

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Sterling Davies

INTERVIEWER: Nadine Mackenzie

DATE: November 1984

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking. I am interviewing Mr. Sterling Davies. Mr. Davies, thank you for having accepted to participate in our project. Can you tell me, when and where were you born?

SD: I was born in Liverpool, England, October 19, 1914.

NM: What did you parents do?

SD: Mr father at that time was the manager of a hotel, it's called the Wheatsheaf Hotel and in fact I was born right there at the Wheatsheaf Hotel. In those days I guess they didn't go to hospitals as much as they do now so I was actually born in the hotel.

NM: Where were you educated, in Liverpool?

SD: In Liverpool at St. Michael's Hamlet School and of course, in those days we left school at the age of 14 unless your parents were able to send you to a high school or you were bright enough to obtain a scholarship. So I guess I wasn't bright enough, however, I left school at the age of 14, so that would be in 1929.

#015 NM: And then what did you do?

SD: Well, I went to work in an office at first as sort of an errand boy, delivering papers. It was a printing office actually and we had copies of newspapers to deliver and we were on the corn exchange, the office, right on the corn exchange so I was a runner between the office and the corn exchange. We also had the retail stationary store and this first Christmas they invited me to go down and work in the stationary store and they evidently appreciated my work because I became an errand boy in the stationary store. And I worked myself up to the manager of the stationary store. That would be in 1936. So I stayed with this one company, the Northern Publishing Company, from '29 until '36. The wages at that time were not very good and my father had passed on and the family was broken up so my brother, Maynard, had emigrated to Canada and he was working on a farm just at Oyen, Alberta. And he sent me a picture of himself sitting on a horse and. . .

NM: Very romantic.

SD: Inspired my imagination so that all I wanted was to go to Canada. Then I never heard for years from him. But finally, I was just about ready to join the Air Force, I was fed up with this other job that I had, living by myself. I had the forms all filled out to go into the Air Force and was just ready to mail them when this letter came from my brother Maynard saying that he was making arrangements for me to come to Canada. So of course, that letter went in the wastebasket then you see. And it was in 1937. . .

#033 NM: Was it easy to immigrate to Canada at the time?

SD: Yes. There was no problem at all. Actually he was sort of a bond for me. He had to apply for my entry into Canada. It was very interesting that at that time, R. B. Bennett, who is well known to most Canadians, he was a good friend of my brother's and I think he helped to sign the papers for me to come in. So I arrived in Canada. . . I left England on February 26th on the Duchess of Bedford and I arrived in St. John's, I think it was about March 6th, it was a long trip. From there I took the train to Montreal, Montreal was about an hour stop over and then I boarded the train for Calgary, Alberta. And oh, what a long journey that was. Miles and miles of snow and I arrived in Calgary March 9th.

NM: What was your first impression of Calgary when you arrived?

SD: It was just huge. It was just beyond comprehension. I had read about Canada and at school, the geography lessons that we had had and the names that I saw on the way across. Of course, I had pronounced them all differently in England. Saskatchewan and Manitoba and things like that. So my brother met me at the station and right away we went into the Palliser Hotel. And I was there for a week and in that time he had taken me down to Turner Valley and showed me around. And at that time, he was the youngest oil promoter in Canada. And he had formed a company, Globe Royalties and also Davies Petroleum.

#053 NM: So he was quite an entrepreneur?

SD: Oh yes. His idea was that I would help him in the business sometime. But in the meantime I was supposed to go to university. But there was no way I could get into university just having come to England and not having had grade 12 math and that sort of thing, you just couldn't enter university. So I went to work right in the oil field. I can remember the exact date, it was April 7th, 1937 and I had taken the bus from Calgary to at that time, they called it Little Chicago, actually it's Royalties but they called it Little Chicago.

NM: Yes, they had all these American names, like little Philadelphia, little New York. . .

SD: That's right, little New York, little Philadelphia. And I was to live in little Chicago and it was on the Davies #1 well, which they had spudded in and they were drilling it by cable tool method at that time.

NM: Did you know anything about the oil business or were you . . .?

SD: Not a thing.

NM: That is the best way to be trained.

SD: That's right, yes. So first, when I went down there, my job, what he had set me to do, sort of a timekeeper and then send in the time at the end of the week or the month or whatever it was and do little errands for them and jobs here and there. So it was quite good until the time came, I went to work actually on the cable tool well. I helped with the drilling and running casing and just general round about. . .

#070 NM: Were you living in Turner Valley?

SD: I lived right on the lease. I had a little hose to myself. It was about 16 x 14, a little stove in it, all hooked up with gas from the wells. It was quite an experience, coming from the

city of Liverpool, a city of 800,000 people and to come to little Chicago with no plumbing and no running water of any sort, it was quite an experience.

NM: How were the conditions of living?

SD: I enjoyed it so much. Coming right from England, it was in the 30's, you know what they call them, the Dirty 30's, and actually I never suffered at all. We had a camp and the meals were all prepared by a Mrs. Ellis and her husband, they had the camp. And the contractor was a Mr. Bull Morgan and we got along very well even though they looked upon me as the brother of the boss, sort of thing, you know. We had a great time down there. After I worked on the well itself, my brother started to drill some other wells so he put me in charge of gas and water lines until the Davies #1 well blew in and it was on production and I went to work on the well as a separator man as they called us in those days. And at that time, I had gone into the hospital in Calgary to have my tonsils out and that's where I met my wife. She was my nurse. So we were married shortly after that, in fact, it was July 3rd, 1940, we were married and I brought her down to little Chicago as a bride.

#091 NM: And how did she like little Chicago?

SD: She adapted herself quite easily and there was a Dr. Green at that time, and he needed an assistant, a little help so my wife voluntarily assisted him and she worked on a few cases.

NM: I think they had a dispensary there in Turner Valley.

SD: Well, in Turner Valley proper they did, but in little Chicago at that time, we just had the Dr. Green by himself, then in Black Diamond they had Dr. Dave Landers and his brother. It seemed to be a long way in those days to drive from little Chicago to Black Diamond.

NM: That's right. So what was your work exactly on the rig.

SD: In Black Diamond. After we were married I wanted to strike out on my own a little bit so I left my brother's company and I went to a little place called Hartel, which was just maybe, 3 or 4 miles north of little Chicago. I went to live in what they called at that time, bowlers camp, and it was Mr. Glen Bowler who had the Atlas Drilling Company. At first it was called Bowler Drilling, then it was taken over and referred to as Atlas Drilling Company and I went roughnecking there for 2 years and really enjoyed that. But we wanted a little change and I was invited to go for work for Haliburton Oil Well Cementing Company. So that would be in 1942, after two years of roughnecking as we called it. And in that period I had worked as I say, just for the Atlas Drilling Company and from there to Haliburton Oil Well Cementing. And it was about that time of course, things were going not too well over in Europe for the Allies and most people were joining up. But as an oil worker I was sort of frozen in my job. However I left Haliburton and immediately I was subject to an Army call you see. I applied for the Navy. Unfortunately I was not accepted. In the meantime, while I was waiting for the results of my application for the Navy, I went to work for Royalite Oil Company. I was mostly in Turner Valley although I went up to Coalspur, which was west of Edmonton, around Edson. And it was while I was up there roughnecking that I had a call from the Army, that I had to report. So I came back down to Calgary and I went in the Army. But I never went overseas at all, I was just in the Army here in Calgary and then from Calgary I went to Ontario, Ontario to

Shiloh, Manitoba and I was finally in the garrison or military police. When I was discharged in May 1946, my wife had gone to Vancouver to live with her mother while I was in the services. So they discharged me and sent me back to Vancouver. At that time my wife was working as a nurse of the Shell Oil Refinery so I went to work for Shell Oil. I was there on leave at one time and Mr. Gardner, the manager of the plant asked me what I would do when I was demobilized and I said, well I don't know. He said, would you like to live in Vancouver and he said, I think I would. So he said, there's a job waiting for you just as soon as you're demobilized. So I did, I went to work for Shell Oil and I was there for 18 months.

#139 NM: What did you do for Shell Oil?

SD: I wound up as what they call a tail house gauger. It was measuring all the tanks for the fluid levels and then switching one tank to another and taking samples up to the laboratory for testing and so forth. It was quite a varied job but as I say, that was enjoyable. However my brother came out from Calgary and he said that I was wasting my time in British Columbia working for Shell Oil Company. He said, you should be back in Alberta where the boom is on right now. And at that time, the Leduc #1 well had come into being you see. Well, I thought about it and I talked to Shell Oil first and I asked them if there was any chance of being transferred to the production. And they said, well no, they were actually pulling out of Alberta. And they had a lot of acreage I think, in the Redwater field at that time. So they said, no, there was no chance. Finally I listened to my brother and I resigned from Shell Oil and I went to Alberta. Arrived in Calgary and my brother, at that time, said that he had a job for me but it hadn't materialized at that time so I went to work for Dowl??? Cementing. Because I had the experience before with Haliburton Oil Well Cementing. So it was a Mr. Roy Graves at Dowl that hired me and I worked in the Redwater field, in Edmonton and Leduc and all around. I finished out my days with Dowl as the station manager in Regina, although I had worked in Lloyminster and Edmonton and Calgary.

#162 NM: So all over the place.

SD: So when I left Dowl in Regina, that would be in 1953, no '54 possibly, I'm a little hazy on that, I came back to Calgary and worked for Mr. Ed Caskey with Wardean??? Drilling Company but just as a warehouse supervisor. And from there I went back and I went to work for my brother again, for about 6 or 8 months as a field superintendent. And I wasn't quite sure that that's what I wanted to do. I wound up with a job with Magnet Coal Barium Corporation??? referred to as Magabar in those days. And I spent quite a few years with Magabar, in purchasing and public relations and equipment manager.

NM: Were there offices here?

SD: They were right here in Calgary. So by that time we had moved back to Calgary. At one time back there I had taken a leave of absence from Dowl and I went to work for my brother in between, where we drilled 5 wells and I was his field superintendent then and then at the expiration of that I went back to Dowl. So I had about 5 or 6 years with Dowl at that time. But after I left Magabar, Mr. Larry Welsh had gone, from Magabar at that

time, he had gone to work for Interprovincial Steel and Pipe and I met him on the street one day. He always referred to me as old man Davies, he said, what are you doing these days old man and I said, I'm sort of in between jobs right now. He said, there's a job at IPSCO for you. So that was 1962, I went to work for IPSCO and I retired 17 years later.

#191 NM: And what did you do at IPSCO?

SD: At first I looked after stock records, went out and took physical inventories of stock and I started doing a little purchasing for them, a little public relations and I finally wound up as the office manager. So IPSCO were very, very kind to me and I can't say too much for them.

NM: And after you retired, what did you do, did you go . . . ?

SD: After I retired I sort of didn't want to give it up completely and Franklin Supply asked me if I would consider going with them for a little while. I thought well, that would be a good chance to sort of ease off completely. So I went with them for about a year, slightly over a year. When I accepted that job with them I thought it would be inventory control or checking the stocks and this and that but when I arrived in their office, they had it all set up for me and I went in the credit department, in the collections. And I enjoyed it immensely but I was working several days a week and so many hours a day and then it came time, they asked me if I would consider working full time but I didn't want that at all. So we came to the parting of the ways very amicably and I've just been retired ever since and I haven't been doing anything except with the other organizations that I belong to. I golf a lot when the season is open and I belong to several other groups, I don't know whether you want me to name those.

#216 NM: I will ask you that later on. Can we talk about key people who worked with you?

SD: Yes. I've worked with so many of these people that you have on your list here. The names that I have worked with throughout the years and the people that I know. I'm not a namedropper by any means but so many of these are familiar to me.

NM: Yes, you must have know all of them.

SD: All of those that it's hard to pick out various ones. I don't know where to begin on that really, if you have any questions.

NM: Let us begin with the alphabetical order.

SD: Right. Mr. Harry Alger is a very good friend of mine. Harry Alger is a past potentate of the Al Azar Shrine, to which I'm also a member.

NM: He's a brother of Ross Alger.

SD: Ross Alger yes. Ed Bower, I remember Ed from years ago and the Rev. Don Binney, Mark Blane, the R.A. Brown, I'm not quite sure if that's the one that I know. And Doug Kerns and of course, Thelma Cameron. Thelma Cameron, she was secretary to my brother when I came out from England and I'll always remember Thelma, she was so kind to me. Of course, we kept up our friendship throughout the years.

NM: Yes, and then she went to work for Sam Nickle.

SD: That's right, yes. And there was one period there when I wasn't quite sure where I was going to live, I couldn't make my mind up in between companies, that my wife and

daughter went to live with Thelma for awhile.

#244 NM: She's the first female Landman of Canada.

SD: That's right. Jack Cravorty, I remember Jack Cravorty. Gordon Connell, another good friend, Bert Corrie, deChastelain, I remember that name. Now we come down, Walter Dingell, Ian Drum, Ian and I, we golf with one another out at Canyon Meadows Golf Club. Jim Drumheller, Garnet Edwards, another name . . . and quite a few of these passed through the Oil Field Technical Society which at one time, if you'd like me to mention now, I was the President of the OTS. Ralph Flanders, Bill Friely, Jack Gallagher, Ed Galvin, Alvin Geddes, Ken Gemond, Gibby Gibson, D.P. Goodall, Red Goodall. Red, yes, we go back to the 1930's. Dave Grey, oh yes, I remember him too. Don Harvey, Dallas Hawkins and you mentioned Harry Heath and I'm sure I've run across him.

NM: Yes, at the Palliser Hotel, everybody knew him.

SD: Yes, because my brother spent many hours at the Palliser, they had the Petroleum Club there for a long time.

NM: Harry Heath was also a very good friend of Neil McQueen.

SD: Yes, I remember Mr. McQueen too and C. Heatherington. Many of these too would be friends of my brother in those days. My brother now has left Calgary. He's still in the oil business but he lives in Spokane, Washington. Very Hunter, I worked with Vern many, many times when I was with the cementing companies. George Jones, Jonesy, lovingly referred to as Jonesy. Stan Kannick, Aubrey Kerr, Tom Kimmet, Stu King, I don't know whether he's living up here now or . . .

#281 NM: Stu King is still working for Asamera???

SD: That's right. He was in Mexico for awhile.

NM: But he's in Calgary now.

SD: Yes. Spy Langston is a very dear friend and the Langham's, Fin and Jim. Delbert E. Lewis, yes. I knew his father very well too. Don Mackenzie, Fred Mackinnon and Emily McKay. Emily just recently opened up a new business. She and her son have opened up a fur business. Emily . . . I worked with her husband many, many years ago, Bill McKay, very fine person. Bill MacGregor, of course, some of these I haven't seen for a few years, but I can see them right now in my mind's eye. Dave Mitchell, Hoagy Mitchell, Tip Maroney, always said Mr. Maroney when I met him. Scove Murray, Clare Nabors and Mr. Matineau, Carl Nickle, Mr. Nickle. I seem to know this name but I can't just place it, Natescue.

NM: He was from Romania and escaped from Romania swimming the Danube with his wife on his back because she could not swim.

SD: That's right. Jack Orman, if this is the same Jack Orman, a well known golfer at my club, Canyon Meadows.

#308 NM: His son Rick was trying to get into politics.

SD: That's right. I don't know Ernie Palister, no it was another Palister, Bill Palister, lovingly referred to as Stud Palister. Maurice Paulson, he and my brother were associates at one

time. Jack Pettinew is a good friend, old Haliburton man. Mel Pope, yes and then I see Mary Pope.

NM: That is his wife yes.

SD: Well, I must have known Mary, I know Mel so well. John Poyen, a great golfer.

NM: Yes, he is a champion.

SD: And Mr. Don Redman, Charlie Ship, oh I haven't seen him for years and years. Stafford, Lloyd Stafford, Lloyd's a good friend. He's lucky too, I understand he won a little bit on a lottery at one time. So I shook hands with him hoping it would rub off on me.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 1 Side 2

SD: Mr. Nick Taylor, yes and Very Taylor, I worked with Mr. Vern Taylor many, many times. And Ben Tune, there's a great old fellow. He was out at Heritage Park for many, many years.

NM: I think he is the one who is making honey now with his son, that's right.

SD: Ben would run that old cable tool out at Heritage Park.

NM: Yes. His son is making honey and several persons from this project went to buy some honey from him.

SD: And Ed Toval, I worked with Ed Toval with Dowl in Lloydminster in 1948. Good friends. And Bill Twaits, Len Walker, I haven't seen Len for a long time and Jim Wark, Jim would remember me. Harry Webster. Now there's another Wark you should have down here, Tom.

NM: Yes, he has been interviewed. He's now looking after. . .

SD: Yes. He's at the dairy counter, yes I go to see him once in awhile.

NM: At Heritage Park. In fact we were even making a film.

SD: Good, I'll have to go out and see it. He asked me some time if I'd like to come out there and help him, being an old cable tool man. Don Wilkin, Don I think, lives in Banff now. I haven't seen him for a long time. Don was great on the barbecues when we had them. We had barbecues for the Oilman's Golf Tournament and we held them at Banff.

#019 NM: Yes, at the Banff Springs Hotel.

SD: At the Banff Springs Hotel, they had a great time there. There's so many other days I could give you to put on here but it would take another day and a half. Maybe I can do that though in the future.

NM: Sure. Can you comment on the ups and downs of the oil business because you have been a witness to that.

SD: Yes. Well, as we realize it has been spotty. Through the war years and money was not available and of course, we only had Turner Valley at that time. Some oil down east. They drilled around Vermillion, Alberta. There was a heavy oil up there that they drilled

for, more for fuel for the CNR and that's why they called it, I think, at that time, Canar Oils. So they did, they realized a lot of production up there and they were drilling wells just as fast as they could get a drilling rig onto the ground you see. And of course, it didn't take but several days to drill a well there. They only went down a few thousand feet. Then there was oil down in eastern Canada but I don't know how much. But we relied on a lot of imports at that time. So that would be til about 1940's. Then there was a lull in it. There was a lot of exploration went on. Many, many dry holes were drilled and I know many gas wells were drilled but at that time, we weren't looking for gas, it was the crude oil that they wanted.

#035 NM: That's right, it seems everybody was finding gas at the time.

SD: Oh yes, there was a lot but there was no call for it. As many people thought, oh well, the well is just shut down and abandoned and I'm sure that many wells were abandoned. But later on they went back into those areas and opened up and of course, the gas had become more valuable then. I think of the wells that my brother drilled that were good gas wells but no oil so that was it. And then of course, we went on to 1947, Leduc #1. Mind you they drilled all around at that time and I think had . . .

NM: So they were bound to find something.

SD: Yes. But from Leduc #1, I understand that if they had drilled just a little to the east of that, they would have missed it completely. But that started the big boom. And of course, Edmonton became, as they said, the oil capital of Canada but all of the business deals and that were formulated here in Calgary. So actually we were and still are the oil capital. But most of the service companies and the drilling companies, they were working out of Edmonton. And of course, from there they went on to around the Bruderheim area, Redwater, so many other places.

#050 NM: What do you think now of the National Energy Program?

SD: Well, I've been out of touch and I couldn't voice an opinion on that. I haven't followed it enough so I really couldn't say.

NM: Adjusting with the ups and downs of the oil business, how do you foresee the future of the oil industry?

SD: How could I answer that?

NM: Do you think it's going to get better?

SD: I think it must. There's so much potential, there's so many areas that have been untouched as yet that I must look ahead and see that it will be a good future. I'm sure of it myself.

NM: Let's just go back to your career, who were the most influential persons in your career?

SD: Most influential.

NM: Number one would be your brother.

SD: Yes, first of all there must be my brother. I'd like to tell you his history a little bit but maybe that would take too long.

#060 NM: Oh no, please.

SD: He came out here on an emigration scheme to Canada and he arrived at a little place, I don't think it was a town actually, Oyen, Alberta and he worked on a farm. Naturally he had no finances at all, it was just what they gave him from the farm. So while he was there he worked as an usher in the theatre at nighttime. And then it wasn't long before he applied for a position in the bank and believe it or not he became a clerk in the bank and it was called the Bank of Toronto. Now at that time he would only have been about 23 years of age. He worked in the bank and of course, he had left the farm work by that time. Somehow and I don't know how this happened, he came into Calgary and he went to work for the Minneapolis Molding and Power Implement Company. It's a long title, I don't know what it is today. What his job consisted of I don't know, unless it was selling machinery or trying to sell machinery. And he met a girl named Ruby Scratch and her sister had married a Mr. Fay Becker??? who had an oil company and was drilling for oil and gas down in Turner Valley. He also had Becker's Bungalows at Banff you see, and that's the connection. My brother married Ruby Scratch, became Fay Becker's brother-in-law, so he and Fay became, not really partners but my brother could see the possibilities of this oil. So he started selling shares in oil. But at that time, somehow he had left the implement company and was working for the City of Calgary in, he told me at that time, the Relief Department. He had a couple of other little jobs in between to sort of help out but he finally saw his niche in the world and he started selling shares for Fay Becker. At that time he could see there was other ways of making money in the oil business so he formed Royalties and he was the one I understand, that first started the method of oil royalties in Canada. So he formed a company called Globe Royalties, which was later sold. I'm not quite sure whether Mr. Labord??? was in on that deal or not. No, I'm sorry it wasn't Mr. Labord, it was a Mr. Clifton C. Cross, who became a great oil man. And I think Mr. Cross and Mr. Labord were related.

#095 NM: Yes, they were associated later on I think.

SD: That's right, yes. So my bother and Mr. Cliff Cross and Mr. Labord were business associates. So my brother then formed Davies Petroleums and that's of course, when I came into the picture. I came out to assist him in the business sort of thing. So that's how my brother was started and he was recorded as being the youngest oil promoter in Canada.

NM: So you must have been very proud of being his brother.

SD: Yes. Although it didn't help sometimes.

NM: That's right. It can work both ways.

SD: I found that out yes.

NM: What were the most exciting experiences in your career?

SD: Davies #1 was drilled to completion and it caught fire and it was . . .

NM: Was anybody hurt?

SD: No, nobody hurt. That day I had been working on the well itself and I was on what they called the daylight shift and there was a term they used called swabbing the well. Which means that they send a type of a plunger down and they pull it back up and it brings the oil and gas with it in an effort to bring out any mud contaminated oil there might be in

there until the gas . . . the oil under its own . . . the gas pressure would flow to the surface by itself you see. So my job at that time was when they were swabbing the well was to turn it into the separator where the gas and oil was extracted sort of thing. I'd finished my shift at 4:00 and my house was right on the lease but it was up on a hill about 400' from the well. And I was busy sort of cleaning myself up and I looked down towards the well and I saw this huge flame and I thought, boy that well is really putting out now. By putting out meaning that the gas was flowing up to the surface of its own accord. And it wasn't, the whole well was on fire. And of course, being in an oil soaked condition with the swabbing well, there's oil all over the What had happened was, like there's no Calgary Power in those days, to supply the electricity to the well. They have their own generators which are situated in the engineer's shack. I shouldn't say shack, the engineer's room, boiler room. And when it starts to get dark in the afternoon, you just turn the generator on, pull a switch and I guess it caused a short circuit and poof. With my brother there was somebody else. . . I think it was a Mr. Chandler. At that time, the well, instead of being cable tool, they had switched over to rotary drilling and it was being drilled by Newell and Chandler. That's Mr. Matt Newell and Mr. Shorty Chandler. And of course, Mr. Chandler, dear old Shorty has passed on to the big oil patch in the sky as we say. And I can always remember Mr. Chandler standing there watching the rig all in flames with a cigar in his mouth and asking if anybody had a match. But the well, it was extinguished and of course, the mop up operations the next day, it was a sad mess. And I don't think they ever recovered from that.

#140 NM: This could have been potentially very dangerous?

SD: And I've had . . . and on that same well I was injured just once, just on my hand but it came back all right. So there was that experience and . . . oh, we drilled another well called Davies #2, which was Royalite Davies #2 and the Royalite Oil Company participated in that to probably 50-50, I don't know what it was. And part of my job was to over there and collect samples and find out information about the well to phone into my brother in Calgary you see. And I remember the first time I went over and I just walked into the dark house as if I owned the place and I was met with stony silence and then somebody barked, what the hell are you doing here. And I said, who do you think you're talking to, I am the brother of . . . I don't care who you are, get off the lease. So I was, until I could prove my identity you see. They got a little tough in those days. But then after that I got along very well with everyone.

NM: So they adopted you.

SD: Yes, they adopted me.

155 NM: Any other experiences?

SD: Oh I've had near misses out on the road when I was traveling for Dowl and with Haliburton. Running off the road with the cement truck, I don't know whether I told them about that but it's coming out now anyway. In those days we were working sometimes 24 hours a day on those cementing companies. I believe it is easier today for the engineers and that. But we would travel hundreds of miles to go and do a cement job, arrive at the

location, have to wait all through the night and maybe the next day because they weren't quite ready for us but they must have us there on the location. Sometimes in the abandonment of these wells, we'd be there for maybe 24 hours, mixing cement, pumping it down the hole. In the winter time, I've come away from there and my hands just torn open with the cement and caustic. You get tired and sometimes you would sort of slide off the road. I think there have been one or two serious accidents like that but . . . no, I was free of accidents in that respect. Even when I was a roughneck with the drilling companies there were many, many accidents. Because it's not uncommon today to see some of those old timers with maybe a toe missing or a finger missing.

#176 NM: Like Gordon Webster

SD: Well, Gordon that was very sad. You've probably heard that story now.

NM: Yes. [They injured him and it was very serious]???

SD: Yes. I was working with Dowl at that time and Gordon had been working with Dowl and he was with the Home Oil Company and I can remember that as vividly as if it was yesterday. Gordon was. . . Did I read Gordon's name?

NM: He is on the list.

SD: No, he's not on there. No, it's got Harry Webster, I know Harry Webster but it hasn't got Gordon Webster.

NM: Because I interviewed Gordon Webster.

SD: But there have been many accidents. And then there have been many fatal accidents and I've known the people it's happened to. Even with Dowl.

NM: Jim Irwin too had an accident too, he told me.

SD: Jim Irwin? That's, if it's the same one, he's out at my golf club. I say my gold club as if I own it. I golf with Jim once in awhile. Another chap, he lives at High River now, a real character, I shouldn't say a character because you associate a character with a different type of person. A very sincere man, Al House.

NM: I think somebody is interviewing him. Also George Tosh.

SD: Yes. Al House and I have been friends since the very, very early days of little Chicago. He and I one time boarded at a place called the Home of Good Eats. Many people remember the Home of Good Eats. Little Chicago was quite a town or village or whatever, not really a town. Rows of shops and stores on each side of the street. The street was probably 1/4 of a mile long.

#202 NM: Here's an old photo, that's quite something.

SD: A good friend of mine is a Mr. Bill Pollard and his father was a great photographer and his pictures and photos are now in the archives of Glenbow. Bill Pollard is still with us, his father has passed on and his brother Harry has passed on but brother Bill is still here in Calgary. He would be a very good person to . . .

NM: Can you tell me about your professional affiliations?

SD: Yes. I belong now to the Masonic Order, which everybody knows the Masonic Order and other bodies, the Royal Arch Masons and the Perceptery???, and the Zadoc Council???, and the Shrine. I have also been associated and still am associated with the Order of the

Eastern Star and I don't know whether you are familiar with that. Many people unknowingly refer to it as a ladies organization but it really isn't.

NM: Because of the work star?

SD: Well, it's mostly ladies really but they must have men in it. It's called the Order of the Eastern Star and it's spread world wide, we have 2 ½ million members throughout the world. And it's the largest organization to which both men and women can belong. We have nearly 8,000 in Alberta alone. There are 78 chapters or lodges, that the men refer to as lodges but we call them chapters. Last year I happened to become the Worthy Grand Patron for it, which required my traveling all over the province and neighbouring provinces and down into the States.

#233 NM: What are the aims of these organizations?

SD: First of all people say, it's a secret organization, well, they're not secret. They are societies that have secrets between the members but it's not a secret society. And their aim is to spread relief, truth and as we say, brotherly love and help your neighbour. And they do a lot in . . .like, for crippled children, multiple sclerosis, dystrophy. And they do, they help. It's a fraternal organization but it's not a benevolent society, we just do a lot of good, a lot of it is done without any fanfare.

NM: No publicity?

SD: No, actually we shy away from the publicity.

NM: So that's why people don't hear?

SD: Now with the Shrine it is different. We go out and we put on the Shrine Circus, we have the hospital for the Burn Children and Children's Hospital. They have a good time. Some refer to it as the playground of the Masonic Order. You see, you must be a Mason before you can be a Shriner.

NM: Really, I didn't know that.

SD: A person couldn't just go in and join the Shrine. They have to pass through all these other degrees you see. And then when they've gone all through that, they become a Shriner. Now it is serious, they have a lot of serious things and then they have their little episodes of play and fun and games which you can see at the Shrine Circus, the parade day. And they have all these units that one can belong to, the Oriental Band and the Marching Patrol, Tin Lizzy car, the Airplane Patrol. . .the Air Core I think it is. Of course, the horses, that's one of the greatest things at the Shrine.

#262 NM: Beautiful horses and so well trained.

SD: Yes. And I belong to the Canyon Meadows Golf Club. I haven't been very active in the Oil Field Technical Society, having retired but I still keep interested in those thing. What else can I say now. That's about all I think for those.

NM: What do you consider your achievements?

SD: The greatest is I have a very lovely wife, a beautiful home, a daughter I'm most proud of and grandchildren and my son-in-law. I haven't really wanted for very much in my life, I've been very fortunate. The good Lord has been very kind to me. And friends that I have met throughout the years, they've all been kind. I can't say I have any enemies. I don't

believe so. I may have a few that disagreed with me at times. And I probably haven't seen eye to eye with a lot of people and I've come in for criticism at times. I think the fact that I can meet people and see them on the street that I've been associated with throughout the years. I don't have to slink around the corner to avoid anyone. I'm just thankful for all my friends that I've made throughout the years.

#290 NM: Before I ask you the last question, is there anything I've forgotten to ask you, or anything else you would like to talk about?

SD: I feel so relaxed I could keep on talking for the rest of the day I think. So many things have happened, you look back at situations that have happened, not only in the oil business but in your own life. 11 years ago I had a very serious heart attack and through a very fine doctor and my good wife looking after me, and all the attention I had from people I came through that. Last January I had a very slight relapse, I was getting all excited about going to England and doing this and doing that and I'd already traveled about 30,000 miles on this Eastern Star trail that I had. I had a little bit of a relapse and it sent me to hospital but as you can see I got over that and everything is fine now today. But so many other things that I could say about work and play. Like helping to organize tournaments and working on the barbecues for the Oilman's up at Banff. People I have met there. Jack McIntyre, his name isn't on here. I think he's living at the coast, he was with Hudson Bay Oil and Gas I believe at one time. Was it Hudson Bay, I'm kind of getting mixed up. Jack McIntyre, he was great on barbecues. With Jack we helped to start the first Oilman's Golf Tournament which was held up at Red Deer through the auspices of the Oil Field Technical Society because Jack was a past president and I was a past president. Then we formed the Turner Valley Golf Tournament, we had barbecues there and they kind of dropped off but I think they're going to come back again.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 2 Side 1

NM: It seems that golf is very important for oil people.

SD: It is really. It is a good place for associates to get together, for salesmen. .

NM: And you can chat while you are playing?

SD: They get very serious on the golf course too but walking, as you are walking along you can maybe discuss a few things but usually it's when you get back to the clubhouse and you relax and maybe have a beverage or usually you stay for supper or dinner, whatever it is or maybe have lunch first before you go and you can talk your business deal over.

NM: And you are relaxed, which is nice.

SD: That's right and it is a good place for salesman to meet prospective clients. There is a lot of business is done, you can't over emphasize the fact that that is. . . besides you have your Petroleum Club, your 400 Club.

NM: Are you a member of the Petroleum Club?

SD: No. At one time I was a member of the 400 Club, of course, when I was gainfully employed and also with the Professional Club. That is a very good club too. And you meet many, many people in the oil patch.

#014 NM: So then you establish all your contacts and that is easier than when you are doing business.

SD: That's right. So a lot of time is spent on the golf course, I'm not saying too much time is spent but it's all for a purpose and it does pay off, there's no doubt about it.

NM: What about winter?

SD: In the winter of course, they have the Oilman's Curling. I was never a curler, I never joined in that at all but they do have their sessions and they get together then you see. but the other things during the winter time, the clubs, the Professional Club, 400, Petroleum, they do put on special nights and dancing. And that's another time too, business pays off. And then of course, you're able to include the wives on that and they are. . .

NM: So they meet other wives too?

SD: That's right. And they can be a great asset, there's no doubt about it.

NM: Did your wife belong to the Oil Wives?

SD: She belong to the Oil Wives back in Regina, Saskatchewan and then she did here in Calgary but she kind of got away from that, she is in business for herself now, she has a little store. I don't know whether I should mention that. She is a business woman and she has no reason to belong to the Oil Wives anymore.

#029 NM: Looking back on your career in the oil industry, what do you think of it?

SD: If I had it to do all over again, I don't think I would change one little bit. At times, when I was changing jobs, sometimes it was on my own accord, another time it was a rearrangement of the staff that I had no control of. And on two occasions when that

happened I thought the bottom of the world had dropped off. And I wasn't quite sure what to do, in fact, one particular time, the time I went to work with Mr. Ed Caskie??? of Wardene Drilling??? I was at a loose end, I had no job, my furniture was in storage, my wife was living with relatives and I did not know what to do. And Mr. Caskie said, well, I have a job for you, it doesn't pay very much but it will give you a chance to, in his words, survive. And we were very good friends, so I thought well, I'll take it. It was in Leduc and as I say, as a warehouse supervisor, actually he had purchased a required lots of oil field equipment and it was all stored in a yard and they had to have someone look after it. So I did and if anybody to buy anything I helped to sell it. But it put me in that position that I had some money coming in until such a time as I knew what I was going to do. And I was sitting on a fence. And that was when I went back with my brother for a few months, that decided me that I would move to Calgary, You see, I didn't know whether to go to Calgary or to Edmonton. I had lived in Edmonton once before and I didn't like it.

#043 NM: No chinooks in Edmonton.

SD: No. So it was a deciding factor in my moving back to Calgary. And then of course, I spent those months with my brother and I had this other job offered to me which I went to.

NM: So looking back at your career there is nothing you would do differently?

SD: No. The only thing that I feel sorry about is the education. The education is very, very essential in today's world.

NM: Yes. But at the same time look at George ??? for example, he was ??? geology.

SD: Well, that's it, we have so many self made men today that have gone through life without that education.

NM: And did very well.

SD: Yes. Because I have had people ask me what university I went to or what college and I left at the age of 14, which I think is equivalent to about a grade 9.

NM: And at the same time, people with a Ph.D. cannot find jobs nowadays.

SD: That's right. So I'm proud of the fact. . .

NM: Yes, that you did all right, so be proud of that.

SD: I recently returned from England and I went back to my old school and met the headmaster there and I went through all the classrooms again and I told him where I used to sit, in that desk over there. . . the desks and everything are still the same. 1959 to now, how many years is that, they haven't changed a bit. So it was very, very interesting. So I'm not ashamed of my education.

#067 NM: Onassis??? I think, quit school when he was 8 years old.

SD: I keep going back to my brother Maynard, who has been a most, I must say, influential person and at age 8, now you can erase all this later if you want. . . at age 8 he ran away from home and was found working in the cotton mills in Lancashire.

NM: So he was very much his own person.

SD: At 12 he ran away again and was found in London. That's 200 miles away from Liverpool.

NM: Which is a long way, especially in England.

SD: Yes. And they brought him back. at age 15 he was a cabin boy on the Blue Funnel Line ships, plying between South Africa, even into China, Japan and he became a wireless watcher, that's at 15. At age 18 he was selling real estate in Wales. And in the times that I had seen him in between, he spent very little time at home, as you can understand, so his education was very, very limited. And yet today, after all those he is living in Spokane and has the Empire Development Company. The company have wells in Montana, they have silver claims and uranium claims and he is still his own boss. He has never worked, except for that small time when he first came to Canada and worked at the bank and for the implement company, he became his own boss. And there again without any formal education. I tell this to people and they say, I can't believe that of any man. So I told my daughter this one time and she remembered and she had occasion to write a composition at school and wrote about it and her teacher said to her, that could apply to a living person. She said, it is, that's my uncle. I was a great admirer of Bing Crosby and I always wanted to meet him. In fact, once or twice, my wife said, you were crazy last night, you had a crazy dream, you were sitting up in bed and you were shaking hands saying hello Bing, how are you. So it must have been an obsession with me. So I did see him once and that was in the parade downtown Calgary. That was the only time I saw Bing Crosby.

#096 NM: He was a good friend of Frank McMahon.

SD: Yes. That's right and I think he was here that time at McMahon's or . . .oh, there was somebody else. . . . Anyway, as I say I always admired Bing Crosby and I have lot so f his records now and I have tapes and when he passed away it was a sad day for me. So I sent a letter of condolence to Mrs. Crosby and I did receive a letter from her, thanking me and she enclosed a card and there was a poem on the card and I have used this poem myself. It says,

It's been a joy, I can't deny,
 Though folks may think I took things lightly,
 But man and boy, I looked on high
 And never failed to thank him nightly.
 I can't forget the friends I've met,
 The things I've done, it's been great fun.
 As for me, I have no doubt,
 That's what life is all about.

I think that's how it goes, I'm sure that's it. I have hundreds of other poems all up here.

NM: And do you use them?

SD: I do, when I go to these meetings I always end up with a poem of some sort. In fact, just recently I was at a meeting, not an official meeting, I just went there as a visitor and I said, well I have nothing to say tonight and they said, oh come on, we must have poem from you. How I find them are through books, there's the ideal scrap books and I have greeting cards that are sent to me. I had a lot of them when I was in the hospital and they have verses on the front by John Gilbert or from Helen Steiner Rice. So I've been asked, why don't I put them all together in a book and I think I will as a winter project. I think I'll start because they always look for it. Tonight I'm going to a meeting and I know they'll

ask for one tonight and it's a birthday meeting so I can pick one out. I usually look through my old book first just to. . . .

#123 NM: You must have a very good memory.

SD: Lots of people seem to think I have. My daughter says, dad I don't know how you do it. I took my daughter to England with me and we went through the school and the church, met lots of my old friends and looking at photographs and I would say, that's so and so, that's so and so and she would say, dad you've got a fantastic memory.

NM: Mr. Davies, I have really enjoyed interviewing you. Thank you very much.

SD: Well, I have enjoyed this immensely and I don't know whether I can help you in any other way or mention people or get in touch with people. If you can use me at any time, I've got lots of time to come back.

NM: Thanks again.