

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Ed Fulmer - CSEG Presidency

INTERVIEWER: David Finch

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DF: Today is the 27th day of March, in the year 2000 and we are with Mr. Ed Fulmer at the offices of the Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists in Calgary. My name is David Finch. For this interview we will be talking specifically about the Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists and how you came to be associated with them .when did you first hear about the CSEG?

EF: Well, it was formed in 1949 by a very mixed bag of people working in Calgary, some that were just in town briefly, contractors, geophysicists, geologists, so really the first I heard of it was about that time. It was in June of >49 that word came out that they were hoping to form a society and they had called a get together at the Palliser. So those of us who were in town, I just happened to be in town at that time, fortunately, and some from our company and other companies, we went. There were about 64 of us showed up for that evening meeting, it wasn't a dinner meeting, we just got together after dinner. There=s a photograph in your book of that gang. Most of the people were identified, some of them we still don=t know, they were probably in town for a business trip of something. Anyhow everybody agreed that we should form a society and we chose. . I don=t recall how we chose the leadership. I don=t remember a ballot or anything, they were probably nominated and acclaimed. So it was my boss, the head of California Standard at the time, John Galloway, became President. He was a geologist and more of a manager, laterally. Lindy Richards, who at that time was Chief Geophysicist of Hudson Bay Oil and Gas became the Secretary, I think, and Charlie Moore, who was the Canadian Manager for Geophysical Service became the Treasurer. Unfortunately they=ve all since passed away but they were the founding group and got us off to a resounding start. I must say I don=t think the Society has ever looked back from there. It grew steadily, not necessarily steadily in the sense of getting bigger every year, there were ups and downs. We had financial problems occasionally. We started to branch off, it would be about >53, we started the Doodlebug Golf Tournament, which had become a very large part of the social side of the Society, plus the Curling Bonspeil and a few other events. So it=s always been a pretty cohesive group of people in the Society, probably more so than in the CSPG. Certainly in the earlier years of our society many of the people in the group were former or active field personnel. They had been there and done that, they were quite capable, they managed crews in the field and fixed machinery and whatever. So if you wanted something done, you got a couple of geophysicists, okay you=re going to do this, okay, you=d come back when it was all done and it was always done well. In terms of setting up conventions and what not. In 1963 I was the Vice-President, my major job was

getting speakers, I don't remember how many we had that year, but the one that stands out was Harold Urey, who was a Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, based in the States. I don't recall how I managed to get him to come up as a speaker. My father knew him, they were both in the chemistry business, but I don't think I went through that route. Anyhow, Dr. Urey was happy to come up and he gave us a nice speech and we gave him the white hat treatment, took him down, to introduce him to the mayor, took him up to one of the TV stations for an interview. He was quite impressed with the whole thing, we had a dinner for him.

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#053 That was in >63 if I recall and in >65. . . a couple of years prior to that I got involved with the Doodlebug Golf Committee, in >65 I was the Chairman. That was quite an experience, 176 golfers, took up the whole Banff Springs Golf Course, naturally. It was always held in September and the first 10 years of that tournament the weather in September was beautiful, 3 days of gorgeous golfing weather. I think the second 10 years was a bit the reverse. I know in my year the first day we woke up and the golf course was covered in snow. So we convened a very hurried meeting of the executive and decided what we would do, we'd start the next day, instead of having 3, 18 hole rounds, the second day we would have 2, 9 hole rounds to break the thing down. And it worked out. That happened a number of other times. There again, you're dealing with a bunch of geophysicists and they go with the flow. But we used to laugh, in the first 10 year cycle, the Oilman=s had their tournament at the Banff Springs every fall and they always got the prime time of August, because they had the money and so on. We got September because that=s when the hotel was gradually shutting down, they didn't stay open during the winter at that time. And invariably the weather in August would be terrible and the weather in September for we doodlebugs would be great. So we kind of enjoyed that. I haven't been to the tournament in recent years but it=s still carrying on very well I understand and it won't be too long before they have their 50th. It started in >53, so 2003 will be their 50th anniversary. So back to the CSEG, I became President in >67, which was Confederation year and we tried to do a few things that maybe would tie in with that but as I think perhaps you were going to mention, we did start the luncheon meetings that year, which became the general practice after that, except for the special invited speakers. They would be up at one of the bigger halls in town, usually up on the hill there at the Jubilee. That was before we had the Convention Centre downtown. We tried to have an annual public lecture, which was open to the public. It drew a lot of high school kids and university people, they were always quite successful. Another thing we did in >67 was to award honorary membership to Dr. J. Tuzo Wilson, who was professor, head of the Geophysics Department at the University of Toronto. He had arrived there after the war, just after I left, so I never had him as a professor but it was my pleasure to present the award to him at a dinner meeting at the Palliser. In fact, it was a joint meeting of the CSPG and the CSEG. That was rather interesting too, because that year was the first time in the history of the two societies that the Geophysical Society was headed by a geologist, namely me, and the Geological Society was headed by a geophysicist, Ernie Pallister. Prior to that the geologists and geophysicists kind of kept apart, since the early days

they've come to realize that the two businesses work beautifully together, they need each other. But that probably helped a little bit to integrate the two, having that cross fertilization of geologists and geophysicists. Anyhow that was a highlight of my year. Another highlight, I consider a highlight, was the SEG was starting to plan at that time for their first every convention, to be held in '69, in Calgary. So they contacted me to see if . . . we had conversations about the feasibility of it and so forth and we agreed that yes, that would be a good idea. I thought that we could handle it quite well with the people we had up here. Well, could I line up a General Sherman from our local group, I said, certainly. So I really didn't have to think about it, I called Pete Savage and asked him if he would volunteer for it. He agreed and did a great job. I recall when he addressed the opening session he used a little bit of French, because he had grown up in Quebec. That was back in the days when people were first starting to think about integrating the two languages, making them official, so that was a nice touch. But Peter did an excellent job and the convention went off very well, subsequently I think they've been held here several times since. It's happening here this fall, I think, isn't it. Yes, that will be the third time, I believe that they've held it here in Calgary and they'll certainly have the accommodations for it and the people. So that was '67. What else did we do that year. . . .?

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#122 DF: The public lecture that year was Dr. A. T. Prince, Water, Our Vital Natural Resource, do you remember anything about that lecture?

EF: No, I don't. There again, Jack Robinson, the Vice-President, was the man who made the arrangements. It was held in due course, but no, I can't say I recall much about it. I'm sure it was an interesting lecture.

DF: What happened down at Suffield, that next year?

EF: That was the big blast that the Department of National Defense organized, I believe partly in conjunction with the Geological Survey of Canada as it was known at that time. And some coordination with the local geophysical industry. The explosion consisted of quite a few tons of dynamite. What the Defense Department's reason for it was, I'm not quite clear. It would be sequestered information I'm sure. But we did tie in with the geophysical industry here and set up a network of seismometers in and around and beyond the perimeter of the thing. My brother-in-law was a chemist down there at that time, working for the DND, so he managed to get us down, as part of the official party, inside the perimeter. So we took up a position just behind a low hill, looking down on the area where the detonation was to take place. It was quite a sight when it went off, the airwaves and the shock waves, all the prairie grass was just rolling along like out in the middle of the ocean. And then the . . . we saw the thing first and then the detonation noise came seconds afterward. I don't know how far away from ground zero we were but far enough to be safe, but it was quite a shockwave. And I assume that the government and the Geological Survey and the seismic industry got useful information from all that. Again, I am not privy to what came from it. Was there anything else in my notes there.

#150 DF: Sure. The membership rose from 635 to 679 during your year. Your Society was always a little bit smaller than some of the other ones, but can you talk about the kind of people who were members. It wasn't just supervisory people like you was it

EF: No. No, it was a great cross section, everything from so called, field hands on the contractors side, to lowly geophysicists in various companies, seismic contractor employees in town here, a smattering of geologists and supervisors. . . a great cross section of the industry, truly. Probably a much more pragmatic group than some of the other societies, which were more purely technical than our was. The CSPG for example, made up entirely of geologists, with probably a few geophysicists, but their interests in gathering together, at that time anyway, was purely scientific, technical. They were publishing a good journal at the time, we didn't get a decent journal until a few years later. But our little Society branched out into social things as well. They grew into quite successful operations, the Doodlebug Golf Tournament, the Bonspeil, several other. . there=s a ski spree each year. So it brings the members of the Society and their spouses together in a very convivial way and I think more people know each other within the CSEG than is probably true in some of the other societies.

#172 DF: Do you remember about the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Doodlebug Tournament, were you in town at that time.

EF: No. I was still in Brandon at that time. I think it was >53 when it was started. It was a very small operation the first year or two. I came back to Calgary in >55 and I went to my first Doodlebug that fall, so that would be about the 3rd year that it had been in progress. By that time it was pretty well organized. We all used to stay. .some stayed in the various motels, some of us stayed in the Banff Springs, I think you could stay in the Banff Springs at that time, for \$25 a night. A little different now. About the time that I became Chairman, in >65. . I=m digressing a bit here. . but the hotel started to insist upon all the participants staying in the hotel itself, because we were tying up the golf course for those 3 or 4 days, so they felt it only fair that they get the housing business. So that was a bit of a climactic period for awhile because staying at the hotel was a little more expensive than staying downtown in some of the motels but we all gradually adjusted to it. It made it better for the festivities, we had cocktail parties and the presentation dinner on the final night, so everybody was gathered in the same place, it made it a lot more convenient, they didn't have to drive back and forth after a few drinks.

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#191 DF: Any stories about the Doodlebug, what kinds of things happened out on the golf course, that might be of interest?

EF: Oh, some of the fellows claimed that the reason they scored poorly on one or two of the holes was that a crow came along and picked up their golf ball and flew off with it. I think a couple claimed that black bears had done the same thing with their golf ball but it was probably a bit apocryphal, I=m not sure how true it was. The weather of course, was always a subject of great conversation. I remember several years, it was so cold, the ball

washers, at that time it was the ones where you=d put your ball in and turn a little handle, they had a little reservoir of water, the ball washers froze, you couldn=t wash your golf balls. Play was pretty slow, you can imagine when the whole course was filled up with doodlebuggers and refreshment stands here and there that it took quite . . .it usually took about 5 or 6 hours to play the thing. You spend a lot of time just sitting waiting for your turn to tee off, which was fine in good weather, particularly if you=re at one of the holes where there was a refreshment booth, but in cold weather it wasn=t very pleasant.

DF: What kind of refreshments were available and who staffed those booths?

EF: The refreshments were courtesy of various contractors and supply companies and the booths would be staffed by their personnel and the refreshments were, shall we say, stimulative, or non-stimulative, whatever your choice was.

DF: Any special drinks that were made in honour of the events or not?

EF: I can=t recall any, that may have come along in more recent years. I haven=t heard of a doodlebug specials. The flights were all named according to different positions on seismic crews basically, driller, surveyor, jug hustler, observer, party chief, party manager. At the height of the big years. . . 176 golfers I think, was the maximum we could accommodate and that took a fair amount of arranging to get everybody into their proper flights, according to their abilities and work through the play off system. But it=s a well organized tournament.

#222 DF: The annual family picnic and barbecue was fairly new when you were President, can you tell us about that, reasons for doing it and so on?

EF: I think Hal Godwin was involved with that and Percy Smith, who ran Seismic Service and Supply was a prime mover behind it. The first several were held out at that area on the way to Banff, it=s now all covered up with housing but it was a recreational area at one time with outdoor-indoor pool and. . .

DF: Happy Valley?

EF: Happy Valley. So we held them out there for several years. They were quite successful. A chance for the kiddies to get out. At that time most of us had young children, so it was a great outing for them. Whether it still goes on or not, I don=t know. Back to the inaugural meeting, in >49, a little sidelight there, after we had the formal meeting and chose the executive and posed for that photograph, which is in your book, we adjourned to a couple of suites upstairs. Several of the drilling contractors and others had laid in a little supply of potables, so we had a pretty good bull session, standing around, sipping, talking, telling lies and so forth. I guess it got a little noisy as you would expect from 50 or 60 people gathered together in fairly small confines. At one point there was a rap on the door and I happened to go to it and it was the house detective. Through a chain of circumstances that I won=t go into, I happened to know the guy. I managed to persuade him that this was sort of akin to a church meeting and nothing untoward would happen. We were just having a good bull session here. So he went away happy and the party finally wound down and we all went home in our various stages of happiness. So it was a nice inaugural meeting, lots of bonhomie, I guess is the word and it got the thing off to a fine start and hasn=t looked back since. Any other highlights from that, I can=t think of any.

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#257 DF: Any other stories?

EF: There are lots of stories about happenings in the field of course. Any one in the Society would have their own particular tales.

DF: Dick Baillie chaired the Doodlebug the year you were President, any stories about him?

EF: No. As a matter of fact, it was my pleasure, having been the Chairman in >65, it was my chore to line up a replacement for 2 years later. So Dick and I had worked together quite a bit, had socialized, we were badminton partners and so on, and had worked together in the field. I had a high opinion of his ability to handle such a thing so I asked him if he would take it over and he did and did an excellent job. It's always satisfying when someone that you pressure into taking a job carries through and does the job. That was the case with Pete Savage. Anyhow my particular executive was. . . Tommy Sommerville was the Secretary, he's had health problems for years and years, I'm not even sure if he's still alive. Jack Robinson, who was with Century Geophysical at that time, was the Vice-President and Program Director. He has since moved to Edmonton, as far as I know, he's still alive and then Gene Cook, who at that time was Chief Geophysicist for Home Oil. And I haven't heard anything from him or of him for many years, so I assume that he is no longer with us. Of that initial 64 people in that photograph, at the inaugural meeting, I think there are just 3 of us left, who were at that meeting and became Presidents of the Society. Wes Rabey is one, he spends most of his time in England, I haven't seen him for years and Jim Kidder is the other. He was an American up here for many years and has long since moved back to the States but he's still with us. There are quite a few of the rank and file in that group that are no longer with us, unfortunately. But we are getting a little long in the tooth, that was 50-51 years. In fact, I got a little miffed at the Society, instead of recognizing the 50th anniversary in 1998, which would have been the 50 year, they held off until this year. Apparently they are tying it in with the SEG. I thought it was worth a little special occasion of its own two years ago, but what the heck.

DF: On behalf of the CSEG and the Petroleum Industry Oral History Project, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to meet with us. Thank you very much.

EF: My pleasure.