

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Bill McKellar

INTERVIEWER: Aubrey Kerr

DATE: September 1985

AK: I'm Aubrey Kerr, this is Wednesday, September 25th, 1985 and I am in the home of Bill and Beulah McKellar and their address is #2 Chalet Drive in Shuswap Lake Estates and their postal address is Blind Bay and Bill's phone number is 675-4357. Bill, it's a pleasure to be here with you and I'd like you to start off by telling me where you were born and how you got out to Alberta?

BM: Well, it's a pleasure to have you here Aubrey. I was born in Ontario on December 29th, 1910. I came awful close to being a New Year's baby. Dad was a farmer and he stayed on the farm until I was 4 years old. I can still remember that farm, I can still remember the auction sale that he had when he sold the stuff, particularly when he sold our little dog. But we moved into Glencoe and Dad come west and bought himself a quarter section. He had a lot of relations out where he bought the farm, which was north of Medicine Hat, or on the ??? - Bassano line, at Jenner, halfway. We moved out there in 1917 and we stayed out there until '25. I lost my mother down there, she's buried at Jenner. Dad went to Turner Valley and he bought a section of land, one of the old Lineham??? ranches.

AK: And you were saying that your dad went to work on the old Royalite #4 wild well, when it was blowing, is that correct?

BM: Yes, he did, he worked on the Royalite, doing team work.

AK: That's right, he brought the boilers out from Calgary.

BM: No, he didn't bring them out, Sam Johnson brought them out. He was just doing team work around the rig. At that time you didn't have these little ??? trucks and stuff to move stuff. They weren't invented yet, they did things the hard way.

AK: But this was your dad's only exposure to the oil patch, he went back farming?

BM: No, it wasn't, Dad worked all the time he was in Turner Valley, he worked team work for the Royalite. He did a lot of team work, he had his black team, he hauled a lot of gravel. In fact, Dad helped haul all the gravel to put the basement's in for Society Heights, up on top of the hill in Turner Valley.

AK: Right. Snob Hill, is that what they called it?

BM: Yes, Snob Hill.

#030 AK: Yes, that's where the Royalite hands were. Okay, you went to the John Lineham School and at Easter holidays in 1927 you had a brief exposure to rig building with Clarence Mann.

BM: Yes, I worked for Clarence Mann for. . I went there to work for Easter Holidays and I was getting \$7.50 a day and my dad was only getting \$6 a day for himself and his team. And he couldn't see me quitting if I could make money like that, so I stayed on for 6 weeks, which I didn't like because I wanted to go to school. Sam Coultis come along and he

knew all us kids and he asked to see me. So Clarence said, I'll call him down and he said, no, let him finish the derrick. And he come down and we talked for awhile and I said, this is sure heavy work, I don't know, I weighed 145-150 lb. when I started working here, I was a husky kid and I'm down to less than 130 lb. Sam said, you know, you're not even under compensation here, Royalite would have to pay any compensation if you were to get hurt, plus we could be in trouble if it was a serious accident, you lose an arm or something, we'd really be in for it. I said, it isn't my idea anyhow, I wanted to go to school. So this was on a Wednesday and when I went home that night Dad was home, and he said, tomorrow you go to school. So I never did know what Sam said to Dad.

AK: No. But you were saying that you had dexterity in both your right and left hands, you were able to work with both right and left hands.

BM: Yes, I could do hatches??? with either right or left hand.

AK: And you weren't afraid of heights, you're still not afraid of heights, is that right?

BM: No. That's right.

AK: Good. Well then, you were a natural for rig building.

BM: Right.

AK: Right, okay. So then you switched back and forth after that, you went to school and your marks weren't all that good because of spelling and your dad decided that you'd have to do something else, is that right?

BM: That's right. He figured that I had enough schooling. . . .

AK: A bit of falling out there I guess, and you went back to Jenner in '28 and you put a crop in, is that right?

BM: Yes.

AK: And then it was a pretty poor year and then you spent the dirty 30's, the first part of the dirty 30's at Brooks with a cousin.

BM: Cousin, my dad's cousin.

AK: Yes, and that was a farm too was it?

BM: That was a farm, it was a 400 acre irrigation farm.

AK: And what did you grow on that?

BM: We grew everything on that.

AK: They would be pretty good cash crops wouldn't they?

BM: Yes, we grew a cash crop there, we used grow peas and they were worth 4 cents a pound for seed peas and the same for beans. And the beans didn't yield so good but the peas would go up as high as 45 bushels per acre and there's 48 lb. of peas to the bushel. So they were making awful good money.

#062 AK: And that's when they were shelled.

BM: That's after they were hand picked.

AK: And you had to hand shell them?

BM: No, they. . .

AK: You had a sheller.

BM: Oh yes, they were faster than an ordinary thrashing machine.

AK: Okay. So then you went back to the valley in '33 and there were some problems there about ownership of land but we'll skip that. You wanted to make something happen, so what was that that you wanted to make happen there in '33?

BM: Well I went and . . and this was just for board too now, no money changed hands, I went to work for Jack Littlefield, to look after his cap crop while he went visiting his brothers at Stavely. He figured on being gone only 2 weeks but he was gone over 6 weeks and he come back and he told me, there's 300 oat bundles a day to go out to these calves, that's all there was to it and that took about an hour. So I said, what am I supposed to do with the rest of my time, I can't just sit around and he said, you can cut that grove of poplar trees out there for fire wood. He came back in 6 weeks time, I had it all cut, so he didn't know what to do with it.

AK: And you were selling that for \$10 a load I believe.

BM: And I sold that for \$10 a load and I got over \$200 worth of wood out of it.

AK: Good. Then in '34 you did get a job, was this with Clarence Mann or Shorty Mann, tearing down derricks?

BM: In the fall of '34, this was Shorty Mann. Beulah and I got married on September 15th and everybody said, those two kids will starve to death and we've never looked back. And we haven't gone hungry either. We tore down 72 derricks for Royalite, wooden derricks, 72 wooden derricks that were standing around the valley there that had been up plenty long enough. And we took them all down and we trimmed the nail holes off of the ends of them and piled them in the yard there.

AK: Now were these derricks pulled down because the wells were finished?

BM: The wells were finished. And also the derricks, when they stand so long, a wooden derrick, these were all 136' leg derricks, when they stand so long they can blow down and then you lose the whole thing.

AK: Well now, what would cause them to weaken, the nail holes get too big?

BM: No, they just . .

AK: Or they warp?

BM: Yes. And they rot a little bit and stuff like that. When they set that long weather gets into them and gets around the nails and they weather.

AK: But I thought you used real good B.C. fir?

BM: Well fir will rot the same as anything else, if it gets a bunch of mud and all those derricks at that time had mud in them because they blew in right up through the derrick. And there's mud lodged in every little crevice there was on them.

#093 AK: So you'd go in there with some kind of equipment, like big hammers or . . ?

BM: No, we didn't. We called it a matic???, it's a grub hoe cut down. It's got the same handle as a pick and we would drive that in between the two planks and just pry it.

AK: Just keep prying the timbers.

BM: Pry it off and they come off pretty fast.

AK: And you'd work from the crown down, water table.

BM: Yes.

AK: And then you'd stack all this lumber up?

BM: It was all stacked and piled so it would keep down in Royalite's yard.

AK: Did you use any of it again.

BM: We had it all used, by the time, they used all that lumber we tore down, this was the ones that they built the derricks right up to '38 with.

AK: But you'd drive the spikes in different places?

BM: They'd cut. . on the ends of the girds and braces, the nail holes were cut right out. We always used new lumber for the legs, for the centre leg. And that was a 2 x 10 and a 2 x 12, made like a pig trough, or a V and that was the centre. But we would use the same doublers on the outside but we made sure we didn't drive the nails in the same hole.

AK: Well, as I said a minute ago, Bill, you and I have got to sit down, maybe the next trip I come out here when I get this other project finished, we'll have to sit down and spend maybe half a day just going through the technique of how rigs were built, with diagrams and everything else because I think this is very important.

BM: It would be a pleasure Aubrey.

AK: Yes, thank you. Now, you started roughnecking around about '37 did you, or '38?

BM: '37.

AK: And you went to work for Snyder and Head?

BM: Right.

AK: And you were in the dumb corner, I guess, to start with, rotary?

BM: No, I wasn't in the dumb corner, they put me a pipe racker. I never did work in the dumb corner.

AK: Well, that's good, you were promoted right from the beginning. So you spent up till about 1938 with Snyder and Head. Was Mel Pope working for them then?

BM: Yes.

AK: Mel was drilling I believe, wasn't he?

BM: Yes.

AK: Was that at the time there was that terrible accident and there was about 3 of them got asphyxiated and Mel escaped or was that some other time?

BM: No, I think that was the time. Another thing I might add, I worked for Charlie Visser out on a well west of High River and that was 5 1/2" heavy duty plus joint pipe.

AK: Drill pipe.

BM: Drill pipe.

AK: No boxes on it?

BM: No boxes on them, you screwed the plug into the top of it that would take the elevators, which was a 4 1/2" elevator.

AK: And you'd take the plug out every time.

BM: And you'd send so many up and then you went up . . .

AK: You'd pull doubles or triples.

BM: They were triples. And ??? drill collars.

AK: Well, what in the world would that be?

BM: Well, they'd had a few blow outs and it was a wild cat and Royalite had this drill pipe so they were being quite cautious about blow outs and this pipe you could lock on it more than you could with any. . because it was flush you see, and it come right straight through.

#132 AK: It wouldn't be very good for fishing with though, you couldn't fish them.

BM: Well, you'd have to take them with a tie???, now you could go out with an overshot. The overshot would grab them, it had like a jaw on it.

AK: Is that right?

BM: Oh yes. You had fishing tools that would fish them out.

AK: Well, anyway, that was for a short period with Charlie.

BM: Yes, I was there 3 weeks.

AK: So you got to know Charlie, you got to know Woodrow Wilson, and you got to know Sam Coultis, all the old veterans.

BM: Tom Visser.

AK: Tom?

BM: That's Charlie's dad. He was the original rig builder for Haslip??? Haslip bought Tom Visser out.

AK: Is that right. Well, that's interesting, I didn't know about that. Okay, well then, what ??? you to go to work for Brown, Moyer and Brown? I might say in here on the tape that Brown, Moyer and Brown was the operating company for R. A. Brown Sr. and he had two sons, Bobby and Ronnie. But you were saying that it was Bob Brown Sr. that called the shots.

BM: He did at that time.

AK: Right. And they had drilled this so called, discovery well, in '36. And they were drilling some oil wells down flank there and you went to work as a production hand.

BM: Yes.

AK: What were your duties there?

BM: To see that the well was producing steady. They had to show the amount of gas, we had the meters, it had to go through the meter diaphragm, show what gas there was. And of course, it had to be figured out on a gas-oil ration. It kept getting, the gas ratio was getting higher than the oil ratio and kept going that way and they kept acidizing the wells, they had them acidized to depth and then they would blow them in again and get all the oil. Of course, they'd acidize, they would put a lot of oil in to spot the acid and the consequences was that they were just bleeding the field.

AK: That's right. Of course, the field, as I said, had been ruined already because of the gas that was withdrawn from the top of the reservoir. There were two people there that you mentioned, Jack Hamilton, now retired, and he was kind of an office clerk?

BM: Well, he worked in the office, I don't know what . . . he pretty well run the office.

AK: Oh he was office manager, right. And then what did Ollie Nevra??? do?

BM: He was field superintendent for Brown, Moyer and Brown.

AK: He was. But he went over to work for Home.

BM: That was when Home took over Brown, Moyer and Brown. He didn't go work for Home until Home took over Brown, Moyer and Brown.

AK: In what year?

BM: I wouldn't know, I wasn't working there then. It wasn't too many years after, it had to have been around '42, '43.

#170 AK: Yes, because you see, ultimately R. A. Brown Jr. took over Home Oil in '51. But that was a different deal.

BM: Yes. That was a different deal. I don't know what the deal would be there.

AK: No. Well, he just seized control and put Jim Lowry out.

BM: Yes.

AK: Did you ever have much to do with Jim Lowry?

BM: Not too much.

AK: No. He ran his own show. Well then you worked up till about 1940 on this production.

Then how did you get in touch with Ralph Benning and Dominion Drilling?

BM: Gene Denton was looking for. . Ralph was trying to get as many experienced men as he could to work down at Patricia. This was the first starting of power rigs in the country. There was hardly any power rigs in the country, I don't think there was about 3 others drilling with the power rigs. Everybody had been using steam. Gene saw me down at Longview and wanted to know if I wanted to go down there, he said, you've been on production long enough, I think you should get on something else where you're going to get somewhere. He said, production isn't going to last too long. So I went down and went to work for Ralph. That's when I started to work for Ralph Benning for Dominion Drilling.

AK: This was out at Patricia, east of Bassano. And all those holes from there on, maybe till about '41 or '42, were drilled for Chevron or Cal Standard. And Johnny Grey was the well site geologist.

BM: Most of the time.

AK: Yes. Do you know who the engineer was with Cal Standard?

BM: Pat Patton.

AK: Pat Patton, I see. I don't know that name. Anyway, ultimately, you boarded up the rig and then they dismantled it and shipped it back to the States. And Ralph went with it and it wasn't until about '48, '49 that Ralph returned and got hooked up with Cody.

BM: Yes. And Gene Denton was still alive then too.

AK: Oh yes. Gene, but he died in about '48, '49 there somewhere. Okay, in '41 you ran into Cody and GP??? down at Taber, is that right?

BM: Yes, I was drilling down there for them?

AK: For GP?

BM: Yes.

AK: Do you remember who you were drilling for down there, was it Chevron?

BM: No, I don't.

AK: Was that a steam rig or was that a . . .?

BM: Steam rig. Oil fired.

#207 AK: Yes. And I think there was a hole drilled there for a promoter but. . you see, down there Imperial had started a drilling campaign about '42, '43, and they drilled a bunch of holes. So then you drilled a hole east of Cardston was it?

BM: East of Cardston.

AK: For Chevron.

BM: For Chevron. It was a test well all the way, so there was a lot of coring done.

AK: And you can't remember the name of that location but that's all right. '42 you hooked in with Commonwealth back at the valley and this was the time when War Time Oils was wanting to drill some holes and . .

BM: They were all drilled for Bill Harron.

AK: Yes, well Bill ran Okalta. That was Bill Sr., the old man.

BM: No, Junior.

AK: Yes, well, Harold was off to the war I guess, wasn't it? Harold joined up and Bill. .

BM: Yes. Bill stayed home.

AK: Yes. But Lloyd was pushing tools there.

BM: No, he was the field superintendent.
AK: Oh yes. Who was pushing tools on your rig.
BM: Well, he did the pushing too.
AK: As well, yes. But there were other companies involved in there but Okalta certainly was one of the ones. But my recollection is that none of those wells were very good, they were down on the west flank and they were pretty poor wells.
BM: They were wells but that's about all you can say for them.
AK: They weren't really any. . .
BM: Not big wells, not like Turner Valley, ???.
AK: No. So okay, in the fall of '45 you went to work for a chap named Bill Ferris.
BM: Bill Ferris, yes.
AK: What was the name of his company?
BM: Well, that was just Bill Ferris, that's all it was.
AK: Oh I see, he had one rig.
BM: One steam rig, yes.
AK: And you were drilling at Pekisko.
BM: For Federated Co-op.
AK: Federated Co-op, right for the Saskatchewan. . . .
BM: Yes. And it was drilled to approximately 16,000'.
AK: And of course, it was a dry hole, unfortunately.
BM: I think if they had the technology that they know today, I think there was a well.
AK: Well, they might have . . . was it pretty . . . ?
BM: There was ??? there, it was just too deep and too tight.

#243 AK: Do you know who the well site man was on that?
BM: No, I don't.
AK: Okay. In the spring of '46 you returned to farming for awhile.
BM: Yes, for 18 months.
AK: And where was this quarter section?
BM: It was west of Red Deer, in a little town called Condor.
AK: That's not far from Bentley is it?
BM: It's quite a ways from Bentley, it's 16 or 17 miles east of Rocky Mountain House.
AK: Oh yes, right. And you did fairly well there, you made \$100 a month clear.
BM: In 18 months, yes.
AK: And then what did you do, sell?
BM: We didn't sell the farm, we just sold all the equipment and stock and everything and I went back to the oil fields until '52, the spring of '52 we come back.
AK: From that time, from the time you left, you still owned the quarter.
BM: Yes.
AK: And you rented it out did you?
BM: We rented it but there was only 72 acres clear on it, so we cleared the rest of it. Got the big equipment in and cleared it.
AK: I see. Well, what impelled you to leave farming and go back to the oil patch, was it because Leduc had been discovered?
BM: Yes. It kind of was in my blood I guess a little bit. But we needed extra money and it was

costly to clear the land, so I worked up at Leduc, why we had enough money, we could afford to go ahead and clear it. So that we had something to come back to.

- AK: Right. So when you got to Leduc, who did you start looking to see if you could get a job?
- BM: Well, I walked into a restaurant there to get dinner, got in there, the bus landed us in there about 11:00 and we walked down to the cafe and we walked in there and everybody I saw, I knew. Turner Valley was in Leduc and about the second person I saw was Cody Spencer. He said, what are you doing, I said, I'm up here looking for work. Golly he said, I wish you were here yesterday, I just hired some green drillers and put them to work, I just can't go out and let them go, he said, I'd like you to go to work for me. Well, I said, I'll look around. Okay, he said, you look around but if you don't find anything, I'd like to see you tomorrow morning. So we got back to our room that night, there was a note under the door and Cody said, it doesn't matter what time you come in, come and knock on my door and come in and see me. So I went in and seen him, he said, what kind of luck did you have. I said, everybody seems to be pretty well full up right now, there's lots of prospects but everything is pretty well full up. Well he said, I've been thinking about a lease crew set up, I'll give you drillers wages to run it. He said, there's 8 men out there and they don't know what they're doing. So I said, okay, I'll take it and I've got another boy with me, what about him. He said, you're going to have to do your own hiring and firing, if you want to put him. .

#292 AK: That was your son was it?

- BM: No. This was just a friend, no relation to me at all. So the next morning I went down to the office to go to work and Cody was there and he said, I'll do better than that, I'll give you tool push wages, then you'll stay with me. So I went to work, I went out there and I could see that the boys definitely, they didn't know what they were doing. The ground was froze about 3' deep and they'd put a fire on and dug it down, but they didn't trim it out and that so they could put the cribbing in it and the next morning it was froze solid.
- AK: Okay. Now Leduc in those days consisted of a lot of makeshift accommodations but General Petroleums had a yard and in this yard was their equipment and also there was bunkhouses. Over to one side was Al and Ann Wright's trailer or skid shack and Jimmy Irwin was in there and out of there from time, but Al Wright was the head superintendent. Under him or beside him was Jimmy Irwin and then Bill Cummer??? was the office manager. But if Cody wanted to do something he just cut across all the lines of authority.
- BM: He'd just go across all lines of authority and do what he thought he wanted to do.
- AK: Right. So when he came at you and offered you tool pushers salary, he hadn't been running around and asking Al, do you think it's all right.
- BM: Well, Al wasn't the field superintendent then. Cody was the field superintendent, that's when what's his name, Gene Denton was the President then.
- AK: Oh I see.
- BM: And Cody was the field superintendent then. It was after that. .
- AK: But Al was set up shortly after.
- BM: Al was pushing tools then. He was pushing tools for one of the rigs for General Petroleum.
- AK: That one out at #14?
- BM: Something like that.

AK: The Woodbend side.
BM: Yes.
AK: Anyway, but the point is that was the set-up. But Al did become field superintendent.
BM: Yes, within about 6 months after I went there.
AK: So your job was to go out and prepare the lease for the derrick and not build the derrick though.
BM: Not build the derrick, we didn't built the derrick.
AK: But you'd pour the footings for the derrick?
BM: We didn't pour footings, we put in wooden mats, wooden footings.
AK: And then they'd have to be perfectly level.
BM: Perfectly level.
AK: And then the rig building crew would come in. And that was the Kerber Brothers?
BM: Kerber Brothers. Of course, when you go to build for a wooden derrick, or a steel derrick, conventional, the footings don't have to be necessarily level because they use blocking to bring it up to the level they want.
AK: Right. But these were conventional derricks. Okay, we're going to have to turn the tape over here.

Tape 1 Side 2

AK: You were describing how the rig maps had to be prepared and these were steel derricks and they were built by people like Hislop and Matlock and that crowd.
BM: Right.
AK: So apart from getting the lease ready, what else did you have to do to the lease, I mean getting the derrick maps ready, what else did you have to do?
BM: Well, we put the sodders in and then at that time they were using suction pits, so we cribbed the suction pits. We started in the fall of '48, we used the first plywood to box the derricks in. Within a year's time you never saw any aluminum or anything like that around, they used all plywood. So our job was to box the derricks in.
AK: So those first two holes that Atlantic drilled, Atlantic 1 and 2, they were boxed in by . .
BM: Hassel Construction.
AK: Yes. Now, do you recall anything about the first two holes and anything that was out of the ordinary? Those two holes that were drilled, I think they were drilled by different rigs.
BM: Yes, that was before we went there. Atlantic 3 was the first well, the others were drilled when I went there.
AK: Oh, so Atlantic 3 was spudded in January of '48.
BM: '48, January '48.
AK: Now did you have anything to do with the choice of the location?
BM: Nothing other than to just make the location on it.
AK: Yes, but you were saying something about it being on a height of land or. . .
BM: Yes, actually the well site was almost in a slough. We remarked about it at that time, all the farmland would drain to it, when we put the location in there.
AK: Did you move it?
BM: No, they wouldn't let us move it.
AK: So what did you do with the low spot?

BM: Well, we just levelled it off and then put the derrick on it.
AK: Now would you have a cat in there?
BM: We had a cat come in and scrape it. It wasn't hard to make it, and then we got some truckloads of gravel in and levelled it and put our footing on top of that.
AK: So when did you first learn about some problems at Atlantic 3? Or where were you when say, after about a . . . they were drilling on into February and March, you were working around the other parts of the field, getting leases ready.
BM: Oh yes. We were working steady, that's all we had, I had about 75 men working for me by this time.
AK: And they would just go from lease to lease?
BM: Lease to lease. There was quite a few of the rigs were steam rigs so we had to have 3 shifts running to keep the fires going because there was a water line and a gas line side by side and we had to have heaters to heat the water so it would continue, otherwise it would freeze up. So I had a crew doing that, that took 2 men to a shift, that was 8 men right there.

#033 AK: And they were just watching?
BM: Yes, just watch to see the fires didn't go out on these heaters.
AK: What were they, gas heaters?
BM: Gas heaters, with a gas line right along side of them.
AK: Well now, where did this water come from?
BM: From the North Saskatchewan River.
AK: Was this Hector's system?
BM: We were buying the water from Hector.
AK: Sammy Hector. And he'd brought the water up from the river.
BM: Yes, and he had a water sump or whatever you wanted to call it, reservoir, shipping all the locations of Atlantic #1.
AK: He had some tanks there?
BM: No, he just had a pit.
AK: Oh, he had a pit.
BM: He had a pit dug. There was a little slope to the land, he had a pit there and he had it full of water and the pumped into that and they got the water from that.
AK: But it wouldn't be hauled from there?
BM: No, it was pumped out of there. You couldn't haul enough water to keep a steam rig going anyway.
AK: No, you'd never, you'd have to have a constant supply. So that was your job also, to see that there was sufficient water for the boilers.
BM: See there was sufficient water. And then some of the wells, there was good water supply in for water wells there, so some of them had 2 and 3 water wells and pumps in them. And this was what the steam rigs got their water supplies from.
AK: Oh, without using Sammy's.
BM: We kind of got away from Sammy, shortly after I was there, they tried drilling some of these wells and found there was a good water supply, so our job was to keep the pumps going.
AK: All right. Now let's get back, can you remember when the first signs, I mean you were

very busy with other things but the first sign that there was something wrong at Atlantic #3.

BM: Well, when it blew out. That was the real first sign.

AK: Yes, now it blew out all of a sudden and the oil came shooting right up through the derrick.

BM: Oh yes.

#053 AK: Now you were saying that you had talked to Lyle Caspell and Lyle felt it wasn't such a big problem but you pointed out to him that there was oil actually running.

BM: Into the Saskatchewan River.

AK: It got down into the river and it was urgent that you try to capture this oil and there was this Sammy Hector's sump that you used to start with and then you moved other cats up there.

BM: And dug one up above us where we could drain the oil into it.

AK: Yes, and one right over in the northwest corner of the section, where the big trapment was. That was where the big dyke was.

BM: This was above Hector's sump ????. So we made a big one there.

AK: Yes, that's what I mean. And then you put a gauge in it.

BM: Well, we put a gauge in Hector's so we could get it checked to see how much of it was coming in there. Over 90,000 barrels a day, estimated then.

AK: It wouldn't be that much, no.

BM: It wouldn't be.

AK: No, that maximum they figure was about 15,000 barrels a day.

BM: Oh it was more than that. It was way more than that. I know we were pumping it out. Because we pumped it up to the tanks at #2 tank farm.

AK: That was Imperial's #2 tank farm?

BM: Yes. That was the one they were just. . .

AK: Or the one on the Atlantic tank farm?

BM: I don't remember if it was on Atlantic land. No, it wouldn't be, it would be on the other. . . across the fence from that. It must have been Imperial because Imperial was pumping oil to Niscue. And we pumped it to there and we put these gas pumps on there and run them 24 hours a day.

AK: I think I have pictures on that but let's just go ahead and what you had to do was lay 3" tubing in there. For what purpose was that 3" tubing?

BM: To pump the oil out.

AK: Out of the sumps, over on the other side of the road.

BM: No, we pumped it right straight up, right up to the quarter section.

AK: From the well you mean?

BM: Well, from the sump pit. But we weren't out on the road, we were out in the middle of the field.

AK: Yes, but the oil ran down to the northwest. .

BM: It run down to the corner of the road and it was running down the ditch.

AK: But what did you use the 3" tubing for?

BM: To lay a pipeline up to the Imperial tank farm.

#078 AK: Oh, up to the tank farm, okay, all right.
BM: We laid 2 lines, we laid 2 3" tubing lines up there.
AK: I guess that was all the tubular goods you could get your hands on.
BM: We just used anything we could get.
AK: Okay. And this was practically up to your ass in mud.
BM: Just about. By night it was higher than that.
AK: Yes. And you were wading around in dark and. . .
BM: Well, we worked 24 hours a day when we were trying to lay that pipeline, we never quit. We just went in there with lights, in fact, we even had a little light plant.
AK: It's a wonder you didn't start a fire with the light plant.
BM: Well, we were far enough away from the oil where we were doing this. This was up towards the top end.
AK: Was any of this pipe welded?
BM: No welding. All screw pipe.
AK: So you didn't have Lawrence Black of Jack Moore doing any welding?
BM: No.
AK: Okay, so then when you got that settled, what was the next step that you took?
BM: ??? keep these pumps going steady.
AK: Who hired these people?
BM: Well, Atlantic.
AK: Atlantic paid for them.
BM: Atlantic was paying for it, right.
AK: But wasn't Lyle hiring them?
BM: Well, Lyle never had anything. . no name on my cheque.
AK: No. And Lyle didn't hire my crew for you.
BM: No, I had my own crew.
AK: Yes. But you were instructed by Cody, were you?
BM: Right, I was instructed by Cody and . . .
AK: Cody got his instructions, maybe from McMahan or somebody.
BM: I don't know where he got them.
AK: No, okay. So what went on as these shot holes and everything else were spewing oil, you were just trying to keep ahead of it were you?
BM: That's all we were doing. And we weren't even doing that.
AK: No. When did you start to move into the well itself and put the well head on so that some of the oil would go over to, there was a tank farm over in Leduc consolidated, on the quarter to the east, you know.
BM: Yes.

#102 AK: Okay, Bill, now there's one other thing that we've got to get straightened out and you were a witness to it. You may recall that the depth of the hole was not deep enough to run the long spring without getting down below the gas-oil interface. The idea of the whole exercise was to try to get the whole deep enough so they could run casing. At several points there, Lloyd Stafford could have run his long string, he had regained circulation.
BM: Partially, yes.

AK: Well, he'd regained it pretty good and he could have run his long string but they wouldn't let him. Do you remember that?

BM: Yes.

AK: Do you remember why they didn't want him to run it?

BM: No.

AK: No. Well then, you were telling me that you were at this historic meeting at which, Clarence Matthews, Dave Grey, Hughey Leeper, Lloyd Stafford and yourself, but you don't recall Lyle Caspell, and you don't recall Cody being there.

BM: No.

AK: But Clarence was there?

BM: Yes.

AK: And the understanding that I'd heard was the Lloyd Stafford was so aggravated over it that he said he was going to quit.

BM: Yes, but Cody wouldn't let him quit.

AK: Cody wouldn't let him. But now Cody was in Calgary.

BM: Yes, but he had to quit through Calgary, he just couldn't walk off and leave the hole.

AK: All right. Well, my understanding was that somebody gave the orders, after all this discussion and argument, to go ahead and drill dry. Do you know why they wanted to drill dry?

BM: I never could figure why anybody would want to drill dry there when they knew there was at least 4 other gas zones up the hole and they only had 150' of surface pipe in.

AK: Yes, they had a very little bit of surface pipe. At any rate, by this time of course, the well had been acting up quite a bit. So who was it that you think gave the final order to go ahead and drill dry?

BM: Clarence Matthews, I'm quite sure of it.

AK: Where do you think he got his orders?

BM: I don't know.

AK: Do you think Cody would have agreed to it?

BM: I'm sure. . I can't figure why Gene Denton would drill dry either.

AK: Well, Gene was a pretty level headed fellow.

BM: Oh yes, he reasoned things out.

AK: But Clarence was pretty hot headed wasn't he?

BM: I didn't know Clarence too well. I knew him but that's all you could say. I'd had lots of different contact with him.

#136 AK: Yes, well, Johnny Jackson, you see, down below here, after he left Imperial, he went to work for New Superior which was that little oil company, and Clarence was still there and Clarence was quite a handful, you know, trying to calm things down. So that's your recollection. And you don't recall anybody else, just to repeat, Lyle Caspell being there, having nothing to do with it?

BM: I can't recall him being there at all.

AK: No. All right. Do you remember the results then, as a result of this drilling dry?

BM: It blew in the next morning.

AK: In the middle of the night wasn't it?

BM: Yes, at about 4:00 in the morning. They told me at about 5:00, they told me that it had

blown in.

AK: And then what did you do?

BM: Well, I immediately got a crew and we went out there, because Al was field superintendent then and he said, get some men and go out there, see what's happening to the oil. So we went out there and there was oil all over the snow, it was blowing, quite a stream of oil was coming.

AK: And right up through the derrick.

BM: Right up through the derrick, yes, it was laying out across the field. I wasn't concerned too much out across the field but . . . [down by the bore out]??? and stuff like that, and it was wet snow, it was mild. So we got a cat in there and pushed the show up to make a damn around, between the boiler house and out around the sump pit and that. So that the oil would stay that side of the derrick and we could still have the boilers to do anything with the rig we wanted. And when they pushed all the snow off and that, that bared the ground and then they shut the well in for a little bit and as soon as they started doing that well of course, the gas started coming up around outside of the casing. Then we noticed that every little frost crack in the ground, it was mild that day, there was water laying on the ground, every little frost crack in the ground where there was water laying, it was jumping about 6-8".

#167 AK: But at this time the frost hadn't all come out of the ground?

BM: The frost wasn't out of the ground at all.

AK: No. So you had this situation, did you recall anybody ever having tried to put that Hossmer??? head on to control it?

BM: No.

AK: There was a Hossmer, did you ??? a Hossmer button.

BM: Yes, they put that on to. . .

AK: It was swung over in the derrick and when you needed it you swung it down and dropped it in and it held ??? in there.

BM: Yes, I know. But they didn't use that. But you can see here, the kind of derrick they want to look at, that's a [D. C. Moore]??? derrick, that's not a tubular derrick too.

AK: Okay. So anyway, they only had a Regan blowout preventor down below and it was pretty ineffective but they didn't try to close that I guess. Because it was coming up through the drill pipe.

BM: It was coming up through the drill pipe. They could shut the well but as soon as they shut the well it was coming up around the outside of the surface casing. This was the big problem.

AK: Right. So they could control the well. . .

BM: As far as the drilling equipment was concerned.

AK: As far as coming up the drill pipe was concerned. They could close that off but Lloyd said he picked the drill pipe up so that the force of the oil and the rocks and everything wouldn't cut the Kelly hole.

BM: That's right, he did that.

AK: Right. So he must have been out there at the same time.

BM: Oh, he was right there all the time, yes.

AK: So here you had this mess to look after. Well, then they did set it in didn't they?

BM: Not for very long though, as soon as they shut it in it started coming around the casing.
AK: Well then, what did they try to do, bleed it off through the bluing??? line out to the sump?
BM: They didn't have a line like that in.
AK: They didn't have a line out to the. . .
BM: Never had any line in it because they hadn't figured on anything like this happening.
AK: So there was no bleed off line?
BM: No bleed off at all, the only bleed off you had was back up through the derrick.
AK: So you had nothing between the casing shoe and the rotary table really, except this Regan.
BM: That's right.
AK: Well then, what about the mud line, couldn't they bleed it out through the mud line?
BM: Pretty hard to bleed it through, that's your Kelly line you see, the mud line is your Kelly line, you ???.

#200 AK: No, but I mean, where the mud comes up.

BM: Oh you mean the. . yes.
AK: But then you see, that's the ??? isn't it?
BM: That's above your blow out preventor too. That's not below your blow out preventor.
AK: Yes, that's right. So you really had nothing except this Hossmer.
BM: That's right, that's all they had.
AK: So what do you recall next then, do you recall them getting this fellow Ball in from . . K. C. Ball from Lloydminster.
BM: No, I don't. They got Red Adair in.
AK: What about Myron Kenley?
BM: No, I don't remember him. I remember Red Adair coming and then he didn't stick around very long because Tip took over just about the same time.
AK: Yes, but Myron Kenley was the fellow in charge and Red Adair was his assistant.
BM: Okay.
AK: That's all right, you may not know. So what did Dave Grey say to all this, after this thing blew out, did you see him or talk to him?
BM: No, never did talk to him about it. I was too bloody busy to talk to anybody.
AK: What about Clarence Matthews, did you. . .?
BM: No, never got a chance to talk to Clarence.
AK: And I guess Al Wright was tearing his hair out?
BM: Well, yes. It wasn't Al's do, it was. . .
AK: No, I know, but he had some responsibility. Let's just spend a minute or two on the big cement job. You were the one that was responsible for lining up the trucks to get the cement out to Imperial Leduc #48 lease.
BM: Yes, I forget how many trucks there were but we loaded that, had it all on the road before 8:00 in the morning and made arrangements for cats in different places along the road to pull the trucks through. There was about 5 places that were practically impassable. We got out to the location about 9:30 and Cody looked at his watch and said, I thought we were supposed to go to work at 7:30, 8:00. I said, I know, we've already been working since 4:00, we just barely had time to eat breakfast and drive out here. So that was that. When we were loading the cement on the trucks every man carried 2 bags but he didn't bend down to pick them up. All he was was the conveyor belt, there was 2 men to each

bag of cement, he picked them up and shoved them into the man's arms and he just held them and walked out and when he got to the truck, 2 men took the sacks of cement and piled them on the truck. This was way more faster way, twice as fast than for each man to take a sack of cement, and way easier.

#240 AK: What about when you got to the lease, did you unload it the same way?

BM: We slid them down a plank to a table about the right height for a man to pick up and there we did use one man because there wasn't room for. . and the footing wasn't good enough. So we had to use one sack to each man and we piled them there and to back into there we had a 3 x 12 lengthwise, 2 side by side lengthwise and then a 14' 3 x 12 planks roadway, all the way in to where the cement went.

AK: And then Cody told you to get home and get some rest.

BM: Well, the day we poured the cement, it was Gene Denton that told me to get out of there.

AK: Okay. Well then going on to when the frost really come out of the ground and it started boiling all up, what was your job, did you have to do anything about trying to contain the oil flow?

BM: There wasn't much we could do, other than make it run to the right direction. We didn't want it running out and going down the road, we made sure it didn't do that. But we didn't do too much. It was blowing in the sky so much that it wasn't ??? like it was towards that last. Towards the last it was all just one solid stream of oil coming out of there.

AK: And most of the oil, you see, what they did, they tried to hook up a well head up on the Atlantic 3 floor, which I think they did. Do you remember that?

BM: Yes, they had something. . .

AK: And some of the oil was flowing, the oil that wasn't bubbling up in the ground, they were trying to get it to flow over to the. .

BM: Sump pit.

AK: Well, no, over to the tank at Leduc Consolidated.

BM: Oh they never got that in. They never had that in.

AK: Well, they had some lines because . . .

BM: ??? but they never got that hooked up to it. They couldn't hook it up because the drill pipe remember, was hanging in the derrick, hanging on the block, how were they going to hook it up.

AK: Well, I'll show you a picture of it with the well head.

BM: I'd like to see it.

AK: Anyway you were still partly responsible around there for that.

BM: Oh yes.

AK: And when did you get the word that Imperial was going to take over?

BM: Oh, I don't know just when I got it. I didn't worry about it, they just seemed to come in on us that was all. First thing I knew Charlie Visser, of course, he knew me and Tip I knew him partly and . . .

#281 AK: So Charlie, he saw a friend there.

BM: That's right. And he knew pretty well what I was capable of doing.

AK: Then did he take you on to work for him?

BM: No, I still was working for Cody.

AK: So you kind of slipped out of the. . . you kind of stepped aside and let them do their thing.

BM: Well, it was my men that was doing all the work, for them. Some days I'd have over 100 men out there doing different things.

AK: On the lease eh?

BM: Well, not necessarily on the lease. We hauled Redwood pulp and we hauled chicken feathers and everything else out there, and poured them. The Redwood pulp they come out there and they drove up the gravel road and dumped them off and it rained on them, there was supposed to be 100 lb. and we weighed some of those bales of Redwood pulp and they weighed over 200 lb. There was that much water in them.

AK: So some of this material, such as oats and chicken feathers was pumped down the hole prior to Imperial taking over.

BM: Yes.

AK: What about the attempts that Myron Kenley made to put dry ice around the casing, do you remember that?

BM: I had nothing to do with that, no, I knew about it but I didn't have anything to do with it.

AK: And then they snaked a high drill in there and put it on, when it was frozen.

BM: Yes, I remember that.

AK: That wasn't part of your. . .

BM: That wasn't part of mine.

AK: So when Maroney took over, you had a friend there of course, Charlie Visser who had know you from the old days but you went on with your other work.

BM: Oh yes.

AK: Yes. You didn't come back. Well, then, did you have anything to do with the directional holes at all?

BM: Not as far as the drilling was concerned. We did have something to do with ??? relief, after it was finished drilling it and they set the casing. They tried to use cal seal??? to pump down and they got it way too thick and it set up in the pipes before they got it out.

#321 AK: Yes, right, I heard about that.

BM: So then they went and they got in a, it would be as big as a cattle line, load of cocomats. Now I think this is some of Tip's, I'm not sure about this but I think this is some of Tip's idea because they knew there was a cavity down there that was as big as a house. And they cut these cocomats so they would go into 3 1/2" tubing and I engineered the cutting of it. I went into town and I went to the blacksmith shop and got the thing where they cut iron with it, you know, the lever, it's about so long.

AK: Oh, like they use in the tinsmith shops.

BM: Yes, similar. Only this thing would cut 1/2" scrap iron.

AK: Yes, scrap iron yes.

BM: So we sharpened that up and put a sharp blade on it and we brought that out there. I had a crew of about 8 men, 3 shifts, loading this tubing. And what they done, they drilled a hole through the bottom of a certain joint of tubing and they'd shove these cocomats that would just go in there, into this tubing and then put them in the hole and they'd put the pump on them, it would force them out. The wire would bend and they'd go out.

AK: But were these cocomats wrapped up in chicken wire?

BM: No, they weren't wrapped up in nothing, just finely cut. They were cut about 3" and you just shoved them in there and believe it or not, with all those cocomat, I never got a cocomat to take home and wipe my feet on.

AK: Let's just go back to this rather infamous incident at south??? relief, when Cody had to be on the brake. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

BM: Well, as you know, all directional drilling is inclined to leave a little shelf, every time you spell off, every 10' there could be a little shelf. They were running a long string in and it stopped. Well, instead of turning the pipe and trying to work it, Cody was on the brake and he sputted it. And it made a shelf and that was it. They never could get off of that shelf and they tried everything.

AK: He was trying to get, as he said, I'll show you how to get around this corner.

BM: That's right.

AK: So we're just about at the end of the tape, I think we better put the other tape on.

Tape 2 Side 1

AK: Okay, then tape 2 side 1 with Bill McKellar. We've finished up on this casing job that went sour on south relief. Now, when you say, sput???, that means he picked the casing up and pretty well dropped it.

BM: Right.

AK: Did he have all the weight off the indicator when he let it go?

BM: The elevators were slack on the pipe.

AK: So that means, it was sputted. When did he try, picked it up 2 or 3 times?

BM: At least 2.

AK: What were you doing there at that time?

BM: I had a crew there rolling pipe up and I came in to see what was going on.

AK: Rolling drill pipe you mean?

BM: No, casing.

AK: Oh I see, and you were getting the casing fed over to . .

BM: I was seeing if my boys were getting it done and that and I just come in and. . .

AK: And of course, the casing had all been measured before.

BM: Oh sure.

AK: And there was still some casing on the rack to run.

BM: They were only down, I forget what the depth of those holes were but what were they. . . holes around 7 or 8 thousand feet aren't they?

AK: 5,000.

BM: And what was the whip stock hole?

AK: Well, it would be about 6,500.

BM: 6,500.

AK: You still had a bunch out on the rack.

BM: Oh they weren't down 4,000', they didn't have 4,000' of pipe in the hole.

AK: So here he was and the other fellows were standing around watching him I guess.

BM: Oh yes.

AK: And then what did he finally decide to do?

BM: He had to pull it out of the hole and go in with the drill pipe and see if they could go back

in the hole. And they couldn't do it, it would go into the shoulder.

AK: They couldn't find the old hole again.

BM: Couldn't find the hole again, there was too much of a shoulder. So they had to come back up, I don't know how far up they come but they come back up and set a cement plug and whip stocked out around the hole that was already drilled and it took them about, I don't know how many days but several days.

AK: Oh yes, it was a terrible setback because they were racing against time.

BM: Oh yes. It was 3 weeks or more.

AK: Didn't Cody realize that here he was racing against time because every day that that damned oil was bubbling up from the ground it was a fire hazard.

BM: Well, not only that, he was also losing money on his rigs and stuff. I don't know what his agreement was but. .

AK: Well, he probably was on constant??? day work, so it didn't matter. Do you know anything about them building a bit of a line out over to the old rig and putting a winch on there and pulling stuff away and cannibalizing the old rig and bringing the equipment in?

BM: I was still there when, you mean after the well was dead?

AK: Well, no, even while the well was acting up, before it caught fire. Didn't they go in there and try to cannibalize.

BM: No, not that I know of. I'm sure they didn't because you wouldn't dare go in there. You used to go in there and it would only have to cough once and you'd set the bloody thing on fire.

#031 AK: No. What I meant, they used a steam winch to pull the line in.

BM: Not to my knowledge. They might have cleaned some of the stuff up there but no, they wouldn't let anybody in on that location. The only thing that was allowed to go in there was a rubber tired cart, two wheeled cart, man-powered.

AK: Do you know where this fellow Cliff Covey??? went to, the fellow that lit a cigarette in the backhouse?

BM: I don't know. I took him down to the hospital and I'll say one thing, he's got more guts than anybody's got because one testicle was burnt completely right off.

AK: Is that right?

BM: That's right. I took him to the hospital.

AK: You were the one that took him into the University, eh?

BM: No, I took him to Wetaskiwin and they sent him to the University.

AK: His fingernails were burnt too, weren't they?

BM: Yes. But he stayed right there till we put the fire out. He was in the privy and he automatically lit a cigarette and . . .

AK: It was a wonder that fire never spread.

BM: The reason it didn't, because these guys had been using that dry ice around the well head and there were several sacks of it laying there. So we broke that up. Now, don't kid yourself, with a pair of canvas gloves on you're still not insulated from dry ice. And we broke that stuff up and we had a live steam line there and a piece of pipe.

AK: And you put the steam on the. .

BM: The steam line was there and we picked up a piece of pipe that had a . . it was 4" pipe with a 4" T welded on it. Where it come from nobody knows. But it was in a ??? and we

shoved it down the outside of the privy, stuck the steam hose into the top of it and poured the dry ice into this 4" hole. I looked in there a few minutes later, that whole privy was full of foam, it just foamed up that much.

AK: Yes, but it didn't catch up on the ground?

BM: No. Well, a little bit but there was enough dry ice there that it put it out.

AK: What a close shave.

BM: One person asked me afterward, he said, were you scared, I said, no, but if anybody said run they'd have had one hell of a footrace.

AK: Right. But he was run off I guess, wasn't he?

BM: I don't know.

AK: You don't know whether he come back to work or not. I can't locate him, I've tried all over.

BM: I can't either.

AK: They say he's on foreign service somewhere but I'd like to get his own story of that. But your story is wonderful, I'm glad that I . .

BM: He was a roughneck you know, he wasn't. . .

AK: Oh yes, I know he was.

BM: He wasn't working for my crew.

AK: No. But of course, getting back to the two relief holes, you set up the mats for the two relief holes I guess, did you?

BM: Oh yes. The west relief, Shorty Mann, he was pretty well equipped doing anything, of course he was always with Imperial. And when they went to put a derrick up of course, they wanted a 22', 12' clear cellar. And somebody said something about, who was going to do the cellar. Well, I said, I can do it but I don't know how I'm going to get time to do it. I said, I can engineer it and get it done. And Shorty said, I know Bill can do it but I'll come over and do it and engineer it. Now he didn't do any of the work at all, he just come over and he engineered it. And I had my crew in there and that was so mucky and muddy, it was all dug by hand, 22' deep, 12' square on the inside, it would be over 13' square and they put these 16' planks on end and there was a ring every 8', this 12 x 12 ring every 8'. Well, it's quite a thing you know, you can't go 22' down in the ground without cribbing it, particularly when it's as wet as that was. And the water weeped in there, so they had to, for every bucket of mud they took out they took about 2 buckets of water out. And those guys were a mess.

#073 AK: Okay. Going on to the derrick itself at Atlantic 3, towards its latter days, when it started pumping water down the west relief. . I guess you didn't have anything to do with those water lines or those other things, somebody else put those in, did they?

BM: The big water lines over those two tanks, I had nothing to do with them.

AK: When it was getting to its dying days, the derrick started to lean over or list.

BM: Yes. Kerbers came in there and they started jacking it up but it was getting to . . .the crater out of the bottom, all the casing, was getting too close to the corner. And I come along and I said to the Kerber boys, you wouldn't get me working in here if they gave me all the bloody country.

AK: So Tip told me that he sent the crew in the day before and it was listing and then it started

to come over again and he wouldn't let them go in a second time.

BM: It was hopeless because the hole was. . .

AK: Yes, it was really going and the whole thing was cratering.

BM: Oh yes, one leg went right in.

AK: Yes, and then the draw works fell in.

BM: Yes, everything went in.

AK: At the last it was just the Kelly. . .

BM: Well, not even that on these holes here.

AK: No. Well, it was just a crater, that's all. After the fire went out.

BM: There's the hole, ????

AK: Yes, I've got that. Where were you when it caught fire?

BM: I was in Leduc when it caught fire and they phoned me immediately, I didn't even get my supper that night. They told me to get out there right now. So I went out. You didn't know how it was going to get because that country was saturated with oil right to the road. So okay, we had west relief, what are we going to do. So the first thing we did was we went and got some material, so if need be, we could put up a shield that we could get behind so that we wouldn't have to head for the field. But it never did get that hot. Believe it or not it took so much of the oxygen out of the air when it first caught fire that down at the two sump pits, where the oil was going into this one pit, one of the boys come along and he saw the fire and he took his hands and made a fill across there, it would be about a foot wide, above the oil and the fire come right down to that because it was just a little ways from there at the time. And there wasn't enough oxygen to set that oil on fire in the sump pit.

AK: Well, that's what Al Phillips said similar, he said that the fire didn't spread as fast.

BM: There wasn't enough air, it couldn't get enough air, it just sucked the air right out of there. There was 40 acres on fire right now.

#112 AK: That's right. And it created a terrible cloud of smoke. Well, then, what other precautionary measures did you have to take?

BM: Well, the biggest thing we had to do, I had to put a bunch of people on the road and keep people who tried to come out there from Edmonton.

AK: I thought the Commissionaires were there.

BM: They couldn't keep all those . . . We tried to get some cats out there and they plugged the road so bad that the RCMP come along and as I said, those ditches were 10-12' wide on the top and 5-6' deep and 8' wide on the bottom, they just come out there, it was so dense and stupid of them to do it, the RCMP come along and if they couldn't move their car off so the cat could get by them, they just said okay, turn off to the side here and drive it in the ditch. They just ditched them, we've got to get that cat out there.

AK: Well then, what did you do with the cats?

BM: Well, they didn't know, they didn't actually do much with the cats when they got there because it was a different set-up altogether than what you would think it would be. The fire didn't burn as fast as they thought and we didn't know just what we were going to have to run into. But it would be a funny place to put a cat into anyhow when, as I said before, that ??? casing had swoll up without the dirt that blew up around the well head, the ground itself, when they took the survey, the elevation on it, it swoll up 14'.

AK: From its original. .
BM: From its original height.
AK: This was part of the cratering too of course.
BM: No, it had nothing to do with the crater.
AK: Oh, this is just an actual swelling up.
BM: Up to the crater. When you went to the crater, the crater was above that again. And that crater was about. .
AK: What would you say, about 30-40' across.
BM: Across the top of the crater, no, it was over 75'. We measured. .
AK: Right. And about 40' deep.
BM: No, it was over 100'. You're looking over 100' right there, that's over 100' down into there. And there's no draw works or nothing showing there, you'll notice.
AK: I think there was one piece of pipe sticking out from one of my pictures.
BM: One corner of it, yes.
AK: Did you notice how much water was coming up with the oil. Because this was really what, really it was fortunate that the water was really pumping into west relief, otherwise that fire would have burnt for days and days.
BM: I never saw any water come up at all, actually.
AK: Steam. There was quite a bit of steam come up.
BM: Yes, steam. After the fire.
AK: Then it went out in about 2 1/2 days.
BM: 2 1/2 days is all actually the well burnt.

#146 AK: Then when it quit did you immediately go in and start working on the crater?
BM: No, we stayed away, it was too hot.
AK: The ground was too hot.
BM: The ground was too hot. We stayed away from there for oh, a week or more.
AK: And then what did you do, start filling the crater in?
BM: No. The crater was still there when I left Leduc in '52.
AK: I see. So you were trying to clean up the lease though weren't you?
BM: We tried to clean up the lease, as much as we could. There was three boilers sitting there, we got them out of there.
AK: They were pretty well ruined weren't they?
BM: No, they weren't ruined. Those were the smaller boilers, they were what they called the 250's, they weren't the big 300's.
AK: You had a big 300 over, supplied west and south relief, you had a big boiler there didn't you?
BM: Where?
AK: The boiler that supplied west and south relief rigs.
BM: Well, that was a steam rig. Behind it.
AK: Yes, but I mean, they had their boilers set away over.
BM: Oh yes, the plant, there was three boilers in there too. That was a steam rig that drilled. .
AK: I know it was, in both of them. Okay, well, I don't know Bill, I think we've really done a real good job here this morning, taking it up to that point. Then you stayed on with GP till when?

BM: Till '52.
AK: And then where did you go then?
BM: Went farming.
AK: Oh, you went back to farming eh?
BM: Farmed for 26 years.
AK: Out at . .
BM: Condor.
AK: Condor. I see. Who is that living still in Turner Valley, your brother?
BM: My brother.
AK: And his name is?
BM: Alec.
AK: Alec. Well, that's who Bill Kerber is confused with, you see.
BM: Bill Kerber knows me too though.
AK: Yes, I know but when you phoned me, you see, I had the notion that you were just leaving Turner Valley and you were moving out here but you'd already been here.
BM: Yes.
AK: Well, that settles that. Well look, I think we'll just call a halt here and we'll have a discussion on some of the photos and maybe I can make some notes on them and I do want to thank you very much for your time. As I said, I'll have to get back and do a story all by itself on the derricks, but I've got to get this project finished first. And if there's anything else that you can think of after I've left, please get in touch with me. Okay, so I think we'll sign off. It's now 12:30 and I have a notion that if we ask real nice of Beulah there we might get a bite to eat or something. Is that right. Over and out. Well, thanks Bill.
BM: You're welcome Aubrey.