

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Don Cook

INTERVIEWER: David Finch

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DF: Today is the 19th day of April, in the year 2001 and we are with Mr. Don Cook at the Geological Survey of Canada in northwest Calgary. My name is David Finch. Could you start by telling us when and where you were born?

DC: I was born in Crystal City, Manitoba on July 20th, 1934.

DF: And what were your parents doing?

DC: My father at that time was a baker, had his own bake shop. He was a bit of a jack-of-all-trades. He had his own baking business there, we moved through three different Manitoba towns, Pilot Mound, Manitou, Manitoba and Altamont and he was a carpenter. He had his own lumber yard in the town of Altamont and during the war, he was called up, he was in the reserve army, called up during the war but he was I guess you might say he was fortunate enough to be a little too old to go off and be shot at. So he was based in Winnipeg through his part of the war. I'm not too sure what he did with the army, some training capacity but never did go overseas. From there, we went, after the war he was wondering what he was going to do next and we moved to the town of Dryden, in northwestern Ontario and there he set up a small tourist camp and then we had a small farm. Always a bit of a marginal operation. We were never too successful but a great place to grow up.

DF: Tell us about your education.

DC: My education was high school in Dryden and went on to Queens University. I always feel a little sheepish that I got 3 degrees from Queens University, so a bit of an in-breed in that respect.

DF: What were the degrees?

DC: All in geology, bachelors, masters and PhD.

DF: Oh, I see. They don't usually do that, do they?

DC: No. They did require that I go off to UBC for one year of course work, just to make a well noted man of me I guess.

DF: What got you interested in geology?

DC: When I went to Queens my plan was to be a civil engineer. In the engineering faculty all freshmen engineers took identical courses and they included one introductory geology course by Fred Jolliffe and I really knew very little about geology, even though I grew up on the Canadian Shield where I was surrounded by rocks. He just, out of all that smattering of math and physics and civil engineering, it was just a grind but there was one course that was fun and so I'm a geologist today.

DF: Good for you.

DC: Good for him.

#036 DF: Did you have any field experience along the way?

DC: Field experience as student employment? Yes, in my first summer I was working in the paper mill at home when a geologist came into town looking for an assistant and by chance he ran into somebody at the local paper who knew that I was going into geology. He sent Gerald Kirwan out to find me and hired me for the summer.

DF: So what did you do?

DC: Well, they were mapping on some supposed gold claims. I'm not sure how much to put on record here because I'm never too sure that it wasn't really a scam, that the main objective was to sell shares in the company. When the company brass came out from Toronto to visit us they certainly talked in terms of reopening the mine, there was a ??? mine there, Pantan Mines. So that was my first summer. Sometimes I found myself wondering why I was in the game, I kept saying there must be more to it than this. But the next summer, who was I with. . I had summer employment with field experience from then on. I was up into Labrador with Labrador Mining and Exploration and the year after that with Quebec Cartier.

DF: So how did you end up out here in the west?

DC: When I was looking for somebody to do a PhD study with and Willis Ambrose, who was my Structural Geology prof. at Queens, he somehow connected me with Ray Price and then Ray hired me to work on Operation Bow Athabasca. From there, that led to employment with the Survey. Joined the Survey in 1967 and I've been here ever since.

DF: So what was that particular project?

DC: Bow Athabasca was a helicopter supported mapping operation to map a big chunk of the foreland, thrust and fold by the Rocky Mountains. And my thesis project was on the carbonate to shale facies transition in the main ranges. The more they had to sort out some of the stratigraphy in the one big unity the Chancellor Formation but I was mostly interested in the structural effects related to that facies change.

DF: So that's what you've been doing, you've been with the GSC ever since?

DC: From there, at the completion of that, in fact just before I completed that thesis, I was hired on here at what was then ISPG, Institute of Sedimentary and Petroleum Geology. Then I was put on a helicopter supported reconnaissance mapping operation in the Northwest Territories. My field career with the Survey has been entirely in the Northwest Territories. Mackenzie Mountains, Franklin Mountains, Coleville Hills.

#080 DF: And stories about the Nahanni area?

DC: I spent a summer in the Nahanni area but I don't have any particularly good stories. That was further south, most of my work has been further north, in the Norman Wells latitude.

DF: And when you say helicopter supported mapping, what specifically were you doing?

DC: Before we went into the field, we attempted to go over all of the air photos to interpret them to the degree possible and Operation Norman was a reconnaissance mapping, some 375,000 square kilometres I looked up yesterday, that we mapped in the course of essentially 3 years. We actually mapped from the helicopter where we'd have a stack of air photos on our lap and be checking the interpretation that we had made previously and marking up the photos and as long as you could identify the rocks from their sort of

surface expression, we never landed unless we weren't sure what we were looking at. For me personally there were some drawbacks in that because I had much more of a hard rock experience up to that point and I had difficulty actually getting used to the sedimentary rocks. And because we worked primarily with their photo expression and their visual expression from the air, when I did get into difficulty and had to land to see where I was, I didn't have the sort of detailed knowledge of whether this dolomite represented the Franklin Mountain formation for example, or whether it represented some of the Devonian units. But that came. Then back, we would fly more or less alternate days. Jim Aitken would fly one day while I would be compiling what I'd worked on the day before. The next day I would fly and Aitken would be in the office compiling things that he'd looked at the day before. And it wasn't just Aitken and I, it was a multi-disciplinary operation, with stratigraphers and palaeontologists and quaternary geologists. The logistical necessities, were that you had to put together, operations in the north are expensive enough that you had to put together multi-disciplinary operations.

#115 DF: Any stories from those camps?

DC: In all my experience I don't have a good bear story. We did have a bear come in and started eating our meat supply and he was shot, other than that I don't have any scary bear stories.

DF: Did he become part of your meat supply then?

DC: No, he didn't. No, we had fresh meat. No, we had frozen meat. But we were past the freeze dried consideration, we had a cook on staff and with permafrost keeping meat from spoiling it was no problem at all. We had a steel barrel dug down to the permafrost. But the bear found that he could stick his head down in that barrel and pull out roasts and steaks and things. We had a Japanese pilot that first summer who spoke very little English and that created some logistical problems in figuring out a flight plan each day when you had a pilot that didn't speak much English. There are one or two stories there that I might tell but won't. Superb pilot though and not all pilots can sort of immediately grasp what it is that you are trying to do, with flying along the mountain face and trying to identify rock formations from the air and to have a pilot that immediately grasped what the right distance was. Sutahiro Mokisaku was that pilot's name and he just somehow grasped what we were doing, far better than some of the others.

DF: What was his story, how did he come to be flying in North America?

DC: That I don't know. No, I don't know how he ended up in Calgary. I'm pretty certain that he learned his flying with the Japanese military but I'm not entirely confident of that either.

DF: This was chopper?

DC: This was piston driven choppers.

DF: Do you remember what kind they were?

DC: They were the Bell, G3B1 I believe. And we had a thing called a J-2 as well, it was a little bit bigger, carried an extra passenger and was slower and they were all slow. We had a Beaver which would cache gasoline in order to get enough range with the helicopter we would tie two 10 gallon drums of avgas on the skids and that would get us out there and

we also had the Beaver that would cache gas out and around. Because we were covering some pretty big areas. So what else, that's probably enough.

#160 DF: What have been some of the challenges in your career, what have you liked about being a geologist?

DC: Being a geologist with the Survey, initially I liked the field work. It's maybe not all that romantic living in a tent all summer but there still is a romance to being in the field with a helicopter for a horse and the challenges of the helicopter borne mapping that was fun. With the Survey you had I think, more latitude, once you were given a task to carry out that task at your own speed and to pursue the different aspects of a mapping operation that I think it suited my personality. I've never really envied company guys, but I have to some degree and that is that they at least, when they have a project, if they can sell it to management, they have the prospect of seeing a drill put on the site and testing their ideas. In working for the Survey you have much more freedom to pursue things in your own way but you never do have the bucks to drill a hole somewhere and see if you really knew what you were doing.

DF: So the pay off isn't quite as good?

DC: Well, the economic pay off isn't as good but you still have the satisfaction of producing significant pieces of work and seeing them published and being part of the geological knowledge that becomes our national heritage.

DF: What kinds of projects were you involved in that kept you challenged?

DC: They mainly were the field mapping and sorting out the structural relationships, were my main challenge. Earlier on I said that initially I enjoyed the field work. Eventually that wore thin for me because I had kids growing up at home without me in the summer time and I'm not particularly a winter oriented person and so eventually there was an opportunity here for a management position. Head of Regional Geology Subdivision and I applied for that and got it and so I went into management for some 9 years. But then that wore thin as well because you join the Survey because you like doing geology. Once you become a manager with the Survey, to a large degree you have to take your satisfactions out of seeing other people do geology. So I saw an opportunity in that the companies in the Territories had to submit paper copies of processed records, seismic records, to the government and there was a huge data base of seismic information that was available to be worked with. We, as an organization, didn't even appreciate how huge that data base was. So when I started manoeuvring to get back to doing science, I didn't want to go back to living in tents in the field and I knew that data base was there, so I sort of simultaneously proposed a project that would tackle interpreting the seismic. Primarily interpreting the protozoic??? imaged on the seismic because the companies, they shot the material for the finerzoic??? part of the record, that's only half to 3/4 of a second and they're up to 6 seconds on some lines of protozoic stratigraphy. Say, 15 kilometres of rock there that very little was known about. So I sort of designed a job for myself and sold that to management and also sold management on the idea that it's time I got out of management. And there was a geophysicist, Bernie McLean, who came from the Atlantic Geo-Science Centre, to this office and McLean and I worked, we think remarkably well

together. With him being a geophysicist and him responsible for reprocessing seismic and me as the computational structural expert. And we have, it's taken quite a number of years but we have just this year, submitted a big bulletin which deals with the whole northern interior plains, from about latitude 63, almost to the Arctic Ocean and from the Mackenzie Mountains, across to the Canadian Shield. And we've been able to sort out the protozoic history, which we think correlates quite nicely to the protozoic history on Copper Mine homocline???. And that in my sort of last years around here, has been really a very rewarding endeavour. I don't think we've established that I'm no longer an employee of the Geological Survey of Canada. I am an emeritus scientist here and I retired in June of 1998 and I still come out here more or less 4 days a week. My non-geological friends have a hard time understanding how I can retire and keep right on working, for no economic benefit.

#262 DF: Well, there must be something there, what is it you're still looking for?

DC: Well, what I was looking for initially was to finish this project because it kept growing. We started in the Coleville Hills region and sorted out a structural and stratigraphic picture there and then, rather than write that up as we might have done, the project expanded westward into the Peel Plateau and Peel Plain area. And then, rather than write that up, they expanded southward, up the Mackenzie Valley, through into the sort of Mackenzie Valley, Great Bear Plain area. And so it has taken a lot of years, where it might have been broken up into smaller size bites and I think in the end, we have, we think, a coherent picture that covers just a huge area. We haven't got it back from critical readers yet, so they may not think it's as great as we do but we're quite pleased with it.

DF: It sounds like a huge piece of territory you covered off in that.

DC: It is huge. The tape recorder isn't going to catch this but we're talking about everything from about [looking at a map I think] that latitude, up to, well I can't say to the Arctic Ocean because we didn't do the stuff in the Delta and then from there across, to this is called ??? here. So it's huge. And I guess we're a little apologetic as to how long it has taken us and I think maybe we don't need to apologize.

DF: So from Fort Norman, north.

DC: South of Fort Norman. Not as far south as Wrigley but. . .

DF: A good chunk of the Mackenzie.

DC: Big piece of ground. And it's having. . . my experience, having worked in the Mackenzie Mountains gave me some, not that much insight, into what to expect in the subsurface. But it's been fun for me relating the subsurface picture to the Cordellera and then relating it to the copper mine homocline??? and Victoria Island and I've had some experience with protozoic rocks on Brock Inland??? but mainly looking at copper mine homoclines has been a matter of published maps and recognizing on those published maps, features that, the same sorts of geological history that we could see in the subsurface.

DF: You mentioned all this geophysical work that was done, who did that and why?

DC: It's all oil companies and geophysical consulting companies and they were doing it exploring for hydrocarbons. Where they recorded, fortunately they were enlightened enough to take long records in some cases, some 4 second, some 6 seconds. Others only 2

seconds. So they saw the scientific importance of recording those records but they weren't terribly interested in the protozoic itself. And a skeptic or a cynic would say, why should the Survey care about the protozoic but I'm an old hand that thinks that the Survey's responsibility should be to understand the geological history of Canada, the geology of Canada and here you had just an incredible data base that was lying fallow. And it's sad from my perspective that in today's managerial environment we just would not be allowed to carry out this project. Everything is much more in short term imperatives and immediacy. Where are the companies working today and why aren't we working in the same area. So I'm getting into departmental politics here but that's fair enough.

#359 DF: Societal politics too. What time frame was this geophysical data from? 60's and 70's, I'm just talking general?

DC: What I'm trying to remember is when they changed the rules which said that companies had to submit the seismic and I've got about 1985 in mind but I'm terrible on dates and that may not be accurate. There was seismic shot prior to that but it's still proprietary and then the feds changed the rules and said, one of the terms of being allowed to explore on federal lands are that you're going to have to submit paper copies of the processed records. I've said earlier that companies weren't terribly interested in the protozoic but they were interested enough that we have had really remarkable support from them in getting the digital data for reprocessing. Some of it is data that never had been processed and we had the processed under contract. Others of it is data that Bernie McLean has had processed on more modern standards.

End of tape.

Tape 1 Side 2

DF: I guess in part where my questions was going there was after the National Energy Program of 1980, there was quite a federal government attempt to encourage development in the north. Was that part of the conditions of the PIP grants and so on, that the information had to be turned over?

DC: No, it wasn't part of PIP. But it's interesting you bring up PIP grants because the Calgary petroleum people in general just hated the National Energy Program, for good reason. It was the federal government ripping off, as I recall it was an export tax that was put on. They effectively brought Alberta oil to world price levels by putting on an export tax but what offended both the provincial government and the oil industry was, they thought that if the oil price was going to be raised to world standards, they were the ones that should benefit, with some justification. But what people in the industry forget was that there were millions and millions of dollars plowed back into the industry, via the PIP grants. And I think, not necessarily plowed back very effectively but with, what was it 75% of exploration costs that were paid if it was a Canadian company doing the work. In the industry, they worked their farm ins and their relationship so that it was the Canadian

company that did the work and so the foreign companies, they benefited from PIP as well. And there was lots of seismic shot and lots of, a number of wells drilled that probably never should have been drilled. They all provide scientific information so from my point of view, every seismic line is worth having and every well is worth having, but from an economic point of view some of those things, they were only drilled because 75% of the costs were paid by the taxpayer. The industry people, I think that they tend to forget that, maybe they never even appreciated the degree that the taxpayer funded exploration through that period. This project that I'm just talking about, one of our favourite seismic lines is a, it's a Forward Resources line 14 and it was processed to 2 seconds but recorded to I forget, 4 or 6. We can't get our hands on those data because Forward Resources is in receivership. So I think there was a lot of exploration done up there by marginal outfits as well and I'm not implying that Forward Resources was an unscrupulous company but I believe that there were arrangements made between contractors and companies so that more than 75% was paid by the taxpayer.

#040 DF: Yes, I've heard those stories before.

DC: So I'm not for a moment defending the National Energy Policy, but the oil industry does forget, perhaps chooses to forget that elements of the industry benefited very significantly from the National Energy Policy.

DF: Well, Mike Hriskevich remembers that too. I interviewed two other fellows yesterday and they both remember small Canadian companies making good money off of the NEP. So you're right, sometimes it's selective memory but some companies did all right out of it. Let's get into your relationship then with the CSPG. You were President in '86, when did you first become associated with the CSPG?

DC: I made some notes here somewhere. I shouldn't need notes for that. I would have joined the Society probably when I was still a student. I'm not sure but I know, when I signed on here, if I wasn't a member then I would have joined. And then I got involved in various committee activities, with the Link Award committee and the Student Thesis Award. I one year, co-chaired a field trip committee for the annual convention and then in 1980 I was asked to run as a Director of the Society and ran and was elected. Then it was 1985 when I ran as VP and Vice-President as you know, pretty well automatically goes on as President.

DF: So what were some of the issues during your time on the executive?

DC: The biggest issue that my executive had to deal with was financial. Under the previous executive, under Gordon Williams, I think maybe executives had recognized for 2 or 3 years that the Society was spending money faster than it was taking it in. The reserves of the Society were being drawn down. Gordon Williams and his executive, they did a pretty thorough job of scoping out what was coming at us the commitments. Each executive lives with commitments that a previous executive makes. And each executive creates some more commitments that the next executives have to live with. Williams, with looking 5 years down the line, his executive projected that my executive would be, we would eat up reserves by about \$130,000 and that the year after that the Society would have no reserves. So it's safe to say that the biggest challenge was to turn that ship around

and we did it quite successfully. It was a matter of just tackling all fronts. Even the Bulletin was cut back to 100 pages and that was a pretty tough decision because the Bulletin was the sort of. . .

#083 DF: Lifeblood.

DC: Lifeblood. But we did it. The 50th Anniversary fund, which was used primarily to fund the Student Industry Field Trip, but prior to our operating year, the 50th Anniversary fund had never been drawn on. Each year the Society had funds enough that it funded the Student Industry Field Trip out of general revenues but we funded it out of the fund itself. It made no sense that we were going to eat up Society reserves to protect the 50th Anniversary fund from doing what it was designed to do in the first place. What are some of the other things we did? The Reservoir was targeted to become self sufficient and Bill Haskett was the Chairman of the advertising committee and he was really quite successful in aggressively going after advertisers for the Reservoir. All committees and what were there, I forget how many committees there were, there were lots of them.

DF: 95.

DC: 95 committees. And they were all asked to be circumspect in their spending and if possible to raise revenues within the community to have a break even budget. Ideally a break even budget and even more ideally to make some money. Where is the number here. . . I've got down an operating loss of \$616 that year, where we were initially projecting \$130,000 loss. That was in a downturn economically in this city and having Clay Riddell as a businessman, he was the Vice-President coming on, going to be President the next year, he had a far better appreciation than the rest of us as to what you'd get away with in terms of rents. And Barry Robbins, our Business Manager, under Riddell's guidance, Robbins renegotiated the lease with, it was the Herald Building that the office was in then and he negotiated a new 5 year lease at rates significantly lower than we had paid prior to that. So a bunch of things came into play but we turned it around. And I emphasize we because I was just the guy sitting in the President's chair. There were a lot of other people that did the real job. That year Herb Sullivan ran the, he headed the 1986 Convention and he came in with a profit of \$50,000. I think that's sort of taken for granted now that conventions are going to make, they want to make a lot more than that today I would guess but that was quite a bit of money in those days. The other accomplishment of my executive was in changing the executive itself. In prior years the whole executive turned over every year, with the exception of Vice-President, President, and past President. So you had one continuum there, one series of . . . so a man would spend 3 years on the job. All of the other positions were elected new every year and it was recognized that we needed some continuity. That was Gordon Williams executive again, that came in with recommendations to restructure the executive itself, but we sort of speeded that up. It had to go to a vote of the membership and the principal change was that 2 positions as Director were changed into Director/Assistant Treasurer and Director/Assistant Business Manager because those are 2 very important jobs that needed some continuity. That Assistant was, barring some other happenstance, he was automatically a single nominee for the following year.

#148 DF: So that gave you 2 years of continuity or more?

DC: 2 years in those 2 positions. There was some continuity in that some people would be elected in some other positions, there was some sort of haphazard continuity but the . .

DF: This was more intentional.

DC: Yes. It was deliberate. And I've lost track, there have been other structural changes on the executive now and I'm not up to speed on those.

DF: Any other major events from your year?

DC: No, those were the big ones. Scientifically we had the Western Canada Atlas coming through the system and we were dealing with that and it was moving towards some sort of culmination but that was one of the initiatives that previous executive had set up. No, I can't recall what other big issues we had.

DF: You increased your membership dues, any controversy around that.

DC: That's right, that's another thing we did as part of the need for financial stability. And there wasn't much controversy on that, that had to be voted in by the membership and we got, I think it was approved by some 76% and it needed 75% to pass.

DF: It squeaked through eh?

DC: That's probably in that annual report as well, otherwise I wouldn't have that in my head.

DF: I didn't notice that. I notice here that you were quite concerned for your unemployed members. What kinds of things were you able to do for them?

DC: What did we do for them? We gave a preferred membership fee for unemployed members, which I'd say was tokenism but important tokenism. And there was some sort of employment committee. I haven't read my whole report.

DF: It says here there was a register of resumes that was created so that employers. .page 85. .

DC: Yes, there was a register of resumes and that was a serious undertaking. I don't recall how successful it was, to what degree companies came to that registry. There were some successes but I think with so many people unemployed the companies probably didn't have that much trouble finding new employees anyway. So that registry as I recall, was used but not extensively.

#197 DF: Geology is sort of like history, we study the big picture so when small things like major economic downturns but in the history of the universe they're pretty small, when those things come along it's hard to bridge from one good time to another for somebody who's out of a job. What did the CSPG try to do, other than a token reduction of membership, how can you help members when hundreds, or dozens at least, are being laid off?

DC: The registry that you mentioned we did. And I don't recall, other than that, what the Society did do. I probably should have read this annual report more thoroughly before this interview.

DF: Well, I mean you did some other things. You tried to keep your own business in order not to lose too much money. What was this about group life insurance, was that something new the year you were President.

DC: That was new. That was a tricky one to decide because, should we, in order to go for group life insurance it meant picking one individual who approached us with the idea of

group life insurance. And should we as a Society, be endorsing one company that wanted to sell life insurance to our members. We decided that the rates were favourable enough that we should do it. But as I recall we were pretty careful to explain to the membership that this looked like a good package to us and that we were permitting the company to offer the insurance but we weren't endorsing the company and that an individual would have to make his own judgement.

DF: Maybe you should read the paragraph there because you are endorsing it, you actually use the word endorse at the bottom of this column right here.

DC: Do we?

DF: Yes. Read that last sentence out loud. I think you came up with some good wording there.

DC: Okay. The Executive Committee endorses the offer but any participating member must accept responsibility for making his or her own comparisons and for any decision to purchase. So I said we didn't endorse it, but it still was a tricky decision.

#241 DF: No, I can see that. But you did want to offer your members something if it looked good. So any stories from the year you were President, any unusual things happened?

DC: No, unusual things happening in the Society. I got shot in the legs by some shotgun pellets in my leg but that wasn't Society business.

DF: Okay, well tell us about it anyhow, how did that happen?

DC: That was just an accidental discharge by one of my co-hunters. He had shot a bird, brought his gun back down across his body and he has no idea why it went off a second time. I was off, not that far, probably 25-30 yards and pellets hit me in the legs. Some of them are still there. Some of them pretty close to home. And some were just under the skin and they were removable but the ones that were deep in the meat, doctors weren't about to go looking for those.

DF: Any comments on the development of the CSPG and its future?

DC: In your questions here, the question that you asked was, what role did the CSPG play in the oil patch at the beginning of my career. The question I think, more appropriate might have been, what role did the oil patch play in the CSPG. I think I see, a lot of people see big changes in the mentality of the companies, as to whether their people should be involved in the Society. In earlier times when oil companies were run by geologists, people like Gerry Henderson and getting support for an individual who wanted to be active in the Society, there was no problem getting the support of your employer. And in a lot of cases, support implied office support as well, typing in the days when people didn't do their own typing, before word processors, cartography. Mail outs would be done at company expense. I'm a little out of touch now and I'm sure some of that still goes on but my feeling is that companies now are much more hard nosed that if an individual wants to volunteer to some function in the Society, he is perhaps with some companies he's grudgingly given permission and he's told he can do it as long as he does his job as well. I have to emphasize that I'm not on the company inside, so I'm working on hearsay and what other people tell me. But I have the impression that the industry just does not support the Society to the degree that it did when I was there. It was coming even when I

was there. When I was a Director, one of my jobs, Harry Wheeler and I were the Directors and we had to find an ex-chairperson for the next convention. That wasn't easy. But that I think, that wasn't so much that companies wouldn't allow individuals to do the job, it's just that the individuals saw it as too time consuming. So I think there's a big change there.

#324 DF: Well, in your particular time, times were really tough too in the patch. So money was tight and that would have affected it as well.

DC: Yes. But I have a feeling that it's still that way today, that individuals aren't encouraged to participate in the Society.

DF: I'll ask some of the more recent Presidents about that too then.

DC: That's good, yes, you should

DF: Any other comments, I see you've made notes all over the questions I sent you.

DC: That's not terribly important but our annual meetings, we changed the nature of our annual meeting. In the past the annual meeting included a business meeting with Treasurer's report and President's report, etc., etc. And it included all of the awards that the Society presents and then, it had a guest speaker. It was completely unfair to the guest speaker to have to sit through a fairly long boring evening for him, and maybe unfair to a lot of wives, maybe unfair to almost everybody. So we changed it so that the annual meeting, the business meeting, was done as a luncheon meeting. And the awards function was a specific evening with either, I think our year had an awards dinner and dance, but the standard format now is awards with a guest speaker. And the current executives, they just do some of the more prestigious awards on that night. So it makes a lot nicer evening now. And that started with my executive.

End of tape.

Tape 2 Side 1

DC: Where I, from outside of the industry, I lament that the industry doesn't really support the Society to the degree that it did in the past. But the support must still be there, you have Clint Tippett, with this particular committee as an example. There are still new and exciting things being done.

DF: It's a good question and I'll certainly ask other people who are more recent than you being President, how that feeling has gone. Because I'm sure it has something to do with the economics but also, in the old days the geologists were more senior in companies and now it's more bean counters and more those kinds of people. What other notes do you have here on this piece of paper? I like to see it when people have written down notes in response to my questions.

DC: A lot of these we've covered already. There's a question here, how did you see exploration change during your career and I personally wasn't involved in exploration but I've seen, early on the industry was. . I keep saying early on but early in my career the industry was pretty strongly frontier oriented. They were interested in the Arctic Islands

and you had Pan Arctic that became formed by a consortium of a number of companies. The exploration in Beaufort Sea, which I think was more PIP money that funded the Beaufort Sea exploration. People used to talk about super-depletion, I'm not sure what super-depletion was but the implication was that Jack Gallagher with Dome Petroleum made money up there whether he found any oil or not. I think, I guess Dome owned its own drilling company. So anyway, I'm digressing, the industry was frontier oriented and then we've gone through a phase where we've almost backed right out of the Territories. Part of that, a lot of that was the Berger Commission with saying that the natives had to be dealt with and the government deciding that it would deal seriously with the natives and so there were moratoriums on everything. But we pretty well, the industry sort of restricted itself to the western Canada sedimentary basin, without much activity going on in the north. And now we're back into a new phase, where the land claim settlements are pretty much sorted out and people are back looking at the Mackenzie Valley, Mackenzie corridor. They're starting to look again at the Delta. I'm not aware that they've started looking at the Arctic Islands again yet but that will come.

DF: Well the east coast offshore is viable now again, and that has to do with the economics again doesn't it?

DC: Yes.

DF: Any other notes there?

DC: No, we've pretty well covered the things that I had scribbled here.

DF: Oaky. Any regrets?

DC: No. I've no regrets. The fact that I still continue to work at my job. . .

DF: Long after the pay.

DC: I tell my wife that you can take the boy out of the GSC but you can't take the GSC out of the boy. And I'm still here. I expressed the somewhat whimsical regret earlier that, working in research, you don't get to see a drill sputted on your play, your concept, your ideas. And that I won't say I regret, but I always had a certain envy for the guys that do see it. It must be very exciting to have a well going down on a play that you've been instrumental in developing.

#050 DF: Well, less directly, has any of the research you've done opened up doors for other people to do those kinds of economic plays?

DC: The work that I have done is certainly used by other people. The surface maps that I produced in the Territories are used by others.

DF: How about Chevron's Fort Liard play, did you map any of that area?

DC: No, I did not.

DF: Further north. Any stories of Ted Link, I hear he was quite the character?

DC: He was before my time. That's the Canol project that he was involved on but I didn't know Ted personally.

DF: Any other characters you might have bumped into over the years?

DC: Well, there are lots of characters, people that have influenced my career. I mentioned Ray Price early on, he certainly had a strong influence on me, on my geological thinking and he sort of suggested the thesis project that I would work on. Bob Douglas who sort of

preceded Ray Price in the sort of Rocky Mountain geology, he was a giant. I knew Bob but didn't have a whole lot to do with him. Jim Aitken who was my Party Chief initially, I'd have to say he influenced me but just working with him. He was a character but do I have any good stories, probably not.

DF: You started out by telling me about your mapping from a helicopter, did you ever do any work on horseback or canoes or any of those old styles of geology?

DC: No. I missed the horse days. Probably I would guess probably by about 5 years. So people like Jim Aitken, they loved to tell their horse stories but I was never on a horse party.

DF: Well, your helicopters were almost old enough to be in the horse era weren't they?

DC: Just about. And I worked with both, in the later parts of my field career, it was with the jet rangers which was a big change.

DF: So no river work, no canoes, river boats, anything like that?

DC: No. My work on the Shield with Labrador Mining and Quebec Cartier, that was fairly detailed mapping of claims and we could travers out every day, from base camp and we had a canoe there, more for recreational purposes than for logistical purposes. So no canoes, no horses.

DF: Any other final comments you'd like to make about your career, what have you enjoyed most?

DC: I've enjoyed most, just doing regional geology and mapping the geology of big terrains and interpreting the deformational history and it's the point I made earlier. With the Survey, with the research organization, you have the freedom to pursue things to a considerably greater degree than you can with industry. Industry has to be working on short term imperatives. Mind you today's Survey is a vastly different Survey to the one that I worked for. We don't have the operational budgets and the budgets that we do have, we don't have. . . I keep saying we as if I'm part of the organization, you can tell that in my heart I am, but we don't have much local autonomy in what things we do. Most of our funding, most of our programs or projects, are decided by central committees in Ottawa and it's

#115 DF: Things have changed.

DC: Things have changed and they aren't for the good and they aren't for the good of geology in Canada. So that'll do.

DF: Okay, on that note - I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the CSPG and the Petroleum History Oral History Project to thank you so much for spending this time with us this afternoon. Your recollections are very valuable, they're unique, they're yours, no one else has them, so we really appreciate you spending the time and we'll end the formal part of this interview at this time. Thank you very much.

DC: Well, thanks for inviting me and as a captain of the oil industry, I am not.