

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: A. E. Calverly

INTERVIEWER: David Finch

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DF: Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June in the year 2001 and we are with Mr. A. E. Calverly at 39 Brantford Crescent N.W. in Calgary, my name is David Finch. Could you start by telling us when and where you were born?

AC: I was born in Boissevain, Manitoba, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1933.

DF: Now what were your folks doing there?

AC: My father was the customs officer at the border crossing 16 miles south of Boissevain at the International Peace Garden.

DF: Tell us about your education and childhood.

AC: That's a tough question.

DF: Well, what got you interested in geology then?

AC: I'm not sure what was the initial thing in geology, I guess lots of boys pick up rocks and fossils. I didn't have fossils where I was but rocks were always colourful and interesting. Science I think was more the thrust, I always thought I wanted to be in science somewhere. I started college in Brandon, Brandon College. The Dean of the college and the President of the college were both geologists and I think that had an influence because I think about half the people that went there went into geology as a major. The other half in to law because there was a lot of politicians there too, including Walter Dinsdale and Heath McQuarrie, some well known cabinet ministers eventually.

DF: So what did you take in geology, what year was this?

AC: I started there in 1951 I think it was. I'm not quite sure about things. Yes, it was '51 because I got hurt that winter and then I kicked around, I spent several months in the hospital due to my injury and lost part of that year so then I got into a mixed year. My dad got transferred to Winnipeg in 1954 so I moved into Winnipeg and finished off at the University of Manitoba, the geology. Just took the general course, it was a 3 year program and I finished it in 1957. Geology and science related courses mostly.

DF: What did you do in the summers?

AC: I guess my last two summers I worked in geology. I worked in northern Manitoba for the Geological Survey of Canada, GSC on a mapping project, canoe parties. It was the last year that they did it in the ???, the old 1800's method.

#030 DF: Tell us about that, tell us the details of travelling that old way.

AC: It was a canoe party, there were 6 of us assigned to the party.

DF: What kind of canoes?

AC: We had a couple of freighter canoes and we had 17' prospector canoes which we worked out of. You've got an interest in those.

DF: Oh yes.

AC: They were canvas covered and painted and heavy sometimes after you painted them again. We got dropped off from the Hudson Bay railroad, met some native people from the Split Lake Indian Reserve and they guided us down a little creek which went into the lake and we went across and we had our base camp on the Indian Reserve in the game warden's cabin, he had a cabin there. But we didn't spend much time there, we were gone and in the bush. Every two weeks we had a rendezvous with a float plane that was supposed to bring us in a new supply of dehydrated foods. There was no radio contact, no contact outside of that plane with the outside world. I think we were 93 days wandering around.

DF: You were mapping?

AC: Just mapping the geology in a general sense. That was my first summer out, I didn't know what I was doing.

DF: So what were your duties?

AC: Paddle the canoe. I guess as one of the juniors, there were three juniors and the Party Chief and two senior people, so we were split up into three groups. I saw the other fellows a couple of times during the summer and that was all, if the rendezvous happened to be in the same place or something like that. As the junior you were responsible for cooking the meals, doing the dishes, putting up the tent, or helping to put it up, it took two of you to put the tent up, just all the general chores to help with the other and learn the game.

#051 DF: Any adventures on those summers?

AC: Well, the plane that was bringing in our food one trip went down and it was about 4 days before they figured out where he was going. So we got a little short on some of the food. The worst thing we ran out of tobacco. Another trip we got locked in on a storm and didn't make it to our rendezvous for a couple of days. We had a lake to cross and there was huge waves and after we got out in it, we had to land on shore, the kind of landing where you go overboard 50' offshore and take the canoe in because you couldn't afford to break it up.

DF: Wow.

AC: We flipped a canoe over when we were lining it up on the Nelson River. Fortunately it got caught in an eddy at the bottom of the rapids but we lost a little equipment, a few things.

DF: Any bear stories?

AC: Not really. They were there but I spent my whole life around them, including my cabin out at ????

DF: So tell us how you got into petroleum geology then?

AC: I had planned to go into mining geology. The second summer I was in the field as a student I was with a mining company in Ontario and planned to go into that. I had a job with Falconbridge, doing exploration, I had accepted a job with them. I never had a holiday away from my family or on my own and some friends from school were in Calgary in the oil business and they invited me out here for a couple of weeks before I

went to work. When I got here I had nothing to do during the day while they were working so I got convinced by them to go do some interviewing, which I did. Went and knocked on some doors, I was used to it because you're doing that coming out of university and I sort of liked what I saw and heard and made a decision maybe I wanted to be here. I phoned the fellow that had hired me at Falconbridge, he was their Exploration Manager and he had done graduate work at U. of M. while I was there, that's where I knew him from and that's where I got offered the job was through him so it was a personal contact. I phoned him and told him what I was thinking and it turned out to be a pretty good story because he had just got word that he had to lay off a whole bunch of people and I became one of his numbers that he didn't have to make a hard decision on. So it ended up being a mutual parting rather than harassment.

#080 DF: Good for both of you.

AC: Yes. And came to Calgary and got serious about looking for a job then instead of just doing interviews to fill time.

DF: So who did you hire on with?

AC: I hired on with Sinclair Oil which is one of the has-been companies here. There's a bit of a story getting to that. One of the people I went to see was the Chief Geologist at Sun Oil, his name was Westy Westmore. I had some friends that were working there so that's one of the first places I went because I knew that they liked it. He told me he didn't have anything for me, that they had done all their hiring, which was the case for a lot of people I think. That was 1957, the oil business was still going strong but he asked me to come back the next day, he said that he wanted to talk to me again. I went back the next day and he had two lists of companies he gave me. There was 10 companies on each list, one was the list of companies I should go see, the other was the list of companies that I should avoid. And he must have spent the best part of an hour with me and went through each one of those companies on the two lists and told me why he had put them on the lists and I followed his advice. Sinclair was one of the top companies on the other list and he had all the reasons. Part of the reasoning he had gone through was he thought there might be a job there, as well as a good place to go. So that led me to Sinclair, I'd never even heard of them before. I hadn't heard of many of the companies on his list but I used his lists. I guess that was a big influence on me. When I got into management I made it a point of never turning away a student that came knocking on the door of the company and wanted to look for something and I would give them half an hour even when I didn't have it. When I finally got around, Westy got killed in a car accident a couple of years ago, when I finally got around about 5 years ago to getting with him and telling him that story, reminding him of it, which he'd forgotten. But I wanted to tell him that he had influenced me and I was glad I did.

DF: I'll bet. So what did you do at Sinclair?

AC: They hired me, Glen Cunningham was the Chief Geologist and I dealt with him. He hired me and the next day. . well, I'd interviewed with them and then I went back and cleaned up my business in Winnipeg and came back and got serious. They had asked me to come back and see them, as had several other companies, I think I went to 12 companies all

together and had 8 job offers eventually out of those 12 interviews. So times were good in Calgary. But there weren't many Canadian geologists or potential geologists around. So I came back and hired on with them one day and signed some papers and I was on a plane to Fort St. John the next morning. I didn't know where Fort St. John was except it was in B. C. And that was to go to well site, to learn well site. The other fellow that was there, was the Exploration Manager, was . . . why can't I think of it, I'll come back to that. .went to Fort St. John and got put out on a well with another geologist and he was supposed to show me how to look after a well from a geological point of view. I think I was with him for about a week or 10 days and then I got shipped out on my own, out to a well at Trutch. And I really didn't have enough experience to know what I was doing, it was learn as you go and make mistakes and hopefully don't make those same mistakes twice. But that was how it was in those days and I guess when you came into the oil business at that time, you had to do well site. It was a requirement I think, for all geologists or surface work, field work or a combination of both, most places it was both. But the well site tenure was fairly long, with Sinclair it was 2 years, almost full time unless they didn't have a place to put you out and then you came in and started learning about subsurface mapping. When you finished that you moved into the office, with the subsurface mapping, subsurface exploration or wherever they saw you fit.

#134 DF: So is that what you did then?

AC: Yes. That was a pretty common route in those days. And it was just a progression that was set up, it was most companies, I guess it came out of the U.S. The U.S. was leading the way in what we were doing.

DF: Do you remember what you got paid when you started in your career?

AC: I signed on for \$375 a month. About 2 months after I was in the field I got notice that my salary had been raised to \$411 a month. It was a retroactive raise that had come through. I guess the salary scale was dictated by the refining in the U.S. and the refining unions had just got a big settlement and then they passed it through to all their non-union people and their upstream friends. So it was a percentage of your salary, that's why it came out to an odd dollar. So I actually started at \$411 but I signed on at \$375.

DF: Anything else about those early days?

AC: Going up the Alaska Highway was an interesting experience. I think the well I was on was probably close to 50 miles to the nearest other wells, 40 miles anyway, nearest control well. It was early days up there, it was the frontier but the Alaska Highway had only been in what, '43 - '57, 14 years and it was pretty primitive. The highway was still run by the military and there was quite a few interesting things.

DF: Such as?

AC: Well, aside from the work part. . . I think about the second day I was at Trutch, when I went up there on my own, the engineer and the tool push and I were going in for morning reports. We had to go in, we couldn't use a radio, they had AM radios but they didn't work very often up there. We used the repeater line, which was the military lines from I guess Fairbanks to Dawson Creek and they had repeater stations where you could go and use those lines. Going in for the morning report and at the top of the mountain there was a

grizzly bear running down in the ditch right on the heels of a moose that had it's tongue out about 6". The tool push was driving the car and he steered the car at the grizzly bear in the ditch and chased it off the heels of the moose and thought that was pretty exciting because I had seen one moose in my life and never seen a grizzly bear. Then about 4 or 5 days later we were driving in for morning reports, we used to go in about 7:00-7:30 in the morning because if we left it any later you couldn't get on the phone lines. Just getting down towards Trutch, before we got to the . . . Trutch was a lodge at the side of the road with gas pumps and the repeater station and the maintenance crew for the highway. We were just getting near there and all of a sudden this aeroplane hit the road in front on us, bounced twice and then went into the trees. Wade jumped out and ran down, it had gone through trees, sheered off a few, the wings were off it, the fuselage hadn't hit any trees dead on, it had gone in there. I ran to one side and the other two people went to the other side and there was an older man and a lady in there, it turned out to be a doctor from Alaska and his wife and they'd just picked up this brand new Tripacer in Texas and were flying it back to Anchorage and got caught in a storm and tried to do an emergency landing on the highway. They'd seen us, flew over us and tried to land in front of us. We were reaching up and opening the door and this fellow was there and he wasn't hurt, I was getting him out. But the plane was tilted my way, I was on the low side and that's why the two went to the other side because they needed two. And the gas was coming out of the overhead tank and I was totally soaked in fuel and pulling this fellow out and knowing that any minute that thing was going to blow up and go and I was going to be part of it. It didn't happen, we got him out and nobody was hurt and it was an interesting day.

#185 DF: I'll say.

AC: And then I was supposed to, about two weeks after that, supposed to meet a fellow at another well. A geologist had been in there for about 2 or 3 months and it was time to get him out. I was supposed to drive over to that well, they'd sen somebody up to relieve me. I got over, had to cross the Halfway River and I got there and they'd had a big storm the night before and the bridge was out. So I went back out to the highway and phoned and they said, oh, we've got a helicopter taking supplies in there in a couple of days, go back to the other well and we'll call you, you can go in when they go. I went back and the next morning we went down for morning reports, I was back at Trutch and got there and they said we couldn't phone because they had the phone lines all tied up, there had been a rig fire. And it was a serious one so they were keeping the lines open because they had an emergency. It turned out the rig fire was on the rig I was supposed to go to and it burned down and it killed several people on the floor, they were pulling a drill stem test and as a young geologist looking to see what was going on I know I would have been up watching that. Somebody looked after me that day. That was my first month in the oil patch and I thought this has got to be about the most exciting lifestyle there is in the world. It slowed down after that.

DF: Great. Now how did you get back into Calgary, how long did you stay with Sinclair?

AC: I never left the company until I retired. They kept changing on me so I stayed in my same

office, I never got laid off in a merger but I went through a lot of them. I stayed in my office, changed the name on the door. Sinclair just when I went was taking over a company called Southern Productions and I basically landed in a merger. Then in I think it was 1969, Atlantic Richfield took over Sinclair. That was a fairly bloody coup, I think there was only 20 of us from Sinclair got kept on with Atlantic Richfield but I was one of them so I survived that. Then following that Petrocan took over Atlantic Richfield and then Petrocan took over Pacific, which the part I was in, the western Canada part really was Pacific people put in as part of that. There were political reasons for that but Pacific management ran the western Canadian operation and old Petrocan people mostly were running the international and frontier part of the operation. I was in the western Canada part.

#220 DF: So what year did you retire?

AC: 1991.

DF: So tell us about how your geology, your career changed over the years. From being out in the field, how did you get into management?

AC: Again, the way the companies operated I think. As you went along and got experience, if they felt you had any leadership qualities they'd ask you to move into a supervisory role, one supervisory role to the next one and just up the chain. I for many years didn't really want to do that. I didn't mind the supervising one or two people but I didn't want to go into management as such and it was not until Petrocan. At Atlantic I'd had an opportunity to go down on their training course to Dallas and I put a lot of provisos on, said I'd go but there was several things I didn't want to do, like I didn't want to stay down there if I didn't make it to a management position and a few other things and they didn't want any strings attached. So they didn't say no, they just didn't take me. But Petrocan it was exciting because it was a brand new company and they were doing everything in new ways and I was asked if I would do an Exploration Manager's job. I was a regional geologist at the time at Atlantic and at Petrocan so it was the next step into management and I thought it was a lot of fun making things happen, designing the paper work, they didn't even have their expense accounts designed in those days. So we used the Atlantic stuff and modified it. So that's how I got in there and I didn't regret it. I missed the technical. I thought when I took the job that I could still you know. . I think most people, geologists in particular when they make that move think they can still do some of the other. Some of them, we all try to do it I guess, some hang on longer than others. But it becomes evident if you've got much going on, if you've got a busy program that you just can't do both and do either of them justice, you have to do one or the other. So I soon quit doing geology, you never quit doing it but you quit doing it as a means to a living. You start observing then, looking at other people's work. That was in lat '77, so I was in management from '77 till I left in '91.

#254 DF: So what were the challenges there, what was exciting or interesting about that?

AC: The first years were tough times to be at Petrocan because everybody in Calgary hated Petrocan. You had a feeling that there was a lot of animosity towards you and I guess

there was in some quarters, it wasn't total obviously because I got elected to an office in the CSPG during that period. Part of that I guess is how well you're known about town. But that feeling was there, just new things, new things happen. The other side of it was I felt, from the exploration point of view, which was what I was really interested in, ??? we had money to do things and the freedom to make decisions and I think we had a fair amount of success. You don't read that in the papers anyway but I think the record's there, we found quite a bit of oil.

DF: Were you employed in the frontier areas?

AC: Yes. Sinclair was one of the first companies in the north. In the early 1960's they went up in the area around Great Bear Lake, drilled some wells, did some seismic and other thing, surface work. Atlantic Richfield was quite busy up there. At the end of my term, 1976, 1975 I guess, I got assigned to the north, ???, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon and the Mackenzie Delta. Nobody but the big companies had land positions there at that time, we did a seismic program up there, headed up a seismic program which was a group shoot. A whole bunch of companies subscribed for it and Atlantic Richfield operated it and that was our first Delta exposure but that was mostly the geophysicists assigned to that. And with Petrocan I was in the frontiers beginning in the north, the Arctic Islands and the Northwest Territories. Then I came back into western Canada and back and forth around. When I was set up as manager, the fellow that was managing the north got seconded onto an overseas project so I was acting manager until he came back and then they set up a heavy oil department, looking for a heavy oil source because they were thinking of building an upgrader and they didn't have a supply for it. That became a question, where are you going to get your supply if you do an upgrader, they thought they should have some of their own seed stuff so they set up a department to look for that and I was set up as the manager for that. Then the Pacific merger came along and I was in western Canada I think until, probably 1981, when I went back into the north as manager. I know I was there for all the new land agreements, when the COGLAC came in in 1982 I negotiated all that exploration rights. The act required that all land holders had to renegotiate or negotiate new terms and new agreements with the government for all the land from the frontiers and I did that for all the north. I guess I stayed in the frontiers until the end.

#306 DF: What were those negotiations like?

AC: Pretty well they were one-sided, the government already had their mind made up what they were going to be but we were able to influence a few things.

DF: Such as?

AC: Just some of the requirements on them, how much land would be involved in one agreement area. I think we got that expanded a bit. The requirements that had to be met, we got them modified a little bit but it was just little pieces on the edges. We didn't win anything, we just gained a little. I think I ended up doing 10 agreement areas in the Northwest Territories and 2 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Another project I was managing at the same time in Quebec which was another story. We did an exploration program there but it was because of their tax situation. They had an education tax on the refinery

which could be recouped through exploration efforts within the province. I think that tax was over \$8 million at the time on the Montreal refinery, so that was my budget for Quebec.

DF: Did you find anything there?

AC: No. We had a couple of good shows that was all. It's pretty tough country. There's still nothing down there. So I had 2 agreements there and 10 in the north and I ended up I think with 3 or 4 on the west coast that I negotiated. That was just a matter of setting out what you had and what you planned to do and what you were willing to do and getting told what you were going to change in that I think, more than what you negotiated. Go down to Ottawa and discuss it with them. They had the mechanism set up and you had to go through it and each one had to be presented so about every month for a little over a year I was going down to Ottawa to do those. But it's worked well.

DF: How did you learn how to do that negotiations and so on?

AC: At the table. I don't know, I think you're around that all your career, you're negotiating farm ins or farm outs, or your company is and you're part of the team that's working on it and you track how that's going in each case from day one. As you get more senior and more experienced you become more part of that team that's making those decisions. Living with what you can live with and learning what you have to do, read some books, ask people questions. There wasn't very much formal training in negotiation. Not where I came through anyway, I'm sure some companies have but we didn't.

#350 DF: You mentioned in passing the NEP and Petro Canada. Where were you when the NEP came in, what company were you with?

AC: I was with Petrocan. I was with the bad company.

DF: And how did it affect you personally? First of all what did you think of the NEP?

AC: When it came in, when it was announced I was at the Banff School of Advanced Management, their 6 week course, I was right in the middle of that. As part of our exercise we sat down and listened to Lalonde talk that night, bring in his program. There was quite a bit of discussion there. That group of people, there were only half a dozen of us from the oil business, the rest were from everything else, forestry to grain elevators to mines and government people, a full spectrum of people. So hearing their arguments was quite different from than you could hear in Calgary. And I was still there for a month after that came in, over a month so I didn't get exposed in the first days of it. And I was hearing it from more of an analytical point of view than an emotional point of view. But I thought there were a lot of things that were interesting and good in it and some things I didn't think were as onerous as a lot of the oil companies thought and I still don't think, looking at it, what the same companies were giving in international situations in South America and other areas where they were working, they were giving up big pieces of their program, doing 100% front end to get in there and giving up big pieces on the royalty end. So I thought there were some good things, I think the frontier part was not too bad at all, although it was rather generous. But there was also I think a need to know on the government's point of view. The other side of it I think they did the oil industry a lot of injustice, took a lot away from us, a lot of incentive away, a lot of momentum away.



Because the business was booming and they just shut it down. In Calgary there was a lot of emotion, huge emotion and being at Petrocan which was considered part of the government, was part of the government I suppose, in a lot of ways we bore the brunt of some of that. I was on the CSPG executive that year and I was the President the next year. So I didn't get it through the Society, I didn't have any problems there, I didn't have people lobbying me that the Society should be doing things. I think most of the members feel that the CSPG is a scientific group and not a lobby group. But there was a few, there's always a few that want to see it as a big lobby but I think the majority of people still feel it's science first. So I didn't feel it there very much and I could have. That's where it could have come in spades.

#402 DF: You bet. We crossed over into discussing your career on the executive, how did you come to be involved with the Society to begin with?

AC: That's a pretty short story. ??? I joined it early on, I think I joined. I'm not sure of the year. We had sort of a reunion for old timers the other night, two nights ago and at that there were several people trying to remember when they were first members, I think it was '59, it was either '58 or '59 I joined. But I hadn't done anything with it, I hadn't done any volunteer work for it, and I do a lot of volunteer work, still do almost full time now. I've always had the philosophy that I got from my father that you should put back into the community you're taking out from and it's always better to put a little more back than you take out. So I've lived with that philosophy and I've done things. In the 70's I was working on the Max Bell Arena. I chaired that and basically put together that concept and got it going, which was a very interesting thing for a young guy, I didn't know any of these people I was dealing with. And I met a lot of very interesting people through that and that's another story. But I'd been doing that into the minor hockey, into kids sports, the Triwood Community, which was the first artificial ice arena in Calgary, I was a Director at Triwood and those kinds of things, volunteering. When I finished the Max Bell and I felt it was time to get out of there, or that I could get out, we were having lots of troubles early on and I didn't feel I wanted to leave a ship that was in trouble. Once we got it going and done and on a paying basis which ??? originally dictates on operating costs then I felt I could leave it and I resigned. I just let it be known to a few people on the executive of the CSPG that I felt it was time I got involved in a couple of committees at the CSPG. With the idea that I'd be a committee member on one of their many, many committees. I just left it at that, put the word out and a couple of months later I got a phone call asking me if I would let my name stand for Business Manager of the Society, which I did and got elected. So that was how I got involved. I'd went a couple of steps beyond where I'd really wanted to be. But that was fun and then the fellow that was the VP that was on that executive had things in his business and he just couldn't stay so I was asked then if I would allow my name stand for President. Then I took that position which continued my commitment for a few years. So that was how I got into it. Pretty simple, there wasn't much intrigue to that.

#455 DF: So what were some of the highlights of the year you were President?

AC: It was . . . my memory is not that sharp on it, I don't remember any big highlights or ???, the convention was a big highlight because we did well on it. We were doing well with our money in the bank because that was the time of the high inflation and we were rolling term deposits at 20, 22% on 30 day term deposits so we did well that year financially. A successful convention when we had that. So we left the books in better shape than we took them, increased the funds by a fair percentage, so I felt left a healthy Society. Just one of the undertakings I had made going in, there had been a little criticism going around in the press, not in the ordinary press but in the science press about calling ourselves the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists and having our base in Calgary and nothing much going on outside of Calgary. So I undertook to expand that as sort of one of my pet projects. I think everybody that takes office like that, you have to set yourself some objectives and some projects that you want to see, either implemented or started. That was one that I felt needed to be done and I undertook to do that. Restructured the liaisons across Canada and set up the National Liaison Committee, I recruited Ward Neale from the GSC to chair that committee. Ward had written a large article for the Canadian Geo-Science Council stating that the CSPG really wasn't a national organization so I confronted him with his writing and said, I'll give you a chance to see if we can do something about it. So that's how I got Ward as the Chairman of that committee. And I think it did some good, it didn't, I think they dissolved that committee now, it didn't meet all the expectations we set out with but it did pull things together, it got some other things going across Canada and I think it deflected some of that heat too. So that was one of the accomplishments I guess I felt I undertook and tried to do. Publications I think in the report you can read about that. Sales were starting to slack off.

#506 DF: Why?

AC: I can't remember all the reasons but I thought at the time one of them was that our inventory of publications was way down. I know there was a lot of publications that had been planned and hadn't been finished, they were under way, they were still hanging out there and needed to be done. We got some of those back on track and got a couple of them finished during my term. So I think the main reason was there wasn't anything new coming in there, or not very much new coming in and the old stuff was either getting dated or they'd run out of inventory on it. I feel that if you've got a science group and one of your things is to educate your members and people want to know about your business that you have to have a fair amount of publication going on to make that happen. That's one of the ways you can get the message out. So I was a strong supporter of extending ourselves in the publication side and we got quite a few new things going. There was a lexicon series was going at that time and there was two of them I think had been out and there were several others on the books that had been bogging down, a memoir on the east coast that should have been out and wasn't out yet. We got it out. And I think the Oil Fields of Alberta or Gas Fields of Alberta, series??? of publications they planned were partly done, the person that was heading it up had left town, and somebody else had taken it over and found out they didn't like it and it had bogged down so we got it going.

End of tape.

Side 2

DF: You were just telling up about your organizing. Tell us how you developed your skills as an organizer then, in all these different things you've done.

AC: Well, I consider that I had an organized mind I guess, that I can organize things. I try to be observant of other people that are good organizers and see how they do things. I've learned that a big problem can be made into a whole bunch of small problems and you can solve each of those and then you've got the big problem in good shape and that sort of thing. I guess it's just trying to keep an organized mind but I have lots of confidence that I can organize an undertaking and make it happen. So far I've had some pretty good successes I guess.

DF: Good. Just looking over the annual report, one of the things you mentioned here is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund, what was that all about?

AC: Bill Ayerton I think was the President that brought that in and that was a fund that was to sponsor a field trip for a lot of leading students in I think, stratigraphy, at the university, the head of the class, the sedimentary side of the geology column anyway. Trying to bring a bunch of them in each year for two weeks of looking at the oil business, including field, looking at outcrops, going through companies. It was a very well received program. When I got involved, the year I was there, I think there was 32 geology departments in Canada and each one of them sent a student that year to the field trip at our invitation and expense. So that was what it was about. I'm not sure what it says in there but it was something that needed funding all the time. At the time I was President we had excess money, we made good money that year so we funded it from the general funds rather than drawing on the trust account so that allowed the trust account to grow.

DF: So that's the Student Industry Field Trip that you're talking about, SIFT.

AC: Yes. And it's changed complexion now, they've expanded it into a lot of other things but the idea was to interest the top students in the country, make them aware of the petroleum industry, that there was good careers in the petroleum geology and to bring them here, show them some of that. Go back and tell their friends also that they had a good time and saw something they want to do. It did attract a lot of people into the industry. I think that Student Industry Field Trip is still big and it's still run and it's all run by people who took part of it as students. So it's been a very good success story. But it wasn't mine.

#033 DF: What were you able to do when you were President to help with the boom and bust cycles that affect the geologists? I mean, you can encourage young geologists to come into your industry but if it's a major economic downturn what can you do?

AC: Well, the year I was President the NEP came in the fall before, which was the beginning

of a bust. But at the time I came in we were still on the tale end of a boom so things were still very good in town. You look in the annual report, it was the largest membership the society had ever had, it was somewhere around 3,400 people I think. A lot of young people had just joined so it was going great waves, there wasn't any crisis there. I guess it's hard to see those downturns, how they're going to affect you, how big they're going to be when they do come. You know it's coming somewhere but you don't know it's coming that year. So it wasn't an issue. Things were going well at that time, on that side, there was lots of young people coming into the Society, we had lots of volunteer funding from companies, where people could work on Society things. It was quite different than it is today, where companies are reluctant to let their people use company time for some of this. There was not that much company time used in those days either but at least they could have a meeting at their office and things like that. But that's discouraged now, they're encouraged to do 12 hour days instead of 8 hour days now.

DF: Why? It's not that you people didn't work hard.

AC: No. I personally think that there's only so much concentration in a person in a day and whether you do 12 hours or 8 hours you might get the same amount of paper work out of it. But there seems to be a mentality out there the guy that's running the company and his two chief assistants by working 15 hour days and passing by everybody else and it's passed down that this is the way you do things. I don't think it's particular to the petroleum industry, I just think it's our society now. It's a hurry up and go society and stressful.

DF: I notice in the annual report you wrote that you thought the membership fee was far too low, can you tell us about that?

AC: I think it's far too high now as a pensioner. I can't comment very much on that because I don't remember the whole thing. I think of all the society's I looked at we certainly were running a very low fee. But the other side of it was we weren't in financial difficulty. We were looking down the road that things might turn around, our budget was flush but it doesn't take much to turn those things around and it actually did happen in the downturn that they got into some trouble and had to tighten up in a lot of places. So I think we were anticipating that everybody else's fees were high, ours were low, somewhere we've got to catch up and do you want to catch up sooner rather than later and set yourself in a good position rather than react to a bad situation. I don't recall much of the details of why we felt that except that we were the lowest fee society I think, of our type.

#070 DF: And the need to be financially stable yes. Any controversies the year you were President?

AC: No, it was very quiet. There was the industry controversy we talked about. I didn't get any feedback on rifts within the Society. There's always little things that come along, like some Chairman isn't getting things done. I guess one of the big crisis at the beginning of my term was that the AAPG was scheduled to come here but that was pretty well done, the crisis was the year before when I was on the executive. But that was Bob Orr that handled that. We had committed to doing it but they hadn't signed the contract with the AAPG and when the contract came along the terms of it weren't very good for us. They

were pretty good for the AAPG and we couldn't live with it. So there was a lot of hard negotiating went on, I went to a convention in Denver that was part of where that was going on, I was on Bob Orr's executive. And that was finished and done before I got in, and signed. But you had the names down there and the numbers but then you had to implement them so the implementation of that, there were some things, there were questions that had to be addressed.

DF: Now the conflict with the AAPG was over the share of the profits wasn't it?

AC: Yes. It was the funding and profiting, the profits on it. Bob Orr and I think Bill Ayerton again, was on that team that went down and fought that out.

DF: Yes, I talked to Bob about that. He said that they told him it had never been done that way before, he said, well, that's the way it is now.

AC: Yes. We just couldn't live with it. I was on Bob's executive. So it was cleaning up those details, of course Bob was the past President on my executive so he was still there looking after that. The other thing was then when we undertook the convention and during my term we had to get all the facilities and all the committees in place so there was quite a bit of stuff on getting committees going. They were already picked, the chairmen for them and so on the year before but they were starting to get their stuff into place the beginning of my term and had to have it in place before the end of my term. We had a couple of committee Chairmen that weren't getting the job done so we had to make some hard nosed changes there. Jim Macdonald was the General Chairman so he really had to make the changes but we had to approve them from our executive. I think most of them were executive prerogative of the President. But there were a few things there, we had trouble with the Stampede Board, we were using that as our venue and the Big 4 building told us that we could use that for our paid displays and we were putting some heavy equipment in there and we checked it out. I think a the Schlumberger truck is one thing I remember, which weighs I can't remember how many tons, 30-40 tons, sitting on a few wheels and could their structure take that on the second floor and we were getting all sorts of assurances it could. Somebody, I don't know who it was in the Society, must have known something, but we ended up, somebody got hold of the engineering plans for that building and our insurance would have been in jeopardy if there had been an accident because it wasn't right and they'd given us all assurances of that. So we had big scrambles with them over that and getting things reorganized, that sort of crisis. It wasn't a crisis, crisis, it was things that just required a little thinking and maybe a little leaning on people.

#114 DF: Do you attend the past President's dinners?

AC: Yes, most of the time.

DF: What goes on at those?

AC: Well, lots of social visits. You see all the people I think as past Presidents we all know each other. I was at the event two night ago and coming home I was sitting there trying to think how many past Presidents I saw at that and there was about 14 I think I could count, of which the last 15 or 18 didn't qualify to go, they were too young because you had to be 30 year members to be there. So you know them all, because of that dinner mostly but

also because you look them up and phone them. I know when I was coming into office I phoned maybe 8 or 10 of them and took them to lunch and asked them for advice, what do you see. Which isn't a past President's dinner, it was my personal way of finding out and also sort of laying on them, well, if I need something can I call you. By the end of my term I knew all the active past Presidents, a lot of them are still out and about. Then at the past President's dinner, the immediate past President that's your dinner to organize so you get to contact them all. I made a point of phoning them all and asking them personally to come to it, which worked I think, we had I can't remember how many there were, that's the largest group of them that's ever been together anyway. We got a photograph of it, it's in the office. But I suspect a lot of that was because I phoned each one.

DF: Probably.

AC: I sent out a letter and then I followed it up with a phone call. So we socialize at these dinners and then the current President gets to tell you what he's doing and not doing and there's always a few things get put on the floor, well, why don't you do this or have you thought of doing that. Sometimes they're a little controversial and get a little discussion going but it's all. . it's serious but it's in good nature. I enjoy the dinner but I enjoy just seeing all the people.

DF: Any comments about the future of the CSPG, it's coming up on 75 years?

AC: I think it's been a well run society. Obviously held together well, it's had a fairly narrow base when you think about it, it's managed to whip that through thick and thin. I think it's got a national character to it, to some degree, but not as much as it could have. I feel that whole business with the east coast coming on now, the north probably coming on but particularly the east coast, I think that's going to make it more of a national society. And they seem to be reacting to that, they've got good liaison in the east, so I see that being a good strength. Financially they're back on track, they've done well. The publications I haven't followed them very closely to see how they're doing on those. Their luncheons, noon luncheons are still well attended and ??? lots of courses and field trips, I think it's healthy. From where I sit it looks healthy anyway.

#152 DF: Good. Did you know Ted Link?

AC: No. Never met him

DF: Bill Gallup?

AC: Yes, I knew Bill quite well.

DF: Tell me some stories about Bill.

AC: He was the one fellow that didn't make that past President's dinner that I phoned everybody on and I talked to him, he was coming, he bought a ticket and he phoned me the night before, he couldn't make it and he had a heart attack and died about two weeks after our dinner. He was a character. I know his son-in-law quite well. He's a native fellow, George Calliou quite well known around town. He's from northeastern Alberta, he's at the university, he heads up the Native Department at the University of Calgary now. That's Bill's son-in-law. I first met Bill my first summer up the Alaska Highway. He was up there doing surface geology as a consultant, Gallup. . it was a consulting firm,

his name was on it in a little, I guess it was a G-1 or G-2 helicopter, one of the early small ones anyway, a commercial. .

DF: That's a Bell?

AC: Yes. He was working out of a lodge right beside the well I was sitting on, which was at 10147 on the Alaska Highway. He was a well known geologist so I used to go sit and get him to talk geology a bit with me and stuff, that's where I first met him. And there's all sorts of stories about him around town, I didn't experience any of them personally except for that stuff up there. He took me out on a couple of outcrops that were along the highway and showed me some things which was very nice. He was an interesting person. I've heard all the stories which you've probably got from people who were there for them. But I didn't experience those.

DF: So looking back on your career, what contributions do you consider to have been most important, things you've done?

AC: That's a toughy, a toughy for me because I don't look at those things as much as some people.

DF: Okay, let me ask it another way, what did you enjoy most?

AC: To me people are important. And I guess on that same side the things I enjoyed least were the downturns when I was in management. You had to do things you didn't want to do, you didn't feel like doing. The toughest year I had was '86 when the big layoffs were on. A whole year you're fighting, trying to preserve people's jobs and you can't preserve them all. And there was people that were good contributors that didn't stay on, they had to go and that hurts. There's always people that you don't feel that much empathy for because they're not pulling their weight, there's always those in a big organization but we got way deeper than that in that one. That was the toughest year I ever had.

#192 DF: How did you handle that?

AC: With difficulty I guess. I don't know, I just did what you had to do and tried to treat people like humans. When we had the big lay off in my department and I got in at 7 in the morning and they were all. . the head hunting outfits were already there, it was all done with these professional people. They had piles of moving boxes so everybody knew what they were coming to that day. And I had the east coast people, we had 100 and some on staff and I was ordered to go down to 6 and I talked them in to going down to 12. They were shutting down the east coast. I doubled what they allowed me to keep and I think I got a little more than half of the rest into other groups in the company. That had been going on for 2 or 3 months before the hit came. But then when they came in and one of the things they said was I was supposed to go in and tell them what their fate was and give them 2 hours to pack or an hour to pack up their desk and get out and I said I wouldn't do that. They had until quitting time that day to get out. We had a big argument about that, they didn't like that at all and they ended up drawing up an agreement I had to sign that I would take responsibility for all the employees that I didn't put out in the first couple of hours of their ????. And you know, that's so tough, people just don't want to come out of their office for awhile sometimes. Anyway I won that one.

DF: Good for you.

AC: I just use that as an example. That's an extreme example about how I felt about the people.

DF: What did you do at the end of that day?

AC: I don't remember, probably went to bed. It was a long day. Because I spent a lot of time. . . and I ended up bringing. . .the technician side got hit, they were 100% and I was able to bring a whole bunch of them back on contract. Because they had helped or done it and there was so much that you couldn't do that had to be done. The Executive Council would ask for something and I'd tell them, it's in a box down there and I can't find it. They got the message, I got permission to bring a bunch of those people back ????. That was the toughest one. People I know in town ????. When I finished my term at the CSPG I knew on a personal basis, at least one person in every geology department in Canada and I still see some of those people. That was the good side. And it's also the contacts, I think from a professional point of view it's very good to have that too. It's one of the things you get from office in the CSPG and organizations like it. You get into your profession, get recognized in your profession and get to know a lot of people.

#230 DF: Before we went on tape you told me you've been doing some work since you retired, what's that been like, how did you get into that?

AC: Paying work or volunteer work?

DF: Like the Fort Liard.

AC: I'd worked I guess, 30 some years, I've been travelling in the north, in and out of the north. I've done well over 200 trips to the north, been through all of it, including Nunavit. So I knew a lot of people and then in the early 80's Petrocan had a major program in the Northwest Territories, multi 10 millions of dollars a year. And I was General Manager of the frontiers and that was part of it and I used to make a point of making a trip, not multiple trips but a trip to each sort of community or each area where we worked, once a year.

DF: To do what?

AC: To shake hands, just be seen. Because those people want to know that you know they're there. It was just part of the business, it made good business sense.

DF: Can you be more specific, you'd go into say, were you in Fort Simpson.

AC: Yes.

DF: So what would you do when you went into Fort Simpson, a day, two days, a week?

AC: No, I didn't have time for. . .

DF: How long would you go in?

AC: I'd probably go in and out the same day, which they did not like, do not like but I couldn't help out. Their alternative was not to see me at all. And I would meet with the Band Council, I would meet with the organization, the Dene, or Metis or both if they had them, some communities had both, the hunters and trappers, I always met with the hunters and trappers and left.

DF: So like a meeting, an hour with them.

AC: Yes, usually about an hour per meeting but it would be maybe three meetings in the community. Because you would meet with each group, which was often the same people



but they had a different agenda. It was their agenda partly, partly ours. This is what we're planning to do in your area this year. Any questions about it, you know, a lot of those communities it was interpreted. It was a good experience.

DF: What was their agenda?

AC: Jobs. Compensation for their trap lines, all those things that you didn't want to be involved in but you had to face. We would pay compensation for physical problems but not on a general sense, that the trapping wasn't any good this year. But if it wasn't good they thought it was because you were there. Look at some community needs maybe, discuss some things we could do for the community. Help them out with something, just that sort of. . it was community liaison, community consultation, whatever you want to call it.

#270 DF: Did you have any sympathy for the concerns around trapping?

AC: Not particularly around trapping. I have a lot of sympathy and empathy for the natives in the country, a lot more than 99% of my friends and I still work on that. Maybe some of that comes across.

DF: And what's the work you're doing now?

AC: I'm at the Chamber of Commerce, I've been sitting on the Aboriginal Opportunities Committee since I retired. I thought I should do something at the Chamber, I'm a member there, have been for a long time.

DF: The Calgary Chamber of Commerce, yes, good.

AC: So I do that and when I first go on there, I chaired a sub-committee, which is still going, in fact it's in the papers this week I guess, Native Awareness Week. Which was a concept from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, now it's gone across Canada and I chaired that for a few years. It was going before but then when we changed it, it was dying on the vine, nothing had happened the year before I got on there so we looked at firing it up on a bigger scale and started several events during the week. What had happened, the Chamber had started it and then it had been taken over by Calgary City funded, CASS it was called, Calgary Aboriginal something committee. And they did all these events for the natives in town during that week, and the Chamber would do one or two during the week. So we put more focus, more ??? . . . so I chaired that and the first year I think we had 3 big events, a breakfast, a luncheon, an afternoon forum, on three different days. And at the breakfast was Nellie Cournoyer who had been Premier of the Northwest Territories and she was a friend of mine from my travels up there, I'd known her for a long time. I got her to come down and do that which was very well attended. I can't remember who we had for the luncheon that year but we had high profile people at each of them and then we had a forum which was 3 native people speaking on topics we suggested. No, that wasn't the year we had Phil Fontaine, it was another year. I know we had Manny Jules that first year as one of the forum speakers, he was the Chief at Kamloops. He's also the expert on native taxation and chairs the committee that the government has looking at native taxation. Very well spoken, very well educated. He was there that year, that was the kind of speakers we brought in and we had to sell so many tickets to break even and I ended up calling in a lot of favours. We sold tables, which was something I introduced to that,

they'd been selling individual tickets, I said, let's sell corporate tables. And we needed about 80 or 90 people to break even and I sold, about 12 tables of 8, starting with Petrocan. Because I didn't want it to fail the first year I was Chairman and go away and not come back. It's still going. In May they had a forum which I went to John Kimbale was the first. . he's a very interesting guy, do you know of him? He's I think the Assistant Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, he's that guy that has this. . these native awards, they have that big thing on TV every year, that's his. He's got 6 honorary doctorates, an interesting person, he's out of Toronto. He was one of the speakers, Bob Brown, who's an accountant in town, Peat Marwick, or was at Peat Marwick, he's got his own firm now and he's big on native taxation and those issues. Manny Jules was supposed to be there and something came up, his assistant came and spoke. One of the commissioners on the Aboriginal Commission the government put together, a fellow from Saskatchewan, I can't think of his name now. And one of the local Chiefs, all good speakers, very interesting. We had about 200 people I think, there was nobody was unhappy with what they went to. Oh, there was one oil fellow, Dominion Explorers, Wayne Foo spoke sort of from the oil industry perspective and what they do in his company. He was at Chevron, he was the Exploration Manager at Chevron and I was President of this and it's been a very successful company. So he was the anchor speaker. That's part of it, like an offshoot of that and this past week was Native Awareness Week, this week right now so there's a bunch of events which I haven't been going to. The same format has been carried on. So that's been going 8 or 9 years now. And it keeps me in touch with some of them.

- #351 DF:       There was a moratorium on development in the north back when you were President, just after when you were President in the 80's, no it was '75 that's right. But the development is now going ahead in the north. Care to compare how things were then with how they are now?
- AC:       I'm not sure I can. I'm not very qualified. The Berger Report is sort of the reference to all that moratorium stuff. And the native land claims, there's some parallels. The native land claims weren't going anywhere and the natives were getting educated which was one of their drawbacks, that's what they needed, education. And they were starting to understand how some things were, some of their political people recognized they had a big stick and they used it. Nellie Cournoyer being one of them. They, through the Berger inquiry, got things shut down until they got their land claims in place. And I don't know, in '75, '76 that was when the moratorium was on. We worked all through it because the Petrocan Act in '77 and we had some previous commitments which they grandfathered through that. A big part of the new act that came in, there was a new act came in, it was bridging legislation and then the COGLA Act in 1982 and it had a lot of restrictions on northern benefits, Canadian benefits, northern benefits, transfer of knowledge, that sort of thing. There was a lot of things in that act that didn't take many words in the act but they were powerful and we had to live with. So that was a lot of that community consultation, that's what ??? was on, it wasn't necessarily part of it, not necessary that the manager or the President of the company had to go but it was always a good idea to go once in a

while. I just saw Stephen Kakfi's speech last week where he said, for the pipeline, they've got to have a pipeline and it's leverage to use for the. . . it's the Dene land claim that's on right now. . . use that to get that done but don't hold it up because of it. So that type of leverage against industry is still there and that's what that was about, a lot of it, just getting the land claims going. A lot of the land claims are done [on emotion]??? like that.

#391 DF: What was this project you were involved in more recently at Fort Liard?

AC: The Fort Liard one was. . . and their land claim isn't done but the Fort Liard band, under Harry Deneron, he was quite a progressive guy, he was the Chief, has businesses in Fort Liard and saw that there was opportunities and they were going to go by, it was going into a high cycle and they had things the oil companies wanted to be involved in. There was the production of Pointed Mountain and he recognized the opportunity and he just said, he wasn't going to sit around and discuss esoteric things about land claims while his people were starving. He broke away from the Dene and allowed the lands of the Fort Liard area to be put up for auction and it was very successful. But part of his dream was that he saw opportunity for local businesses and to get a lot of the money that was going to be spent on the exploration projects. He'd gone to the banks and the governments for money to get the businesses going and he required a business plan. Harry, I'd met him through my trips north and stuff and he called and asked if I could do a business plan. I undertook it, I wasn't sure where it was going but I undertook it. The Territories government funded it and we put a business plan together which I think has carried through to this day. The last time I looked at it, which was about 2 years ago, we were right on the money with what we'd projected as happening. In some ways it was fortuitous, a lot of it was just because I had the experience of the years. But at the time we did that all the companies involved up there were very generous, very candid with us, Harry sent them a letter and asked if we could interview them, he came down and went to the interview. They were as I say, totally candid about what their plans were. Of course, what happened isn't the sum of all the companies plans because all sorts of things happen so reading between the lines and knowing how business works, we developed a plan and spending profiles and they've worked right on the money. They got into a lot of businesses and made a lot of money for the town, it's a town of 550 people, about 500 of them are natives, both Dene and Metis. I went up and spent a week in the town to start that project, we interviewed all the businesses, there was 2 of us. I think we identified 27 businesses operating in that little town, most of them on a shoestring. From that we looked at which businesses could benefit, how they could benefit and also what new businesses they might look at. Got them ??? and equipment and things we found, mostly got them into the camp business, which is a very lucrative business when you've got it filled and they've gone from there. The last thing they got into was ownership in a pipeline out of there, which was the last thing I did for them was to start identifying what that might be and they needed somebody with more expertise than I had and we brought in Peet Marwick. And all of a sudden Peet Marwick didn't need us anymore so I haven't been down there in the last couple of years. That was one and the other one I was involved with that I liked was the land claims for the Sahtu. Just after I retired they

phoned me and said, now that you're retiring can you work for us.

#457 DF: So you went to work for them.

AC: I worked on the subsurface selections for their land claims. They didn't have very much land on the subsurface, they had it all on the surface and they wanted it selected. So I did that, it was a big project, a lot of technical reading to do for it, because I didn't want to do it with my prejudices, [not very many of them, you can't take them all]???. So I went through the public literature and set up their stuff on what was in the public domain at that time because I felt that they would be subjected to criticism if they chose land that never got anything done on it and right beside it there was good land that had a big discovery on it, how could they justify that. I wasn't too worried about my criticism, I was going to be long gone but the local leaders that hired me. So I did it all from public domain so another geologist could go and take the same route I had and should come up with somewhat similar answer. But that was fun, doing that and being involved in it. Then I did quite a bit of work for them after the claim was done just on the oil and gas side.

DF: So I think you've answered my first question here at the end, which of your contributions do you consider most significant. I sometimes need these thought up questions.

AC: I was involved as was a working geologist in quite a few discoveries.

DF: Yes, any of those stand out.

AC: To me they do. Some of them weren't that big in the industry but they were significant. One of them was Boundary Lake, I wasn't the discoverer of Boundary Lake but at Sinclair we extended the field a way south of where it had been and kicked off the major development of that oil field. The basis of it I can't remember the year, it was in the early 60's but the basis of it was hydrodynamics, which was a brand new field. Sinclair had sponsored the people that came up with a lot of the hydrodynamic theories, as one of four companies that sponsored it and they had an exclusive to use the outcome of that for a year. So we were ordered to do all of our stuff, incorporate this hydrodynamics. The Boundary Lake field, we looked at it and tried to figure out where the oil-water line was, based on the hydrodynamic work and that allowed us to go way south, because we believed it and posted some land, posted a drilling ??? and posted against it and drilled it and we were right. I think we ended up with 22 wells down there.

DF: Where was that?

AC: Boundary Lake, it's right on the boundary, it's an oil field on the boundary between B.C. and Alberta. And it's quite a large oil field and we ended up with a good piece of it and that was I think the first application of hydrodynamics in the oil business in Canada.

DF: What year?

AC: I don't remember, early 60's, it might even have been 1960, somewhere in there.

#515 DF: Any regrets, things you wish you could have done, didn't have time to do?

AC: There's always lots of those but none of them stand out. No, I think I was very fortunate to come to the oil business because at the time I came it was a brand new industry in Canada or basically a new industry. It was exciting, we saw it happen, now it's an

engineering bean counters industry. When we were here it was a wildcatters industry, when I came. I experienced that, I met lots of those people that were the wildcatters that had the wild dreams and got lucky with them, some of them, some of them are still full of them. It was just totally different times than it is now, the way things were done and why they were done. Now it's technical and stock markets and accountants taking care of all the things.

DF: Isn't that true. Well, on behalf of the CSPG and the Petroleum Industry Oral History Project, I'd like to thank you so much for opening your home to me this afternoon and allowing me to come in and interview you about your career and what you remember about your time on the CSPG executive, thank you very much.

AC: Oh, you're welcome, I enjoyed it. It made me think back a bit.