

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Clifford Ray Baker

INTERVIEWER:

DATE:

This tape starts in mid sentence past when the interviewer introduced herself or said what date it was.

Interviewer: . . . a subdivision of Sorrento in the Shuswap area, and we're sitting in his living room. Mr. Barker, could we just get a few statistics down first, where you were born, when and who your parents were?

CRB: I was born October 12, 1912, on a farm near the town of Maidstone, Saskatchewan.

I: Where is Maidstone in relation to some of the other larger cities?

CRB: It is about 45 miles east of Lloydminster and 60 miles west of Battleford.

I: That places it very well. How many children were in your family?

CRB: There were seven, of which five are surviving.

I: And where did you place in those seven?

CRB: I was third.

I: Would you like to just put your names of your brothers and sisters on so that we can have it recorded?

CRB: My oldest sister is . . . .

I: Just their first names.

CRB: Blanche, Marvin, myself, Roy, then two deceased who I won't bother naming, and my youngest sister Irma.

I: And your father and mother's names.

CRB: My fathers name was Thomas Henry and my mothers name was Esta M.

I: Emma?

CRB: No, just M.

I: Oh, was that like Em or the letter M.

CRB: She was a twin, her name was Esta M and her twin sisters name was Ethel N., believe it or no. And they were born and raised in South Bend, Indiana.

#018 I: Did your parents come to Maidstone to homestead?

CRB: No, they came to Maidstone and ran a restaurant for two years and then went farming. My father was a painter and decorator by trade, with the consequence that mother was left home with the family 90% of the time, and we eked out a meager existence on the homestead.

I: Where was the homestead?

CRB: It was at a little district called Freemont, Saskatchewan which was about 25 miles

south of where I was born.

I: So your father took out a homestead, but he also continued to be a painter and decorator.

CRB: Yes, and we were off and on the farm during the period 1914 to 1928.

I: Where did you go to school?

CRB: Cutknife, Saskatchewan on my fifth birthday, 1917.

I: Now, how did you get to and from school, in those days?

CRB: In Cutknife, we walked because we were only two or three blocks from the school, but then when we moved back to the farm, as I said before, we went by foot and by horseback. In the winter time we used to gang up several families and go by wither bobsleigh or cutter with a team.

I: How far did you have to go to school?

CRB: It was 2 ½ miles in the country. I had some education in Unity, Saskatchewan as well. This was during the years that we travelled around, as I said, off and on the farm, from '14-'28.

I: Right. Did you get a chance to complete your education through high school?

CRB: No, I only got to Grade 10 at the age of 13 years.

#040 I: And then what did you do?

CRB: I left home and foraged for myself from that point on.

I: Did you really, at thirteen you could go out and find yourself a job?

CRB: Oh yes, well you'd go out and work on a farm for your board or something of this nature.

I: Where was your first job on your own?

CRB: Oh, it was a little town of Balwington???, which was about 20 -25 miles from home. Then my brother and I rented the farm for one year. And then I left the area entirely and came into Alberta.

I: Whereabouts did you come in Alberta?

CRB: West of Clan Donald, between Clan Donald and Woolindon??? on that CPR branch line that came through past my home in 1924.

I: What were you doing in Alberta, what did you come up. . .?

CRB: Worked in a livery barn.

I: In a livery barn, did you? What brought you there, did you just sort of go where the train took you?

CRB: Yes, I just went where the train took me. And was fortunate enough to land a job at this livery barn which was in a new town and we performed every phase of work, I think, that could be imagined, from digging out from under the pan of a grain elevator to hauling material in for the various businesses that were establishing, cutting ice, which was an experience because we dropped a team of horses in the hole that we were hauling the ice out of.

#059 I: Goodness, was it in a river?

CRB: On a lake, the ice was four feet thick. This was west of Derwent??? in 1928.

I: And what happened, you mean you cut around the horses and the horses fell in the lake?

CRB: We were hauling ice with tongs out of the hole. We cut one block too large and pulled the horses back in. Then we had to hook another team of horses on to get them out. Of course the ice was napped???, and we slid the horses out after we got them.

I: Did they still allow you to stay in your job after that?

CRB: Oh, the boss was there, I wasn't alone.

I: How long did you stay there then?

CRB: From December 1927 to June 1928. Then I went on grain elevator construction and repair in that area and then I went back into Saskatchewan with that same crew. I changed crews. . .

I: You were working for a particular company by this time?

CRB: Yes, contracting companies, construction companies. And worked until the freeze up of '28 and took sick and spent a few months at home.

I: You did finally go back home?

CRB: I did finally go back home.

I: They allowed you to come back?

CRB: Oh, yes and this was in. . .

I: What happened, did you get pneumonia or what kind. . . .

CRB: Appendicitis.

I: Appendicitis. That would be serious in those days.

CRB: It was, but fortunately I didn't require an operation at that particular period. But I was unemployed for several months and then I got back on construction again and worked for about 2 or 3 months and the bottom fell out of it and then I went sub-contracting with my father and brother on the CNR, painting.

#087 I: What were you painting, cars or. . . ?

CRB: Section houses, stations etc. that were newly constructed.

I: All with the same colour paint, what did they call that colour?

CRB: It was CN, it was buff and it was bondex, it was mixed with water and spayed on the stucco buildings. And the paint was buff and the trimming was brown. And we covered a good portion of Saskatchewan from Paradise Hill to Hudson Bay Junction.

I: This would take you through the 20's, how many months or years were you doing that?

CRB: This was only from June until December of 1929. Then I went and lived with my sister back in Maidstone, I was married.

I: What year were you married?

CRB: I was married in 1934. I lived with my sister from November of '29 until after I was married.

I: What did you do during that time?

CRB: Oh, we did several things, my brother-in-law and I . . . Oh, I'm ahead of myself now.

I: This would be just after the crash.

CRB: This was right after the crash. I worked on a farm for my board and the government paid the fellow \$5 a month to keep me.

I: This was like relief, was it?

CRB: This seemed hard to believe but it nevertheless is the truth. The three of us, my brother

and my brother-in-law and myself. . . .

I: You were all on this farm

CRB: We contracted to stook 800 some acres of grain, this was the fall of 1930, for 20 cents an acre and we boarded ourselves.

I: How long did that take you?

CRB: From September until later part of October and then we thrashed after that.

I: Did you get onto one of those large thrashing. . . ?

CRB: No, it was a small domestic thrashing machine where there was probably, six bundle teams and we got \$4 a day for bits and bundles.

#121 I: So you finally had a bit of money in your pocket?

CRB: Yes, but that all went because I had to have an operation for appendicitis and that put me out of work. Then I did farm work for a couple of years, one year for a fellow north of Maidstone and then there was a few months at her fathers place. [Someone talking in the background]. That was 1933, we started that.

I: But you were in Saskatchewan?

CRB: This was all in Saskatchewan.

I: Yes, and this was a very bad time in Saskatchewan, wasn't it?

CRB: Terrifically bad.

I: Were you into the drought, was it the drought time by then?

CRB: I've gone out in the field in the morning and you couldn't see twenty feet ahead of the outfit you were working, this was with horses, due to the dust. But strange to say, even though we were plagued by dust in that area, we did get a crop. Not like people further south who didn't get anything.

I: And did you sell the crop?

CRB: Yes, at a price.

I: What about your fathers homestead in the meantime? Did he still have it?

CRB: Well, it's vague in my mind because I wasn't associated with them from 1929 on. They eventually, while they kept that farm, they moved by team and wagon from there to Grande Prairie and my brother took a homestead at Sturgeon Lake and stayed there for 3 or 4 years. Then they moved back to the farm.

#150 I: And they got the same farm back?

CRB: Oh yes, they never let it go, they retained it.

I: Was this in the middle of the '30's, they tried their luck out in . . . ?

CRB: Yes, that's right.

I: You didn't go with them of course?

CRB: No way, I was on my own.

I: But in the meantime, just in this area, in the early 30's, you got married.

CRB: In 1934 we got married, yes.

I: That was quite a brave thing to do, the two of you.

CRB: Yes it was. Under the circumstances. I was in the trucking business at that time.

I: And your wife's name?

CRB: Alma Buckingham was her maiden name.

I: And she came from the same area?

CRB: The same area, yes.

I: Had you known her all your life?

CRB: No. Strange to say, we first met by bumping heads in a square dance.

I: So this was. . .to set up housekeeping in 1934. . .

CRB: We were working out as a couple.

I: Were you? What were you doing, what kinds of work did you do?

CRB: Farm work. Until. . . [ talk in the background, I think his wife, 'until you took sick and went to Lamont?']. . .that's right, I came to Lamont in 1935 as a hospital patient.

#168 I: What was the matter, it wasn't the appendicitis?

CRB: No, it was kidney trouble, due to the jar of the trucking business.

I: So that ended your trucking career?

CRB: That ended my trucking business. [ 'had an accident. . . ] Yes, and I had a runaway with a set of harrows. I was riding a mule for ??? and they pulled me about 300 yards across a field. I finally came off the end of the draw bar. I laid there and the team circled me and it ended up they ran half a mile and finished up within a hundred yards of where they left me. And that finished my farming pretty well.

I: Yes, you were fortunate you weren't killed.

CRB: I was. I came out of hospital in Lamont, we came to Edmonton, worked for a short while in Edmonton and then went south to Okotoks, she went to Caillie and I went to Okotoks.

I: What were you going to do?

CRB: Farming, I was thrashing then.

I: And your wife went to work. . . .?

CRB: She went as a domestic down at Caillie. And then we got back together in Okotoks in late November '35 and I was working on a farm intermittently.

I: How did you get into Turner Valley, how did you get into the oil patch?

CRB: Well, this is coming up. I worked for a man, I don't know whether you ever heard of McLeod Oils or not, E.H. McLeod was one of the men that I worked for. He more or less got me interested in the oil field business, so we did some travelling around there for awhile. I only stayed with him till June I think it was. Then we traveled around for 2 or 3 weeks and landed back in Turner Valley on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of July in 1936. I didn't start into the oil patch immediately. I milked cows, I did mechanical work and anything that was available and was on part time pipeline work.

#206 I: What were you doing part time?

CRB: Reconditioning pipe mostly, digging ditches, scraping the rust off of pipe and coating it and this sort of thing. And this was in the summer and then in the winter time, the gas lines would freeze up and we'd have to go dig them up by hand and fire them to get the ice blocks out of them. Then in January of '37, I started in earnest with the pipeline and from that time until I was retired I stayed with the pipeline.

I: What was the name of the company?

CRB: Royalite Oil.

I: Who hired you?

CRB: Pipeline foreman by the name of Norman Tupper.

I: Can you tell me about him?

CRB: He was a run-of-the-mill foreman. Mind you, he was the headman but there were several sub-foremen underneath him, who had maintenance crews in different areas of the field you know. One of the names was Howard DeMille, which is a familiar name around Calgary and Tommy Drysdale was another one.

I: They were all foremen at the time?

CRB: They were all foremen and there was Bill Taylor and Frank Roberts, Bill Powell, Jack White, oh I could name numerous.

I: Right. And could you tell me, now the work that you were on down there, this was very early pipeline work, was it not?

CRB Yes.

#231 I: Could you tell me how early, where it fitted in to the picture of the pipeline?

CRB: It was in the transitions period between actual major gas production and crude oil production when I started. Well then, the Valley Pipeline was formed in July of 1939 and from that on, it was strictly oil transportation and maintenance, pipeline maintenance. Which covers a multitude of activities.

I: Let's start with the activities that you performed. Now when you were laying the pipe and you say you did it the hard way, with a shovel.

CRB: I didn't do too much on pick and shovel, only in the maintenance work, the earlier part. When we started laying the pipeline, there were four of us out of the crew that were picked, we were all pretty husky men. And it was our job to take the pipes after they had been burned out and carry them to the side of the ditch, line them up on blocks in preparation for the welders to join them together. And this we did right from Turner Valley through to Calgary, the Imperial refinery.

I: How big were these pieces of pipe?

CRB: Forty feet long and four inches in diameter, that was that particular line.

I: And four of you picked these. . .?

CRB: Four of us, two on each end with tongs. They were like ice tongs but they went around the pipe and we picked them up and carried them to where we had to lay them. And then..

#262 I: But this was quite an early pipeline.

CRB: This was 1937.

I: And excuse me, but you didn't. . . , what did you have in the way of machinery to bring the pipe in? Did you have. . .?

CRB: Trucks hauled it mainly from Okotoks. This was new pipe, there was reconditioned pipe that we used a lot of it. Any new pipe that we had was brought in by truck and strung right off the trailers along the line.

I: Weren't you still using horses though a bit in those days?

CRB: Oh yes, a lot.

I: Could you tell me because you know, '37 is fairly modern to be using real horsepower.

Where were they used?

CRB: They were used for hauling supplies along the line, like oxygen, acetylene cylinders, valves, fittings, anything that was required. And also, in the early part of the time, we used them for back filling. Now this is an operation that's somewhat unique. It was a stoneboat with a tripod on it, on which the top had a pulley and it stood on one side of the ditch and the filler, which was commonly called a mormon board was on the other side operated by a man. And the team worked back and forth, across this stoneboat, over the tripod and backfilled the ditch after the pipe was laid in.

#289 I: You called it a mormon board. What is a mormon board, I've never heard of a mormon board?

CRB: I don't know why it ever called a mormon board.

I: Well, where was it on this tripod?

CRB: It wasn't on a tripod, it was separate and apart. It was the gadget, so to speak, that moved the dirt, but through this system of pulleys over the tripod, into the ditch.

I: It would be like a big flat board that just pushed. . . ?

CRB: It was about, oh I would say, about 2 ½ feet wide and maybe 2 feet high with handles on it and a chain hooked onto it that pulled it forward and the man had to pull it backwards.

I: And where was the horse in all this?

CRB: They were on the opposite side of the ditch.

I: Why would you not use machinery?

CRB: We didn't have it.

I: I see. I thought perhaps the horses could go where tractors couldn't.

CRB: Well they could, yes, in places. I think it was about May of '37, we got the first side boom cat with a dozer on it and after that the horse was out as far as back filling was concerned with the exception of the odd bad place where it was swampy or something like this and then they'd use the horses.

#312 I: When we were talking earlier, you were talking about the longevity of the pipe that you were using,

CRB: Oh, the length of service. Well as I said, the first pipeline went in, in 1935 and to my knowledge it is still in operation, in propane service today. The second pipeline went in, in 1937, and it transported oil to Calgary until 1976 and then the flow was reversed from Calgary to Turner Valley.

I: Why

CRB: Production dropped to the point of . . . well, let's say it could have been uneconomic. The field was taken over by Western Decalta???. Hudson Bay became the purchasers of the crude oil in the Turner Valley field, so it was no longer necessary to transport it to Calgary. Two of the reasons being that the Imperial refinery was ceasing to operate, as such, the Gulf refinery converted to asphalt. There was no need anymore for the oil to go into those two refineries. So it was kept within the field. They in turn shipped it across the line to Montana.

I: So were they actually shipping oil into Calgary and then trans-shipping it on the pipeline

to Turner Valley.

CRB: No. Imperial ceased taking crude oil entirely. . . .

End of tape

I: . . .covered quite a bit of Alberta because Alberta is now criss-crossed with pipelines, where there was nothing. Could you talk a little about that?

CRB: Well I did some work in Redwater but it wasn't in association with pipeline. The pipelines were pretty well all laid up there when I went there. I was in the store keeping area at that time but was still indirectly associated with pipeline. Most of the construction was in around Turner Valley area. We did however, lay a line from the Petrofina plant, the Jumping Pound plant into Calgary in 1961. It became operational in November or December of 1961.

I: How did the work there differ from what you had done in 1936?

CRB: Well, I had nothing to do with that, this was all contract. I was then in the supervisory bracket on transportation and supply.

I: But the laying of that line would be a little different that the way you did it back in '37.

CRB: Oh definitely. It was all done by mechanical equipment, bulldozers and ditchers. Mind you we used ditchers too. But the type of ditcher was vastly different.

#016 I: How was it different?

CRB: Well ours were vertical booms and those were rotaries. Now whether this is familiar to you or not.

I: No, you better explain it a little more.

CRB: Well, in the early days we had [Barber Green]??? ditchers and their depth was maximum, the ones that we had at least, had a maximum depth of 5 feet, at which depth we put pipe in.

I: This would be something to hold the. . .

CRB: You would go straight down, 18 inches wide and 5 feet deep. And the dirt was emptied by conveyor off to one side on a spoil pile. Later ditchers, which were the Buckeyes and Austins, I could name several, but the worked on a wheel. They go down and come up this way, and as they go over the top, the earth falls out onto a conveyor and it's, in turn, conveyed out to the side.

I: How deep would those ones be?

CRB: They weren't required at that time, to dig as far. . . , 36 inches was max at that time.

I: Why was that?

CRB: Regulations changed and they found that at the depth of 5 feet, there was the possibility of getting into hot spots in the soil and setting up . . .

#033 I: What does that mean hot spots?

CRB: The chemical content of the soil was detrimental to the pipe. And they found by coming up that they got away from some of that. But they also found from experience that by protecting the pipe cathodically??? it eliminated corrosion almost entirely. Now all these



pipes are insulated from the soil, but strange as it may seem, if there is a small hole in that insulation or coating, the earth will react with the pipe and poke a hole in it if it is not electrically protected. And if you hook your protectors up backwards, it does likewise.

I: Surely you never did that?

CRB: Yes, I had it happen.

I: Is that right, when was this?

CRB: They widened the road south and east. . . well, right from the Jumping Pound plant, this was one of the later lines. Cathodic protection was put in before the line was put in operation and after two years they decided to widen the road, which consequently meant that we had to move one of our stations, our rectifiers. The electrical company we hired hooked the thing in backwards and made a cathode out of the pipe. And for seven miles, we were plagued with leaks and. . . , oh, we were desperate. It came right from the Jumping Pound plant yard right down to the Trans Canada highway. I repaired one particular point, tested it to 1,300 pounds, put it back in service and in seven days it had a hole poked in it, just by virtue of the rectifier being hooked up backwards. So it can be a very serious problem.

#060 I: How did you discover the backward hook-up?

CRB: Through tests. But not until after all these leaks had occurred.

I: It wasn't something you would presume automatically would happen?

CRB: No. Well, we depended on the electrical people to tie the thing in properly.

I: How did you discover it was in backwards?

CRB: By test. We brought testing equipment in and had them test and the positive was on the wrong side, that's all.

I: When you talk about supervising, you were first with Royalite. . . well you were really always with Royalite except that the owners of Royalite kind of changed.

CRB: Yes, I was transferred from one to the other.

I: Did it make a difference to your own career withing Royalite, the fact that you kept being gobbled up by somebody else?

CRB: No, I advanced steadily through the various positions from one company to the next. Service credits went on and your record was carried on.

I: What advancement would there be for you, where did you move to, from your first job which was really the equivalent of roughnecking, only roughing it on the. . .

CRB: Then I went into plant gauging.

I: Were you trained to do that, did they give you a training?

CRB: Maybe a week. And from plant gauging to field gauging and from field gauging to engineering and from engineering to stores.

#078 I: You didn't have to go back to school and take any courses?

CRB: No.

I: And then where did you go from stores?

CRB: I went into dispatching. That was where the figures were all compiled, from the various locations. The field gaugers go out and pick the oil up out of the tanks and bring it. . .

make tickets out on it and bring those tickets in and you work them out and compare the amount on the ticket with the amount you received in the tank and come up with gains or losses. Then they have to be submitted into head office. That's what I did until such time as I was moved out of Turner Valley in November of 1961. And then I was operating pumps on pipeline. . . I was second man, so to speak, at this time, from Cochrane and Turner Valley into Calgary.

I: When you say operating, that would mean that you would know who needed what, where and you would say how much would come through.

CRB: I picked up the fluid products. In other words, it was glorified gauging, actually is what it was and pump maintenance, pump and line maintenance was what I was on. Until I moved into Calgary in 1966. From 1966 until 1977 I was in charge of the operations of it.

I: What would that entail?

CRB: That would entail detailing men to do the work that I previously had done. Maintain pipelines, like if there was a pipeline that had to be lowered or repairs that had to be made, well it was my responsibility to procure help to get this done.

#105 I: Always when they think of pipelines, it's something that's going on underneath the earth, you can't see it, and there are a lot of, certainly ecologists, worry about the fact that it could burst out anywhere and how are you ever going to know until it blows up.

CRB: You don't.

I: So how would you try to guard against this?

CRB: Cathodic protection is one of your main safeguards.

I: What did you call it?

CRB: Cathodic protection.

I: Okay, and what is that exactly?

CRB: That's electrically impressed current throughout the entire system. This system is taken from the power source, through rectifiers into the pipeline. And as you know, there's positive and negative current. The positive is grounded, you negative is pipe, which puts your current flowing from positive to negative going into the pipe whereas if it were the other way, your positive to the pipe, you negative to the ground, it would shoot steel off of the pipe into the ground. This is what causes your leaks. That's why I said that reversal on our rectifier system created our leaks.

#124 I: Now another thing about laying of pipeline, is what the ecologist feel, is the permanent damage to the surrounding area. Now you would, I'm sure have come up against a lot of people talking about this. How did you find they tried to protect the landscape from the permanent imprint of pipelines underneath?

CRB: Permanent imprint is a false impression I would say. I could take you over pipelines that have only been in, possibly two or three years, and you don't see anything on the surface. As far as ecologically is concerned, it really doesn't do the damage that it is reputed to.

I: How would you, when you were working on the pipelines and installing, how did the crew have to work to get it back to the way it was?

CRB: In many cases, it had to be reseeded, in many instances, natural growth. You put it back to as near nature as it was before you opened the ground. But your ditch is normally mounded when it's newly back filled. In time that settles back to level and growth grows over it. Through cultivated ground, they try to put the topsoil back as near as they can to avoid having the subsoil brought up so it's unproductive.

#149 I: Did they always do this though, right from when you first started in Turner Valley?

CRB: No, this, at one time, wasn't given much consideration, until farmers began to complain that they were losing ground through the transitions of the pipelines.

I: About when would that be?

CRB: This would be in the late 30's and early 40's.

I: So the next major thrust after Leduc and all the other discoveries, you feel that the ecology has been highly considered?

CRB: Oh, definitely. If a pipeline were to go across a cropped field, the farmer was compensated fairly in the estimate of the company for any damage that was created in crossing that field. There's a right of way taken and damage is paid for that portion of ground that's. . .

I: This is one thing in the southern part, but were you involved at all with pipeline in the norther part?

CRB: No, not in the northern part.

I: Where was your jurisdiction?

CRB: Calgary, Turner Valley and Cochrane.

I: Very concise, down in that part.

CRB: As I say, I was in Redwater. . . I was in the Leduc field for a bit but only in engineering.

#171 I: Looking back at your time when you were in the oil patch, can you think of any of the people that you worked with, who perhaps worked with you . . . or when you were out in the field and again, in the office, who have then gone on to other areas with their pipeline experience.

CRB: Turner Valley was the nucleus of practically all of the pipelines that exist in Alberta and trans mountain and it was deeply involved in inter-provincial as far as the personnel at the outset was concerned. Many of the personnel operating people for these various pipelines were drawn from Turner Valley.

I: Can you think of some particular people or are there too many?

CRB: They're practically all gone now. They were all older people when I was in there. . .

I: Such as.

CRB: Well, Howard DeMille was one, but he went out right in Turner Valley. There's Howitt??? went with Trans Mountain and another lad was Herman Fifer???, Al Stagger. .

. . .

I: They were all working with you. . . ?

CRB: We all worked together at one time in Turner Valley. Pembina pipeline started in 1954 and the first superintendent was drawn from Valley Pipeline in Turner Valley and he in turn took a field gauging crew out of our Turner Valley personnel. Redwater, many

people from up there, Leduc, we lost a lot of people out of Turner Valley to Leduc.

I: Did you find that you were a sort of training ground and then off they'd go somewhere else.

CRB: That's right, that's what we did find.

#204 I: In your time in the oil patch, can you think of any particular job that you were involved in, that you feel was very satisfying to you, or different or unusual.

CRB: Well, the last job that I was in, Operations Supervisor was the most rewarding as far as I was concerned. Mind you I enjoyed it all.

I: How was it more rewarding?

CRB: Well, financially and career wise. There was more advancement in it than in others. I had to work up through it, same as I worked up through all the rest of it. I found store keeping very interesting. That field, you become acquainted particularly, with the equipment that is used in the oil patch. And in this way, I found it very interesting.

I: What about people that you worked with, can you think of any people that you were associated with and knew that impressed you?

CRB: There were quite a number, Lawrence Ferguson was one. He went into stores in Edmonton for Imperial. Another one was Bill Campbell, who I worked in stores with, and he in turn went to Redwater.

I: What did you find about them that particularly impressed you?

CRB: Oh, it was more or less personalities.

#233 I: Can you think of any particular instances when you were working, say down in Turner Valley, when you were laying pipe, any unusual occurrences or funny incidents.

CRB: Only one, and this happened to Howard DeMille. They were thawing out a gas line and they had released the bonnet off of a six inch valve and a slug in the line let go and he was standing over the top of the doggone thing and it came up and it hit him in the midriff and it carried him about forty feet and never hurt him. That was one instance. There was another one, while I wasn't involved. . . it happened in mid winter, we lived a mile away from Turner Valley, across the river and a ten inch gas gathering line had frozen up, just out of the plant a little ways. They had dug it up for approximately forty feet and were firing it to get the slug out of it. . . this was about, oh I would say, 9:30 - 10:00 at night. The heat got too much for the pressure that was inside the line and it burst, and it went off like a cannon and it just rolled the pipe back like this. And there were two boys that narrowly missed getting killed. But the interesting part of it was, our next door neighbour, she was sitting with her feet in the oven to keep from freezing. When that thing went off, she was out that door and she. . . there was snow this deep. . . down over the riverbank, as hard as she could tear in her bare feet.

I: I guess she'd been shot out of a cannon hey.

CRB: There was another one that involved lightning. One of the foreman's wives, whom I later brought out to Mission??? to her husband, she was coming down from Turner Valley, they lived farther out than we did yet. She was just coming on to a swinging bridge across the Sheep River at a well location and there was a 10 x 40 horizontal tank sitting off to

the side, maybe 50 yards from the bridge. And there was a terrific electrical storm at this time. She just stepped on to the bridge when the lightning hit this tank and completely collapsed it and blew the end of it out, fortunately the opposite end to where she was and took it down river about 100 yards. But that was 5/8 plate and it bent it like it was a tin can. She turned around, she was a woman that weighed in the neighbourhood of 250 pounds and before she got over the shock of being in the vicinity of that, she was over 250 yards away and running as hard as she could go in the opposite direction.

#300 I: You were never involved in anything like that?

CRB: No, I was never seriously hurt in any way.

I: So how many years were you in the pipeline?

CRB: Forty plus.

I: Fourty plus, that's quite a record isn't it.

CRB: Yes, it's a long time.

I: I'd like to thank you, is there anything before we close off the interview, anything that you'd like to recall that we should put on to tape.

CRB: Nothing other than the fact that my family were all born, raised and educated in Turner Valley and today, they're all gainfully employed in their various fields.

I: So oil's been good to you and your family.

CRB: That's right. Strange as it may seem, none of my family are involved in oil.

I: That is funny isn't it.

CRB: Two are in communications and one is in conservation. I think that about winds up. . .

I: I do want to thank you very much for sharing your time with me and your memories. It's been most interesting.

CRB: I hope it proves interesting for anyone who may have the privilege of listening to it.

I: Thank you.