocal about our industry and speaking out. I certainly think that the oil and gas industry has, well I mean, they've done so much for not just Alberta, but for Canada.

NM: For the whole country.

HT: For the world really. We have so much potential here and I think the oil companies are spending literally, millions of dollars, and yet, they're maligned by the public because they're not properly understood. People are saying, the big oil companies are doing this, this and this to the country but they kind of refuse or just don't want to see the whole picture. I think perhaps again, we the people in the industry, have to put our story to the public in more tangible positive ways. I think this is being done. There are now organizations, the Petroleum Communication Resources Foundation, Desk and Derrick, we have a speakers bureau where we try to educate, not only our members but we even try to go to schools and try to educate young people from an early age about the petroleum industry. Because I think it definitely has a place in our history and probably the place will never really be known until 100 years from now, just what the industry has done for this country.

NM: How do you foresee the future for the industry here in Alberta?

HT: I think it's good. I think we're survivors really and I just have so much faith in the industry and industry people. They have a lot of foresight and I just think it'll be fine. The whole economy has been in a slump for the past year or maybe even 2 years, but I think that will turn around. I think it's just going to mean hanging in there by companies.

NM: What do you think of the place of women in the industry, nowadays, compared to what it was when you started working?

HT: I personally think that there's just about no limit now. You know, I really think that a woman can just about go as far as she wishes. Not just in our industry but in any industry or any walk of life today. I think the opportunities are there. I think we're a little slow in reaching them because we still have a role as women. I guess until men can bear children we're going to have another role. And I mean, if we're going to have to pursue the family

life as well as a career then maybe some of us are not going to be able to move ahead as quickly. But I think certainly for those women who want to move ahead, the opportunities are there. I know with my company we've got all kinds of training programs, they'll train you, you can educate yourself to just about any extent you want, even with company support, that kind of thing. So I think the opportunities are there.

#257 NM: How would you compare Norcen to other companies?

HT: I think Norcen has got to be the greatest. I'm probably the wrong one to compare because I haven't worked for any other company but just what I hear around the industry, I think Norcen is a highly regarded company, has been for a long time. I think we've got super good management, really good that weight all the pros and cons. I'm just very proud of where Norcen is in the industry today and the fact that we're a totally Canadian company has really a lot to say for us. I just don't know where we sit right at the present time in terms of size. I know we're one of the top Canadian companies of our time today.

NM: Did you travel a lot for your company?

HT: No, I didn't. Not for my company. But there are women in our organization that do travel because of their job description, that kind of thing. My job description never has been of the type that I would need to travel. I've travelled a lot with Desk and Derrick. While it's not for my company it's for the industry and to gain more knowledge of the industry. As you know, we talked about that in another interview. So in that respect I have and I hope to do quite a bit more travelling in that area.

NM: When you came to Calgary, how did men at the time look at women working in the oil patch?

HT: Of course, maybe in the position that I was in, I've always been an executive secretary, we were always thought of as pretty special and our bosses kind of . . . I know my bosses still make jokes, we work for her type of thing. But I think secretaries have always been very well accepted in whatever industry so perhaps. . .

NM: People need them . . .

HT: Right so perhaps I was always in the right place at the right time. I would hate to speak for women geologists, engineers. I would think that would be another story again. I've heard things which I would not be prepared to talk about because I am definitely not in the know about that. Again, I think it would probably depend on, not men in general but probably one or two isolated cases where there might be animosity but I've never experienced it in my. . .

NM: This is the end of the tape.

## Tape 2 Side 2

NM: Mrs. Turgeon, who were the most influential persons in your career?

HT: I think I might first start of by saying and you're going to kind of swallow and wonder where I'm going to go from here but I would probably have to say the first most influential person was my husband really. I think when I first went out I said that I was going to work for a year. I think I'm a happier person working, I need to have something

else and he always encouraged that and he always understood that need which I understand for a lot of my friends, people my age, that they didn't have this kind of support from their husband. So perhaps even though he's never worked in the industry, he's always been a great support to me. But other than that, it's not fair to single out one or other of my bosses. But I think certainly, in Regina, when I started to work there was George Hefter, who I later worked for her. He always had a lot of faith in my abilities. He was just a very good sport to me and I think influenced my career a lot. Tiny Thompson who I spoke about. You know, he's another one, just a great guy and if he felt someone was doing a good job he had no hesitation in telling you and he told me many times. And you need that kind of support. But perhaps one of the most influential people was Stuart Dikeman. Mr. Dikeman was a real Texas gentleman. In all the years that I worked for him and he is my mother's age, in all the years the I worked for him he would not call me anything but Mrs. Turgeon, which is very unusual in this day and age. He just insisted on that kind of respect. I called him Mr. Dikeman of course. But you know, he was a fine gentleman in every way. He appreciated my efforts and he told me so and supported me in other things. I joined Desk and Derrick while I was working for him and he followed my career with interest. He still does, he is now retired and he lives in Seattle. He and Mrs. Dikeman have never come to Calgary that they don't call us and we get together so we're personal friends, but he still follows my career. Not only with Norcen but my involvement with Desk and Derrick and never hesitates to commend me and encourage me to go on in these areas. And of course, even my current employers, Bill Hennenfent is a great supporter of Desk and Derrick as is Mr. Singer. They support me with working on Desk and Derrick work at my job and I have travelled and of course, while I always have a replacement I am away from my workplace. So many people really have influenced my life I guess, and my career.

#043 NM: What were the most exciting experiences?

HT: I don't know. When I think about exciting experiences, it's kind of funny to say it's when your bosses retire. I know when Mr. Hefter retired I was asked if I might do something in honour of his retirement and I put together a scrap book for him of his life in the industry, which was very well received by him and Mrs. Hefter. It was a delightful thing, it was a huge thing and it took us almost a year to research and get it. And to see the look on his face when he got it was an exciting thing for me.

NM: His whole life was there.

HT: His whole life, yes. Then when Mr. Dikeman retired I wrote him a poem and it was the same kind of thing there. I think just the fact that you can work for and with people but after all, we are all people together and we all have the same needs and the same. . .

NM: Human beings.

HT; That's right. And while these things may not be important to some people, to me they were. Because I had just done a job for which I was paid for. I suppose I didn't have to have all these little recognitions but I was recognized by their appreciation of the little things that I did. Those were exciting times. I also had exciting times, for instance, when I became president of the Calgary Desk and Derrick Club, that was a real exciting time for

me. And then just this last May I was elected Region 7 Director of the Desk and Derrick. I don't know why, I just haven't even really tried to . . . I guess I'd let my name stand because I find it hard to say no to certain things but sometimes it's just kind of nice to know that you're accepted.

NM: And people recognize your efforts.

HT: And people recognize maybe your efforts. That's right. And I think that's excitement enough. Of course, I've had lots of other exciting times. Probably my most exciting times were with my family but those are not things that we want to discuss here.

NM: What do you consider your achievements?

HT: I really think and I mean, I know hundreds of other women have done it but I think that as I look back on my life, I've worked for nearly 25 years steady, I have raised a family, 6 kids.

NM: Which is quite something too.

HT: And they're all pretty nice kids if I do say so myself. I think back on my dad when he said, how can you leave those little kids and I can remember about 2 or 3 years down the road, my dear dad said to me, you know, I'm very proud of you and what you're doing and how you're coping. I think that just the fact that I've been able to have a career and a family, while maybe not as glittering a career as some, I've tried to do the best I can and I think that's quite a sense of achievement for me or I guess an achievement. And even my involvement in Desk and Derrick, I think you know, a person can really aspire to things or sometimes you get places and you don't even have to aspire. I think that I've just tried the best I know how. I've never let anything stop me, I've never had to, I've had good support from my husband, my family and I think that's probably contributed a lot.

#086 NM: Looking back at your career, is there anything you would do differently nowadays?

HT: Yes I would. I'm not saying I didn't have the opportunity. I was the oldest in my family so I probably didn't get the chance to go to university. I'm sure I could have done. My mom and dad would have moved heaven and earth if I wanted to but I just felt that there were other things I could go into that would be a lot less of a burden on them. They still had my 2 brothers and my young sister to put through school or whatever. So I chose the route I did but I think that if I had a chance to do it over I would take more education somewhere along the road. And I don't know where along the road that I took I could have done. Because you know with my family, when I went out to work I went out for financial reasons and then I suppose there always continued to be a little bit of that. So maybe I couldn't have done it differently but I guess, assuming certain things I would probably just have gone on to get more education.

NM: Thank you very much for this very interesting interview Mrs. Turgeon.

HT: Thank you.