

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Clark Siferd

INTERVIEWER: Jim Wood

DATE: October 1983

JW: This is an interview with Clark Siferd, geologist. My name is Jim Wood, the date is September 2, 1983. This is tape 1, side 1. Clark I wonder if we can start by finding out where and when you were born and some of the experiences in your early life there?

CS: I was born in the southern Alberta in the town of Foremost, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1918 and lived on my father's farm down there, in that area, until I was 10 years old when we moved to Turner Valley in 1928. Actually I was 9 rather than 10. We moved to Turner Valley in the spring of '27 actually. I went to school around Turner Valley there and. . .

JW: Do you recall anything of your trip from Foremost into Turner Valley?

CS: Yes, it was quite interesting for a kid of 9 years old. The first time I was ever on a train, as a matter of fact it was the first time I was really ever off the farm. We took the train from Nemiskam, which was our town, and arrived in Okotoks sometime after dark, I remember that. Stayed in the hotel in Okotoks that night, that was my first time ever in a hotel also. The next day we unloaded all of the family belongings, which wasn't a great deal at that time, into a hay rack. We'd shipped everything up there by train and coming off the farm we had cattle and some hogs and all of our household effects, which we loaded on a hay rack. With a team of horses we left Okotoks sometime early afternoon I would guess, to go out to Black Diamond. I can remember this trip quite well because we had to pull some cars out of a mud hole about half way to Black Diamond so that we could get through because the road was very narrow in those days and it wasn't gravelled. We arrived in Black Diamond just about dark if I remember correctly and stopped at one of the 2 stores that was there at the time. That's all Black Diamond was at that time was 2 stores and a blacksmith shop and there might have been a house or two but I don't recall. The north side of the street in Black Diamond was being farmed by a man by the name of Butler and the corner where the hotel now is was farmed by a man by the name of Nicholls, Frank Nicholls. Then we moved out about 5 miles northwest of Black Diamond, just up on the hill from Millarville and lived there from the spring of 1927 to the early winter or late winter I guess, yes, it would be early spring of 1928 when we moved down to Black Diamond and lived near the bridge, not actually in the town of Black Diamond but just outside the town there. The town of course at that time was starting to grow quite a bit. But schools, there weren't any in Black Diamond, there hadn't been a school built. There was one east of Black Diamond at that time, some 2 or 3 miles east of Black Diamond. There was no school in Turner Valley, there was a north Turner Valley school which was about 3 miles north of Turner Valley town. I went to school there from the spring of 1927 till the end of that school term. Then I went back there again in the fall of 1927 until they opened the New Valley School, which was about

5 miles north of Black Diamond or something in that order. Then I went to this New Valley School where there were 8 kids altogether. There were 2 Stanhope boys, 2 Kings, I think Betty and Jimmy King, I think Betty still lives on the farm down by the river not far from there. 2 Mortimer girls and my brother Harold and I. We were the janitors at the school, I would be 10 and he was 11. I think we got \$5 a month. Then in the early spring of 1928 we moved down to Black Diamond.

JW: How come your family moved out to the Turner Valley area in the first place?

CS: That I am not too clear on. There were some friends by the name of Thomas who had moved from that Nemiskam area a year earlier. The drought down there in the prairie had been pretty bad up until that time and of course, we weren't doing too well. We were still farming with horses and I think it was just at the time when they were going over to more mechanized equipment. There was a sort of boom in Turner Valley at that time, I think it was just the beginning of a boom that lasted through 1928 and '29, until the Depression. And as a matter of fact, I never did sit down and talk to my father as to just exactly why he decided to leave there. But anyway we came up to Turner Valley, I would guess because he felt there was a better chance of making a better living up there.

#053 JW: He didn't start farming again in Turner Valley did he?

CS: Only in a very small scale. Actually he still kept the cattle there and some hogs. There was quite a demand for horses to haul oilfield equipment at that time. 1927 was a very, very wet year and trucks could hardly move. You'd get some old cats around that hauled some of the stuff but a lot of the equipment was being moved by horses. Sam Johnson was one of the people that hauled stuff there and a fellow by the name of Ray Tomlison and my father used to work together. They hauled the lighter oilfield equipment around. Of course, the oilfield equipment at that time wasn't very heavy, it was all cable tools now. Much lighter and I think they probably used, I know they used horses to haul boilers, small boilers. I have pictures around here of my father hauling some equipment. But other than that he put in a small amount of oats or something like that but never really went back to farming.

JW: They did the oilwell site preparation too with horses, didn't they? Preparing and levelling the land and so forth.

CS: Yes. What they did, they used to dig cellars. They didn't have any way, when they ran pipe, ran casing in the wells, to get it up in the derrick, the derricks were so short. I can't remember how deep these cellars were but they must have been something in the range of 20' deep probably and maybe 10-12' square. And they dug these cellars straight down and cribbed them. They used to dig them with horses with a kind of a gin pull, and kind of lifted the dirt out and later, they had a runway that ran out and then they used a scraper to pull the dirt out of there. But they were all done by hand and with horses, to take the dirt out.

JW: So that was to facilitate stacking the pipe then?

CS: Yes. This was quite dangerous actually, because if they had some gas in the hole and the people were down in the cellar while they were running pipe, that's why they put the . . . later on that was one of the, I guess, the early safety features was that they had this

runway where people could get out of the cellar rather than have to come straight up. Of course, I was pretty young then, I was only 12 years old, 13 years old, maybe less. I wasn't aware of these things, you know, as far as safety was concerned. But there was little, really not that much thought of safety in the field at that time as near as I can determine. The real safety in the oil business is probably the last 15-20 years when it's really come to the fore here.

JW: When you moved into the valley, did you dad build a house or did he move into an existing place there do you recall?

CS: The original place, it was really a quarter section that he'd rented from a fellow by the name of Depalizoo???. There was of course, a house in there and we lived in that house for the first year or so. Then we moved to Black Diamond, just on the road to Turner Valley, just about half a mile south of the bridge, we lived in an old shack, really it was just a shack too for quite some time.

JW: How many were there that were living in this, brothers and sisters?

CS: When we came there, there were only 2, my older brother and I, Harold. Then my sister was born there, my oldest sister was born at this little shack we lived in by Black Diamond. Then we lived in 2 or 3 other rented places around that area. We were like 2 families, my brother and I and then I was about 10 years old when my oldest sister was born and then there were 3 other children born about a year and a half apart from then on. And we moved into the town of Black Diamond in the winter I believe, of '31, '32. That was our first permanent home, was in Black Diamond which I believe we established in 1932. The house is still there.

#113 JW: Still occupied?

CS: Yes, people by the name of Macleod own it now, my mother sold it to them. After my father died my mother was living next door and she sold them that house, they were renting it at the time. And they're still there. School in Black Diamond was quite an experience in the early days. They had built a community hall and that was the first school in the town of Black Diamond. I think it was 1930, '31, about that time. The building wasn't sealed inside, it was just a skeleton really, of a building. In the winter time, I can remember going to school one morning and it was 15 below in the school so we went home again. But it was a very cold winter, that would be the winter of '30, '31 I guess. Then they built, I believe it was the Church of Christ in Black Diamond, that then took the overload because of the. . . In the early years there was quite an influx of people in Turner Valley and Black Diamond. But the demand for schools was pretty heavy at that time. And they had school in this church, it must have been '30 or '31 that they built the school which is still being used as a school there in Black Diamond. It was a 4 room school.

JW: What do you think of the quality of the education you got there, in looking back on it?

CS: Actually, it was probably similar to. . . the life at that time was much simpler, there wasn't any great pressure on the students at that time. You know, I don't know whether it was. . . we didn't have all the computers and like I say, life then, everything was relatively simple. I do remember one thing though that was kind of unusual, one of the things I do

remember was we had to memorize the Lincoln's Gettysburg speech. That was how much American influence there was in our education at that time.

JW: Oh yes, four score and seven years ago. You mentioned a lot of people coming into the valley at that time, were they all finding work?

CS: That I wouldn't be sure of but I would guess they did until the Depression. This created quite a situation in Black Diamond and Turner Valley at that time because there were a lot of people who had come in and probably left an area because they had no work there and everything. They got a few boards, built a shack and when the Depression came here were all these people with a roof over their heads you might say, but nothing else. And of course, at the Depression there was no place to go, they probably didn't have enough money to get out anyway and then where would they go. They could go back where they came from but there was no work there. People had families. So I would imagine there was a pretty high rate of unemployed and people on welfare or relief as it was called then. I think the average for a family was something like \$15 a month.

#175 JW: In terms of relief?

CS: Yes, that was the relief.

JW: Could you live on \$15 a month at that time?

CS: Only if you had your own garden. I know we had some relief there for, I don't know just how long. And I think we got \$15 a month but we had our own milk and eggs and we always had a garden and everything. So we lived fairly well actually, as far as food was concerned.

JW: How did you start in the oilfield then? You were obviously right there, do you recall how you began your career in Turner Valley?

CS: After I left school in 1932 I worked, just did labour work in Black Diamond, around the field there some but not steady of course at that age. I went out harvesting and just odds and ends. I was only 14.

JW: You hadn't completed high school then at 14?

CS: No, I hadn't. I started to take a commercial course, which they had just started that year. I went about 2 months, 2 or 3 months and went skiing one day and broke my leg and I was laid up for quite awhile with that and I never went back to school after that. So that ended my education unfortunately. I worked around, just doing labour work here and there. In the winter time, I think the first winter I went up west of Edmonton and worked in the logging industry was 1935, I was 17 or 18 then. I worked there 2 or 3 winters after that and would go back to Turner Valley in the summer. I can't remember exactly what year, it was '37 or '38, it was when the old 4" line was dug up, that was a pipeline from Turner Valley to the Imperial Oil refinery in Calgary. I worked on that line, they dug that old line up, reconditioned the pipe and tarred it and reburied it.

JW: Was this all done by hand?

CS: Yes. They did have a ditcher to dig the pipe up. Some areas were too rocky for the ditcher, it had to be all done by hand. The wrapping and tarring was all done by hand. The pipe had to be cleaned with wire brushes and files and it was all washed off and cleaned by hand when they dug it up. Some of the pipe was totally disintegrated and it had to be

replaced. The line was welded, using acetylene welding. Originally the pipeline had been put in with what they call victolic??? couplings, which is a clamp coupling and a rubber gasket in them.

#229 JW: Was that a gas line or an oil line?

CS: It was an oil line. The old line had been smeared with some kind of grease, it looked like a heavy grease. In some places it appeared the way it had originally and you could actually read the weight of the pipe and all the markings on the pipe and other portions of it were completely disintegrated. Then I worked, I think it was the following year on a 6" line, a new 6" line that was laid to Calgary. Also I worked around, in the field, for Royalite during the summer months in other types of pipeline and plumbing jobs.

JW: How deep were these pipelines, were they well buried or pretty shallow?

CS: That old 4" line was only about 18" or something like that. And I think they buried that somewhere around 3' the second time, I don't remember offhand just how deep they buried them, it would be about 3 or 4' I guess.

JW: Did they do any pressure checks on those or anything like that after. . .?

CS: Oh yes. They were pressure tested all right. I forget now just how they went about it, whether they used the gas pressure to do it or if they used air. But they would run a section of line, I don't know just how long and then pressure test and then move on. Before they would connect the next one of course, they'd pressure test that section.

JW: I see. Were these monitored at all after they were in use again?

CS: Gee, I don't know.

JW: Okay, I recall hearing about pipeline walkers.

CS: Oh yes, well, they used to have a man start at Turner Valley on a Monday morning and walk about half way to Calgary and they had a halfway shack there and I believe he spend the night there and walked on into Calgary to the refinery the following day and stayed in Calgary for a day and reversed his walk back to Turner Valley in the 2 days, making it a 5 day week. I believe part of the time he rode a horse, I'm not sure about that. I think Howard DeMille was one of the first pipeline walkers, don't know who took over from him after he left it. I believe he went up to Leduc later on and did some work on the early pipelines in Leduc.

#280 JW: Do you recall who was in charge of pipeline construction in the valley at that time, or for Royalite?

CS: Norman Tupper was in charge of that pipeline and Sam Virtue was the line foreman I think both the years that I worked on that. I think they called it the Turner Valley Pipeline, they formed a separate company then. Norman Tupper and Sam Virtue was the line foreman. I was involved mostly with tarring. A fellow by the name of Shorty Chayers??? and I were on what they called the tar rag. It was just a piece of canvas that we ran under the pipe and pulled it back and forth to tar the underside of the pipe while somebody was pouring tar out of a bucket with a spout on top of the pipe. And that was the way the pipe was tarred.

JW: Were you down in the trench, was it big enough. . .?

CS: No, the pipe was on timbers over the ditch and we were on either side of the ditch and the pourer walked ahead of us and poured tar into this canvas and we just spread it on there with this canvas. It was then wrapped by hand with, part of the time they used burlap, part of the time, cheesecloth. Then it was retarred over that so it had 2 coats of tar and one coat of wrapping. Then lowered in the ditch of course, and buried. That's basically what I did until 1940 when I went in the Army. I joined the Army Service Corps in June of 1940, went over to England in March 1941, spent about 2 ½ years in England. Finally in the fall of 1944 I went over to Europe and spent roughly a year in Europe, returning to Canada in 1945. I was discharged in October 1945.

JW: Okay, I'm going to turn the tape over here.

Tape 1 Side 2

JW: Let's go back to Turner Valley just for a couple of minutes here, Clark. Do you recall if there was any union movement in the oil field in Turner Valley?

CS: Not that I can recall. I don't believe I ever heard of any attempts by unions to organize the workers in Turner Valley, I don't remember ever hearing of it.

JW: I understand that Royalite at the time had, I suppose what would be called today, grievance sessions, where the employees would meet with management periodically to talk about problems and resolve difficulties, do you ever recall meetings of that sort or participating.

CS: No. I suppose probably I would have, had I been a steady employee. But my work at that time was just seasonal. I had never worked as a steady employee of Royalite, who was the big employer down there at the time. I don't recall any type of union or anything until in the Leduc days, when Imperial Oil, I suppose it's probably established, during the war, all of their rigs had, I think they called it the Industrial Council and one representative from each rig would come to Calgary here once a month, I believe, and they had a meeting and they aired their grievances. But that is the only type of union I know of ever in the oil industry here. Or at least in the drilling production portion of it. But in Turner Valley I don't recall any attempts by unions to organize the workers. There may have been possibly during the war or something like that. Of course, I wasn't around then from 1940 and probably there was more activity in Turner Valley during the war than there was prior to because of the discovery of oil in the north end, I think it was in 1939 and in the south end in 1936. So consequently I had very little to do with the oil industry in Turner Valley during the height of activity.

JW: Were you living at home primarily, at least during the summer time in Turner Valley, before you went overseas?

CS: Yes. I lived at home when I was in Black Diamond, I always lived at home.

#033 JW: What did people do for entertainment in Turner Valley, do you recall?

CS: Really, in the early days they would have a weekly show in Turner Valley and later in Black Diamond. Then in the depth of the Depression. Any entertainment people had at that time was of their own making. We'd have house parties and you know, I can

remember a group of people, friends would get together, usually this was a Saturday night affair and somebody would have a fiddle an a mouth organ or something like that.

Everybody would bring some food and make a bunch of coffee. This is the one thing that was interesting, I can't remember ever having any liquor at any of these parties. Well, people couldn't afford it of course. Let me put it this way, this was the group of people that our family knew. Now I know there was considerable drinking going on among other people but in our group of friends there was very little or no drinking, whatever.

JW: Well, you were more in a family context, whereas some of that other activity were the oilfield workers and that sort of thing.

CS: Yes, the old Black Diamond beer parlour did a pretty good business there over the years.

JW: Was there much crime in the valley that you recall?

CS: No. None to speak of. There was the odd little bit of vandalism, mischief more than anything else. But actually, as far as crime was concerned, there was little or no crime whatever. Of course, nobody had anything to start with so there was nothing to go for. And usually, in those more isolated places, the atmosphere was totally different than in the cities. Everybody knew everybody. But as far as crime was concerned I recall very little. I know we used to go break into the school once in awhile and change some books around but we didn't do the same. . .you know, it was more mischief, it wasn't vandalism like you get in the schools here in the city. We didn't do any intentional damage anyway.

JW: Was Little Chicago and Little New York and those communities, were they in full swing at that time?

CS: Well, Little Chicago or as the proper name of Royalties, sort of grew up after the discovery of oil in the south end of Turner Valley, I think it was 1936. Little Chicago as it was known then I think was the first place to start and it grew very, very rapidly in, I guess it was the summer of 1936, '37, that time. It was like Black Diamond and Turner Valley in the 20's, the late 20's, it just sprung out of the ground. Then Little New York, or Longview, which is the town now down in that part of the country, it was probably simultaneously that they grew. I wasn't down in that area that much at the time so I don't know that much about the actual growth of these towns. Then, like Royalties now no longer exists, Little Chicago. There are a few houses there. But Longview became the permanent town in that area.

#085 JW: So you came back to Canada in 1945 after your military service?

CS: Yes. I was discharged from the Army in October of 1945. At that time I had no goals whatever, I didn't know what I was going to do or where I was going to do it. I heard that Imperial Oil was hiring some people down in the old Tecumseh building on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 3<sup>rd</sup> St. right across from Eatons, where the TD Tower now stands. So I went in to apply for a job and I met Stan Harding, who later worked for Imperial for many years, now retired. I was told at that time that they didn't require anymore people but I filled out an application. A month or so later I went back and was employed in the paleo lab there, disintegrating samples for what they called the bug pickers, they picked microfossils. Cam Sproule was the chief geologist there at the time, Dr. Ernie Shaw was 2 IC and Stan Harding, I guess, I don't know what his actual position was.

JW: Is he the one that actually hired you then?

CS: Stan Harding is the person that actually hired me there. I worked disintegrating samples, this was in the 20<sup>th</sup> of December if I remember correctly that I went to work for Imperial there. And in April I went to Edmonton to work for John Wall, who is now with the federal government here in Calgary. He was running a little paleo lab up there, we were doing paleo work on a core hole, shallow core hole program that Imperial was doing east of Edmonton I believe at the time. I went up there to disintegrate samples for them.

JW: Maybe let's back track for a second. When you went to work in Calgary disintegrating samples, could you just describe what I guess would be called the lab you were working in down in Calgary at that time?

CS: The lab there was a building, a room about I would say, 30-40' long with benches around the perimeter of the room and several sinks. There was one, I can always recall this massive oven, to dry the samples after we had washed the clay away. The method used at that time was, they would take part of the samples, most of these were from Saskatchewan, they were drill cuttings in bags. We would put a portion of it in about a half pint jar and soak it, just soak it in water for about 24 hours, or longer possibly. Then use an old gold pan and an art gum eraser to very gently disintegrate these shales so as not to damage the micro-fossils. You'd end up with a small amount of dust in the bottom of this pan and we would then dry this, put them in envelopes for the bug picker. Diane Langer??? was one of the micro-palaeontologists there at that time. As a matter of fact I think maybe she was the only one.

#151 W: That was a question I was going to have, other than her, I know she was, who else was down there working with you?

CS: The manager of the lab was Jim Smith. I believe he must be retired by now, I haven't seen Jim for years. All of the people who were working, disintegrating samples and other menial jobs there, were people who had just been recently discharged from the forces. There was, let me see, Heck Macalister, who is retired from Imperial, lives out in Victoria now. Bill Litscus was another one of the people, I think he was picking bugs at that time, he is deceased. Ron Worthington, who later went to Gulf, he was scouting there and Ron Campbell, I think he was with Hudson's Bay after that. But I've lost track of most all of these people now. This was a whole new crew in there. Prior to that they usually had high school kids on a part time basis. One thing that I do remember was, I went to work there on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December and from then through to about the end of the first week in January we did very little but party. I thought it was the greatest place in the world to work. There was an awful lot of partying going on. We weren't really doing a great deal of work and apparently, we had boosted the production about 200%. But I think most of the people who had been in there had been used to doing a day's work at that time. So consequently they were very pleased with our production there.

JW: Do you recall what you were making?

CS: \$110 a month. We were paid once a month and after taxes, we paid income tax on that, after tax I think I was getting \$90 or \$91 or \$92 a month. Actually if it hadn't been for my gratuities from the Army, which was about \$90 a month, I'd have probably starved to

death. I just had sort of an attic room down on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. and I think it was \$9 a week I was paying for board and room. So at that time the cost of living wasn't that high, so relatively, maybe we weren't that badly paid.

JW: Did you think this was sort of an unusual activity, what you were doing and these bug pickers at the time?

CS: It was completely foreign to me. But you know, I just went along with it, it was an easy job and I hadn't any thought of . . . well, I had no ambitions at that time, or no yen to do anything but sort of make a living. So I went along with this and I really had no thought of getting into geology until, I guess it was a year and a half, 2 years later.

#203 JW: There was a story apparently, of you and Diane Langer perhaps being engaged, how did that come about?

CS: Actually I'd forgotten about this completely until I was talking to Di one day and she mentioned this. I don't remember the details of it but I gather it was something to do with a little ring out of popcorn or something. We were clowning around or something and I put it on her finger and she was wearing this around and somebody started a rumour that we were engaged. It got to . . . well, just to back track a little, Imperial at that time did not employ married women. And one day Ernie Shaw, I believe it was Ernie Shaw, called Di in and asked her what her intentions were you know, because she wouldn't be able to work for Imperial if she was married. So I guess that's when she told them that this was just a hoax. But that was one of the humorous things that happened in my days with Imperial Oil.

JW: So that was Imperial policy then, that they would not employ married women?

CS: Yes.

JW: Even in administrative jobs and secretarial jobs?

CS: So far as I know. This was quite common. Well, my wife here worked for the Journal in Edmonton and they didn't employ married women, she left when we were married. That was fairly common. Stores like the Bay and Eatons employed married women at that time but the newspapers didn't, I don't know if any other oil companies did but that was a policy of Imperial at that time.

JW: Well, relatives, could your brother theoretically have been employed at Imperial when you were working there?

CS: Yes, Imperial, and I think this is still common with Imperial Oil, I'm not sure, but there were many, many members of families that worked for Imperial. Shell was the one company that, first company that I knew of that prohibited any relatives from working at the company, regardless of how remote they were related.

JW: You then went up to Edmonton, do you recall when that was, was that in 1946 then?

CS: Yes, it was on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1946 that I went to Edmonton. Bill Litscus, who I mentioned before, and I went up there to work for John Wall.

JW: How did that come about, why you 2 were transferred up there?

CS: We were both single. I guess Bill was picking bugs and I was disintegrating samples and I would guess that's what John wanted was a big picker and a disintegrator up in Edmonton. I actually thought I was probably being laid off at the time because when I

went to work for Imperial, Stan Harding said, we've got about 6 weeks work. So this had gone on from December to April and somebody came in one day and said, Ernie Shaw wants to see you and I said, well, I guess my 6 weeks is up. So I went in and he asked me how I would like to go to Edmonton. Of course, I was just living, like I say in kind of a garret room, attic room on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. there and so I said, fine with me. So Bill and I went up to Edmonton on the train. Checked into the Ritz Hotel and that's where we started our time in Edmonton.

#266 JW: You mentioned you were up there working for, John Wall was it?

CS: Yes, J. H. Wall, Dr. Wall. Or he wasn't at that time and he later went back to Indiana and took his PhD.

JW: Did he run a different kind of an operation than Dr. Shaw did at that time?

CS: It was very similar, except that there were really only 3 of us, John Wall, Bill Litscus and I in that particular department in Edmonton. Later Heck Macalister came up there so there were 4 of us, compared to 7 or 8, maybe 10 down here. But it was the same type of operation.

JW: Just one more point on the operation in the lab, do you recall how the bugs were catalogued, how that part worked? You disintegrated the samples and then the bugs were picked, what then happened, were they put on slide or were just simply notes made relative to the sample?

CS: The dust that we ended up with after disintegrating the samples was examined under high power microscope and the so-called bug pickers used a very fine paint brush. They would pick these bugs out of the dust and place them on a glued slide. At that time it was very, I suppose you might say, the adhesives or glues were primitive compared to today's glues but what they ended up using was . . . there was a trade name for it. . . anyway, what women used to put on their hair for a hair set. And it made a perfect glue because you could just dampen it a little bit and stick these fossils on, Wave Set I believe is what they call that stuff and it was sort of a sticky glue that women used to keep the waves in their hair.

JW: There weren't really bugs were they, what actually were they looking at?

CS: They were what they called forams???, micro-fossils, they were very minute fossils. And of course, by studying these micro-fossils they could age date the formation.

JW: When you went to Edmonton you mentioned these cores or samples you were disintegrating were from a core hole project. In Calgary these were from Saskatchewan, that Stan had apparently picked up in the 40's, with Cam Sproule.

CS: Yes, well, Imperial had quite a drilling program in Saskatchewan in the early 40's I believe and they had kept all these samples and brought them to Calgary. We were just going through them. I believe this was a project that Dr. Sproule had initiated and he was quite a keen person on palaeontology. I don't know the history of it, I'm not familiar with the history. Aubrey Kerr would know a lot more about it.

JW: Sure. Okay, we're just at the end of our tape here again.

## Tape 2 Side 1

JW: All right Clark, last time we were talking about your experiences with John Wall at the Imperial labs in Edmonton. I wonder now, I know that you went to Wainwright and I wonder if you can tell us when you went to Wainwright and why and what was going on there?

CS: I went to Wainwright in the fall of 1946, actually it was to Irma, in the Wainwright area, where Imperial Oil was drilling a bunch of gas wells. I went out there to relieve a fellow, to catch samples. At that time Imperial had 2 sample catchers on each rig. With this fast drilling they were taking samples for paleo work and they were not washing the samples or anything like that. They were just bagged, mud and all and shipped into the paleo lab, so as not to wash away any of the micro-fossils in the samples and then have them as near original as possible.

JW: What was the intent of all the gas drilling up there, why were they after so much gas at that time?

CS: That, I'm not exactly sure but I believe that they had some idea of a gas liquification plant at that time. That was prior to the discovery of Leduc and they were doing a lot of drilling down in that area. They were lower Cretaceous wells. So I worked down there for, I guess it would be September, then we went and moved down to Youngstown and we drilled a well, I believe it was a gas well for the senior citizens home there at that time. I believe the senior citizens home is still there. I've been down through there several times.

JW: Would they have paid for that, would they have said, come Imperial. . . ?

CS: I've no idea who was paying for it. I would imagine it was probably some kind of deal with the provincial government at that time, but I wouldn't say ??? because we drilled, that was in the fall of '46 because . . . The reason I remember it was in early October, late September is because I was there on my birthday which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October. Anyway, I spent some time there on that well. At the same time Aubrey Kerr was up at Provost, they were drilling a bunch of Cretaceous wells in that area. I went from Youngstown over to Provost to work for Aubrey. That's where I first met Aubrey.

JW: You were still sample catching then?

CS: Yes, I was still sample catching then, I went over to catch samples for Aubrey.

#042 JW: Before you go on, who else were up in Irma and Youngstown was there at that time, was George DeMille or Fred Turner, any of these people?

CS: Alec Bland I believe, was the geologist on that well. I believe that George DeMille was there at one time. This was quite some time ago and I don't clearly recollect. I do remember that Alec Bland was the geologist on that well. There was another fellow by the name of George Squire who is now a geologist here, I think in Calgary somewhere. I believe he was a geology student at that time, or was having a year out or something, he went back and finished up his geology degree. He was also catching samples on that well. I don't exactly remember who the drilling crew was on that well. I do have some pictures of the actual rig and everything but I don't remember who was. . . I have a very faint recollection of the crew at all. While we were at Youngstown, that's great goose country

out there and Fred Keller, the late Fred Keller brought a bunch of Imperial Oil brass from Toronto out there goose hunting at that time. Other than that, I don't recollect who else was there. Of course, at that time we had to come into Calgary, take the train out to Wetaskiwin and then take the train out to Provost, that was the route that I had to take to go up there from Youngstown. I suppose I could have driven across but cars were at a premium at that time. Alec Bland and I had to grind the valves in the old Chevy at Irma before we came across to Youngstown. I guess we had a few days so thought we'd do some ????. But cars were pretty scarce at that time.

JW: This was still. . . the war had just ended so it was. . .

CS: Oh yes, it was shortly after the war. I can remember, I think it was Gordon Beard who claims he bought a new Ford car on an Esso credit card on time. Which is a rather unusual thing, it just happened that there was one available so he grabbed it while it was still available. But cars were pretty scarce. I can remember arriving at Provost about 6:00 in the morning and I sat in the hotel lobby until I thought it was a reasonable time to go and wake Aubrey up. That was our first meeting in his trailer, he had a little trailer parked there somewhere in Provost. That was when I started my sample catching tour down there, which lasted until I think it was late December, when they decided to move this rig up to Leduc. In those days trucks weren't too large or available and also the roads weren't such that you could use heavy trucks on them. You could have in the winter time I suppose. So they loaded the rig on a train in Provost and it sat there for some time, a week or two before they moved it up to Leduc. Then Aubrey and I came up to Leduc, towed his trailer up behind his car and spent some time between Calgary and Leduc, prior to the spitting of Imperial Leduc #2. That was the rig that was moved up from Provost, it was located on Imperial Leduc #2. I believe we spitted that well about the same day that Imperial Leduc #1 was tested, the initial testing of Imperial Leduc #1.

#094 JW: Let me ask, before we get into that, these were contract rigs?

CS: No, these were Imperial rigs.

JW: Oh, they were, okay.

CS: No, no, these were Imperial's rigs, they weren't contract rigs. At that time there were contract rigs around but Imperial I believe, used almost entirely their own rigs until after the development started.

JW: So Leduc #2 was spitted before they realized they had something interesting from Leduc #1?

CS: No, no.

JW: Or that was then a step out?

CS: Yes, it was a step out, right. Imperial Leduc #1 was a Nisku well, it was not a Leduc tester D-3 as it was known, it was a D-2. Imperial Leduc #2 was the actual discovery of the Leduc formation, the oil in the Leduc formation. But I don't remember the exact timing on it but I believe that it was somewhere about the time they started to test Imperial Leduc #1. Let's back up here, they began testing of the Nisku in Imperial Leduc #1 about the time we spitted Imperial Leduc #2. And Leduc #2, the Nisku was dry. It was tight in Imperial Leduc #2 and it was the Leduc discovery.

JW: You didn't know there was D-3 at that time?

CS: No, I don't believe that there was any thought of a D-3. Now there may have been from seismic, I do not know. But after we went through the Nisku into the Ayerton???, which is a big, thick shale zone, then . . . Aubrey would know a lot more about that than I do but I'm not sure, I've heard rumours that they were just drilling ahead, waiting for someone to tell them down when we ran into the Leduc.

JW: Was there a disappointment when the D-2 was tight, or do you recall?

CS: I don't. I wasn't that terribly interested in the overall picture at that time. I had a job and I was working shift work. I didn't discuss the geology because I knew nothing about it so I suppose there was some disappointment definitely. I have no way of knowing just what the feeling was but I'm sure there must have been some.

JW: So you didn't go to Leduc, or work on that rig with the feeling that there was going to be, with a feeling of expectation that this might be it, you were just there?

CS: No, I was just there, that was a job and that was it. I would do a little rough necking when one of the hands was away, like catching samples of course, you know, it's a minor thing to do. It was when they were drilling and if they were tripping???, I would sometimes help out and rack pipe or something like that. They wanted me to go rough necking at the time.

JW: Who's they?

CS: The drilling people. Bill Blin and Leeson, I forget his first name now, they used to call him Squeaky. Leeson was the push, Bill Blin was the assistant push on that rig.

#136 JW: This is Leduc 2

CS: This is Imperial Leduc #2. At that time I could have gone rough necking, I would have made quite a bit more money than I was but I just didn't care for the constant shift work. I was working sort of shifts at the time but not in the same way. Maybe it was because I was lazy or something, that was another reason I didn't care for going rough necking.

JW: You were a sample catcher working shift, there must have been 2 other people at least, on your rig, catching samples, do you remember who those were?

CS: No, I don't offhand. That's interesting that I don't remember. Eddie Dean I know, was one of the fellows that was working there and I do believe that he was one of the sample catchers but I can't remember who the other one was.

JW: Were these samples going back to Edmonton then, still to the lab where John Wall was, or how was that working?

CS: Let me see, I would guess that the samples from Imperial Leduc #1 and 2, probably went directly to Calgary. Because we hadn't any facilities at Leduc at that time. Leduc #3 was drilled a little to the south and I wasn't on it and I don't know what would have happened. After we finished Imperial Leduc #2 we moved out about 10 miles east of Leduc, on a well called Imperial Looma #1. That is where Aubrey, it was from that well that he came back to Leduc as the resident geologist. I came back with him to look after the samples in the field. At that time we had a set-up in the town of Leduc, where we washed the samples and dried them and started to build up a geological staff there then. We used to have a little jeep, we used to go around the field every morning to all the wells in the

field, pick up samples, I should say, all the smaller independent samples. We would pick them up, bring them back, wash them, and kept pretty good track of what was going on in the field that way.

JW: So, small independent samples, you mean samples from small oil company and contract rigs not associated with Imperial?

CS: Yes. You see, there were very few geologists around at that time and consequently there was a great demand for geologists. That's actually how I came to start doing geology, because of the shortage of trained people. They had to compromise a little bit so I started doing geology there in the Leduc field. After we got a few people around, then I started helping the geologists out in the field instead of logging cores and samples and this type of thing. From there, I worked in the field then, until in 1949, when I left and went scouting for Imperial.

#186 JW: Let's just go back a little bit, to the Leduc discovery wells, actually 1 and 2. Once it was recognized that there was a pretty good field, in fact, something that was quite exciting and very significant, do you remember the reaction, your reaction or the reaction in the oil community? Was there an excitement or a euphoria, a this is it, this is the big strike, we have it, bonanza?

CS: There definitely was, I'm sure. I personally didn't share any of this type of excitement. I was still, at that time, I wasn't even sure I was going to stay in the oil business. I just don't recall any, on my part anyway, great excitement. I'm sure there was a lot of excitement among the management and different people of Imperial Oil and all the other oil companies that were around there because certainly, the activity increased so much there in such a short period of time. I think probably Atlantic #3, the blow-out well there, created more interest outside the local community than a little bit. Probably did more to develop the oil industry in Alberta than anything.

JW: That's true too, you hadn't been with the industry through all those frustrating years of dry holes and lack of finds, so you didn't have that background.

CS: No, I wasn't so involved. I came in really, when things were . . . I should say, I started in Calgary in the fall of '45 and I wasn't really associated with the actual drilling or operations in the field until the fall of '46. Then we were drilling those gas wells down there and it was just sort of, well, we got gas here, we'll move on, it was pretty common. I don't remember abandoning any holes down there. We went down to Youngstown and then back to Provost and they were drilling, had some heavy oil, Cretaceous oil there which I think they were trying to follow up on at the time. You see, the big rig that went to drill Leduc #1 came from Provost also. So anyway, I don't really think that I appreciated the significance of all this at the time.

JW: As a participant in the, you almost have to say, discovery wells, there was Leduc 1 and 2, although Leduc #1 is credited as the discovery well, was there any special recognition for you, or the people, by Imperial, that were on the rig?

CS: Not that I know of, no. I didn't receive anything.

JW: It would have affected your career differently had that not been productive.

CS: Oh, very much so. I've often thought about where I might have gone if the oil industry

had died about that time. I really have no idea what I would have done. I had no other plans.

#235 JW: You mentioned rough necking and you were involved a little bit or helped out occasionally, racking pipe and so forth, but then you decided to remain more in the geological end of the whole thing. What was the difference in pay at that time, say, between rough necking or sitting a well, or well site geologist and so forth?

CS: I'm not exactly sure, but I seem to recollect, I was making something like . . . I must have been making about \$160 or \$170 a month at that time. It seemed to me I could have made close to \$300 rough necking which was pretty big money in those days. But I couldn't say offhand, this was I suppose, it was overtime and whatever but I know at the time I was thinking I could make quite a bit more money. But I chose not to take it and I've been quite happy I did.

JW: Yes, it worked out real well.

CS: Sometimes you make a good decision for no particular reason.

JW: After Leduc 2 you mentioned you and Aubrey went down to Looma #1. Where was that?

CS: It's roughly 10 miles east of the town of Leduc.

JW: Okay, so would that still be in the Leduc formation, or that reef?

CS: I suppose they had, I really don't know what the background was for the location of that well. I would assume that they were looking for the edge of this reef. Although they must have had a pretty good idea because their seismic, as far as I understand, the Leduc reef is probably one of the text book examples of a real good seismic anomaly. But I don't know what was behind the location of that well at Looma. Maybe just that they had land out there and they wanted to drill it or something, I have no idea.

JW: Was it productive or dry, do you recall?

CS: To my knowledge I think it was a dry hole. We left before it was completed.

JW: Oh you did? So they called Aubrey back then to Leduc to take charge of the whole. . . the geology. . .?

CS: Yes, he became the resident geologist there.

JW: And then you became the resident senior sample. . .?

CS: Yes.

JW: The town of Leduc at that time, I wonder if you can describe when you came into Leduc from the Wainwright area, what was there at Leduc?

CS: Leduc at that time, I wouldn't hazard a guess as to what the population was but I would say it was under 500. It was just a sleepy little agricultural community. There was nothing there at all, other than I believe, agriculture was its total claim to fame. As far as I can understand, I never felt it myself but there was considerable resentment with the oil company people there. I think that some seismic people had made themselves a little unpopular there so the people of Leduc weren't too happy to see the oil industry moving in at all. They couldn't see anything for them coming out of it except a lot of unhappiness and disturbance. So as far as I can understand they weren't very happy, although I was never. . .

#294 JW: Yes, did that attitude change over time?

CS: I think that they may have changed considerably. Because once the oil companies knew, or at least Imperial especially knew that they were going to be there for awhile, of course, they stressed discipline of their people. Because they certainly didn't want their name to be, what shall we say, they didn't want a bad name with the people of the area. They were also in the marketing business. No, I don't remember any terrible unhappy incidents there while. . .

JW: That's right, I'd forgotten, they were also selling their products too, you'd see Imperial gas stations.

CS: Oh sure. They were the leading marketer of course, at that time. Shell wasn't in Alberta. BA was here, Gulf now, but Imperial was the major marketer here in Alberta at that time.

JW: Can you say after the boom started, I suppose, 1948 and into '49, at Leduc and that area, can you relate that to Turner Valley at all, were there similarities in the 30's, the same kind of atmosphere, or was it a different kind of a boom?

CS: No, not really. Because of course, I was much younger in the boom years of Turner Valley, I was just a kid at the time. I think the major difference there was the activity never slowed down once it started in Leduc and people came in. . . The one similarity I guess was the housing problem in Leduc with the housing problem in Turner Valley, Black Diamond area at the time. It was probably more like the 1936 boom in Turner Valley. Then of course, there was the establishment of the town of Devon and that created a lot of activity. Starting a new town out of a plowed field was rather unique in that a complete town starting from scratch. Well, I suppose Swan Hills is another one of the same, but usually they had the nucleus of an old small town like Turner Valley but here, they decided I guess, that Leduc was a little too far from the centre of activity. I think it was Imperial that actually established the town of Devon and turned it over to CMHC for development.

JW: I'm going to turn the tape over here.

## Tape 2 Side 2

JW: I wonder if you could describe your work schedule at Leduc, after especially you and Aubrey had come back into Leduc and you were running the samples on all the rigs. Do you remember, was it frantic, your work schedule?

CS: Well, at that time you worked as long as there was something to do. It wasn't a case of you go to work, well, I think of course, 8:00 in the morning was probably our starting time which we probably stuck to pretty well but then, if you were late getting in, ??? something to do, there was no rigid time schedule. I believe that as long as I was working in the lab, as far as just looking after ???, we probably quit at 4:30 or 5 or whatever. But once I started working out in the field on wells there was no time schedule at all, it was 24 hours a day and 7 days a week and no scheduled time off and no time given in compensation for the time you worked. When I left to go scouting, just from that one winter I looked back on my little time sheet I'd kept and I think they owed me 28 days for Sundays and holidays that I'd worked, or weekends and holidays. It was supposed to be a

5 day week but of course, it didn't turn out to be. Imperial owed 28 days but of course, there was no such thing as any set plan with the company at that time, it was just work as long as the work was there to be done. If I recall correctly, the only time I had off was when I was waiting for daylight to do a drill stem test or something like that. Usually you worked pretty steady, night and day. Sometimes it seems to me, we did test at night, I think it was just in the latter part of 1949 that they stopped testing at night, there had been too many accidents. Maybe the Conservation Board had decided that that was taboo, which it should have been all along. The safety regulations were somewhat different then than they are now. The one thing that really brought that to the fore I think, was the blow-out at Atlantic 2. There was a lot of changes made in the casing practice and the blow-out preventor systems and all that after that. For the better of course.

JW: Had you encountered a number of, were oilfield accidents common and safety a problem?

CS: Actually none. No, it was very surprising. Just possible that I wasn't involved but I think Imperial at that time, they had a safety council on their rig and you know, they were, for personal safety more or less, and working conditions. . . The hard hat hadn't come into common use at that time and a lot of other things now that are totally taboo were considered all right. But there were very few accidents. I don't remember any fatal accidents but even lost time accidents, they were few and far between. I can't speak for the contract rigs because I never worked for them. But it's my recollection that the Esso rigs were good. They had their industrial council at that time, they had a representative on each rig, sort of an answer to the unions really. They would have I think, a monthly meeting in the city, I believe in Calgary here and the representatives would come down here to the meeting and voice their grievances.

#050 JW: Would that have been a driller or one of the roughnecks appointed as. . .?

CS: No, it was a roughneck, it was not a boss, a man of authority on the rig.

JW: So he was almost the union steward in fact?

CS: That is basically what it was. I think it worked out well. At least, the unions have never, as yet, got into the drilling industry here.

JW: They're trying offshore, I heard that.

CS: Oh, I imagine they'll make it down there.

JW: Imperial had a field office at Leduc, didn't they, I wonder if you could describe that, do you remember anything about that office?

CS: This, as I recall, this old office that they built, it was built like a house almost, with quite a high basement on it and we had offices, as a matter of fact our original lab was in the basement and we had 1 or 2 offices built down there and then the rest of the offices on the main floor. But it wasn't built, I think, it wasn't built like an office. It was probably built so that it could be converted into a house. I think later on that they turned it over to the Canadian Legion there at Leduc but I'm not sure about that. That's about all I recall. And we did have some other smaller plywood buildings where we stored the cores. But I don't really recall an awful lot of the actual features of the buildings.

JW: I understand that Jack Gallagher, you had come across him in the offices there?

CS: Yes, I recall Gallagher coming up there. I can't remember just when it would be, it must

have been sometime in 1948. I remember him being around the office there but I never did know what he was doing there at the time. I gather he, at one time, looked after the sort of initiation of the town of Leduc, what did they call it, Devon Estates I believe is what it was termed at the time. Gallagher was involved with that and I don't know what his capacity was or anything.

JW: Did he make any sort of an impression on you at that time?

CS: I never really got to know him at that time. I can remember him sitting in there reading, and I thought he had a great job at the time. I guess, I don't know what his actual job was. Of course, I had then, my association had been with labouring jobs more or less up until that time and my whole thoughts on the thing were completely different than they are now.

JW: You don't remember his smile at all, his famous smile?

CS: Not really, no.

JW: One other person that was around at that time I understand, was a fellow by the name of Bob Curran. Does that name ring a bell or did you ever encounter him?

CS: No. Curran, I think he came to Imperial here in 1949. The one thing I remember, when he came here we had company cars. I was scouting at the time, I had a company car. I had moved to Edmonton by that time. The first thing that happened after he came, and I assumed it was his doing, was they sold all the company cars and started renting cars, went to rental cars. That is my only. . . Well, another thing that I do remember now is that I had been offered a salary to go scouting, which I think was something like \$300 a month. When he came along he would not okay that. I forget now what it ended up with, it was something in the order for \$270 was as far as he would go with it. But it was a considerable increase I think, from about \$175 to about \$300 a month. I suppose he thought that was too much. I didn't like him too much. He later came to Home Oil and he was only there for a very short time.

#103 JW: You mentioned the lab was in the basement of this office-like house or house-like office in Leduc. Do you recall who was down in the lab with you at all, any of the other people that were working down there?

CS: There was the one fellow who eventually took over the lab, his name was Jim Brinker. He is now operations manger I believe, for Canterra. Jim had come out of the Air Force and had taken a tin-smithing course, on I guess, government retraining. He came there and I can remember, we didn't have an oven for drying samples in so Aubrey had him build a tin oven, just made it out of sheet metal which we used to dry the samples in. Jim then later, went on to North Well Operators, which was a Home. . . oh, I forget who else, some other companies, operated some lands up in the Woodbend area. He spent some time there and then went from there over to Joarchim field, then over to White Rose, which was taken over by Shell later. From there he went back to Banff. But Jim did all the geology in the north end there. I think he was drilling manager for Canterra, now he's operations manager.

JW: Good.

CS: And there was a fellow by the name of Orin Griggs, who hired on at that time. He then

went to production in Leduc and he's now retired, lives out in White Rock, B.C.

JW: How about Don Stewart?

CS: Don Stewart was I believe, was a summer student at that time. I can't remember when he came there but he worked in the field there. Then I think he had one year out and he and I did most of the well site work in the winter of '48, '49. This was the winter that I was saying that I had accumulated something like 28 days time off, which I never got. Then Don of course, went on. . .he hadn't finished his geology, went back to university after that. I don't know if he worked for Esso after he got out, he worked for Mobil Oil. I think he retired from Mobil.

JW: Do you remember Gord Darling?

CS: Yes, I remember him but not too well. He worked up there for awhile. Darling Silt, which later became the Graminia??? I believe, was named, it was one of the markers that he had established in there. As a matter of fact it's one of the first markers I remember recognizing when I went to work, started doing geology, looking at samples, this type of thing. The first marker I was shown I think, was the Darling Silt, because it was quite obvious.

JW: This was in. . .?

CS: In Leduc. A fellow by the name of Joe Streeter was one of the young geologists there and he was the one that I started out examining samples with, he was my tutor there. Bob Elliot, R. H. J. Elliot, I don't know if he's retired now or not, he went on, I can't remember how long he stayed with Esso, he was also a summer student there. I learned an awful lot, especially in the carbonate core examination, from him. I'm trying to think who else was there at the time.

#158 JW: Maybe Bob Schwartz?

CS: Bob Schwartz was there, I think he was working. . . yes, he worked with us in the sample end of things there, right. Bob is on his own company now, some kind of an iron peddling business or something. Bobby Kay came in there about that time but I believe he was a little later in '49. He was killed in a car accident on his way to Redwater one time. He was from down east somewhere, he was just a new graduate geologist.

JW: Do you remember George Thompson?

CS: Oh yes, the old grey wolf, they used to call him. He was personnel manager. I think that he. . .I don't know, I guess he was actually in Leduc before we moved to Devon. That era on personnel were kind of vague in my mind at that particular time.

JW: You don't know how he earned the nickname, the Grey Wolf?

CS: No, not really. His hair was grey. Beyond that I wouldn't speculate, although I think I know. I didn't know George that well but I think he liked the ladies.

JW: Oh I see, all right, okay. Bruce Beatty?

CS: Yes, I think Bruce Beatty, I'm not sure if he was in Leduc, I remember him in Devon. He was office manager I think, at Devon, when they established the office there. Beyond that I really don't know much about him.

JW: You mentioned earlier on that one of your jobs was going around getting the samples from contract rigs and other companies, and other company's rigs.

CS: Yes.

JW: This is a sharing activity that sound contrary to kind of the way the industry was and still is, in many respects. I wonder if you could just talk about the sharing between Imperial Oil and some of these other companies?

CS: Of course, you see, in those days, going back in, there was a real shortage of geologists. And with the development of this thing, everybody was out looking for geologists and there were very few geologists around. Gary McCourt was another fellow that came, he's now retired from Esso, he stayed with Esso until a year ago. But another one of the geologists that was hired there in 1948. Well, all of the companies, the smaller companies, Globe and I'm not sure, Okalta, numerous other companies who were drilling in the field there, other than probably Gulf was about the only other major company that was drilling there at the time. Of course, these people had no geological knowledge of the field, they had no geological staff of their own. So consequently they were quite happy to give Imperial, each of them had a quarter section and that was about it. I'm not sure if we picked up Home's samples at that time or not, must have. But in any event, they were quite happy for the information on their hole, to give Imperial the samples. Imperial was quite happy to take the samples because they were also getting the broad picture of the field. And this way, one geologist or 2 geologists could do the work of what 10 would do otherwise.

#212 JW: That's right. There was really no precedent for that though, was there?

CS: No. But this tight hole business hadn't really come into being I think, at that time. Of course, people just didn't pass out the information. This was quite a learning process for everybody and I think that what was learned during that field was, you know, this was the first time that there was, outside of Turner Valley shall we say, or maybe down in Lloydminster or places like that where there was a lot of drilling, the first time in Alberta where there was that concentration of drilling. And there was that much attention paid to the formations. You see, we were now going into reef formations which had never been, as far as I know in Alberta, had never been productive, or weren't much known outside the mountains. Consequently the nomenclature for all that's presently being used, was developed from Leduc and some of the surrounding step-out wells where there was a good development of a particular formation.

JW: Did this sharing then of information, we're going to jump the gun a little bit here, a little bit later we'll talk about your time as an oilfield scout, did that set a precedent for the sharing of information among scouts that came later on? Did these activities at Leduc and the cooperation amongst oil companies have implications that carried on through the history of the industry?

CS: I don't think particularly that the sharing of information in Leduc had a great deal to do with it. I think it was probably later when the Scout Association was formed, which I guess it was in 1949, no it must have been the spring of '50 maybe. I can't remember now but I do remember coming down to, it must have been '49 because I know that I used to go down to the Scout Association meeting at Red Deer, which was a very informal thing at the time. They drew up a constitution which had no, really had little teeth in it. But that

was where I . . . but as far as your question about this sharing of the information in Leduc, leading to this, it may have had some you know, affect on it but I doubt it was a great deal of assistance in that.

JW: You mentioned that Gulf was the other major company in the Leduc field at that time, with Imperial. Were Gulf and Imperial as cooperative as say, Gulf and Globe Leduc?

CS: That I can't say, I really don't know. I do know that we got the cores, the cores from Gulf's first well in there. What did they call that well now, BA Pertz I think they called that. These cores, they'd cored all the Ayerton there and I do believe it was just on the east edge of the field and it was a dry hole. I think it was. I remember I was sent out with a 6 wheel drive Army truck, I wasn't driving but I was sent out to gather up all these cores, after the rig had been moved off. They were laying out there in the snow, in 5' long boxes of ship lap lumber and the markings on them were very, very faint. People had been taking souvenirs and I was given the job of gathering all this core up, hauling it in, making, I built 3' or 2 1/2' boxes for it, and then tried to rebox this in the proper sequence. That was quite a lengthy job and rather frustrating at times.

JW: That sounds like a thankless task too.

CS: It was interesting if you like working jig saw puzzles, that was about the way it was. Yes, I built a lot of boxes, I can remember building those boxes. I went over to the lumber yard and got the lumber. There was a small cabinet maker there and I built the boxes and then I took these boxes and brought these other ones in and sorted them out, tried to get them established in the proper order and then reboxed them. There was a lot of core cut on that one. That was the first, I believe, the first diamond core I ever saw. You see, in the initial wells in Leduc, Imperial was using what they call the old conventional core barrel, which wasn't very successful. It was all right for sand but not for carbonates. And I think that Gulf was the first company to use the diamond core barrel. At least, I believe, the first diamond core that I saw.

End of tape.

### Tape 3 Side 1

JW: Clark, we were talking about Leduc last time and as we finished off you indicated there were some equipment shortages at that time. I wonder if you could maybe just talk a little bit about the availability of equipment out there at Leduc and how you had to make do for example?

CS: One thing that we did have were old Army type jeeps, which were being, I guess they were producing them for civilian use at that time. They would build a plywood cab on them, those were the vehicles we used in the field there, sort of just sheeted them in with plywood around. One time I can recall, there seemed to be a furniture shortage, I don't know if they were just unable to get it or if Imperial Oil didn't have any money to buy it but I built a typing desk for one of the girls there. Of course, this type of thing wasn't available, speaking of a drying oven for samples, so one fellow Jim Brinker, who had taken a tinsmith course after the war, who was at that time working in the sample lab built a drying oven out of sheet metal of some sort. I presume that this type of thing wasn't

available, or not very readily available. So that were some of the things we did in those days that nobody would even think of doing now.

JW: They sure wouldn't. You went off in 1949 and became a scout, how did that transition occur, when you were through at Leduc, or what was your next move then, after Leduc?

CS: Well, at that time Imperial Oil had several, what they called seismic scouts, who used to go out and scout seismic lines over the province. What they were doing was keeping track of where other people were doing their seismic work, how detailed it was and all of this type of thing. Trying to I suppose, determine if they felt they had something, go down to a finer grid, well, then they probably assumed they may have been detailing some anomaly. But they hadn't anybody to scout what they called a deep hole scout or a well scout, so they came to me one time and asked me if I'd like to go. This would have been I guess, in the spring of 1949, if I would like to go out and be the deep hole scout. That's the way it came about. I thought, well, they offered me about another hundred odd dollars a month when I was only making \$175 or something like that, and expense account and a car. Of course, I sort of felt that was not a bad deal, sort of a roving commission of the province of Alberta, to scout wells. At that time, I moved into Edmonton then, from Devon, I'd been living in Devon. I moved into Edmonton and went on from there as their deep hole scout. It was about that time that the Scouting Association started. There were a few people then who were working for the American companies and there was already an Oil Scout's Association in the U.S. but none here in Canada. So I guess, for convenience sake, they had their meetings in Red Deer so that people from Calgary could come, it was a central point. Imperial was the last company to join this association, at that particular initial stages of formation. Imperial was the last one to join and the first one to be kicked out of it, because at the initial. . . Well, really they didn't have any kind of a constitution and it was a very loose sort of, all you had to do was come there and they had all the wells and all you had to do was give out a status and maybe a drilling depth. That was all you had to give out on this thing. So really, the association was meaningless as far as any exchange of information was concerned at that time. So Imperial got them, actually we purposely went out to be kicked out of the Check so that we could force some, get some teeth in their rules and get the association so it was meaningful. Because Imperial had most of the information at that time, they were doing most of the work. And of course, they were giving away an awful lot more so they felt they should be getting something back. And that was the way and then gradually it grew into the. . . well, the present day, I think there must be 30 companies or something belong to it.

#066 JW: Were you the only deep hole scout then at that time, with Imperial?

CS: That's right. Yes.

JW: Could you talk a little bit about what you did, how you got your assignments, where you were sent, that sort of thing?

CS: If there was a particular well that the people in Calgary were interested in they would ask me to go out and keep a close check on that well. I also would go out to wells where Imperial had exchanged information with other people and look at the samples at the well and witness drill stem tests, look at cores, this type of thing. Otherwise, I would keep

track of the wells that were drilling and if it was near Imperial land, would go out and scout these wells, make periodic trips to the wells. Of course, you couldn't get anything of a geological nature unless you happened to know the geologist. It was interesting, the only well I was ever really kicked off was one that Imperial Oil had an interest in. It was a Texaco well at Ponoka and I was run off the well and at that time, I forget why, there was some sort of a mix-up there and they hadn't informed the geologist on the well that Imperial had an interest. So that was the only well I can ever remember being kicked off.

JW: When you mean kicked off, were you asked to leave or were you run out?

CS: Well, it's just a case of, they come out and told you, you're not welcome, take off. So you had little choice but to do it.

JW: Who were you reporting to, as a scout then?

CS: Harry Reedford was the original, was the chief scout when I went there and later Ken Marble became the chief scout. I believe that he was chief scout when I left and came to Home Oil.

JW: Did you have any sort of a code that you would use from the field?

CS: No, not at that time, no we didn't use any kind of a code at all. If I had any good information I would come in and put it on the telecopier to Calgary, or phone it in, one thing or another. It was an interesting situation, Canadian Superior at that time were really into scouting. Just about the time, I forget what year that would be, it must have been in early 1950 when, I can't remember the name of the field, the name of the well was Flint and Mobil was drilling it and it was a Leduc discovery. Canadian Superior had scouts on there around the clock, 8 hour shifts. I was talking to Ed Bragg, the chief scout for Canadian Superior one morning and he said, did you hear about the discovery at Flint, I said no. so he gave me some of the details they got and I just put it on teletype and sent it to Calgary and they phoned Mobil and Mobil hadn't heard about it. Their geologist hadn't got it to report, well, I guess he was waiting for the final results of the test before he reported it. At least they may have known but they certainly played dumb on it, but I always thought that they had not known about it yet.

#111 JW: They probably didn't. Do you recall any cloak and dagger experiences in the field, as a scout?

CS: Not really, no. That was the one thing I did not like about scouting and that was why I got out of it really, because I just didn't particularly like this sort of type of thing. I would go to the well, drive in and go in and if the geologist was there I'd talk to him or go up on the floor and talk to anybody I could find around. Usually you know, unless it was totally tight you could get something off the well. One thing you could do was count the stands of pipe, you could tell roughly how deep they were, this type of thing.

JW: You weren't in the bush with binoculars?

CS: Oh no, I never even had a pair. I owned a pair but I never took them with me. I just wasn't into that kind of scouting. I used to do a little seismic scouting, the day I would go to, it was a Wednesday we used to go to Red Deer. And we'd finish up by noon and then I would go out and scout seismic lines around Ponoka or Red Deer for the afternoon and then go back to Edmonton that evening.

JW: Clark we were talking about the scouting organization in Red Deer, do you recall who the companies or the people were that got this thing going?

CS: I think it was Canadian Superior, Union and Gulf or BA at that time. Ed Bragg was chief scout for Superior, Doug Leech for Union and Norm Bartley for Gulf. There were other people but those are the people that I recall and it seems to me that they were the original instigators or organizers of the Scout Check. Phillips I think also was quite active in there at that time. They had a fellow name of Barker was with Phillips. I don't recall Shell was in the initial part of it, then Mobil came in and other people. But I don't remember any other details of it.

JW: What really was the intent of this sharing of information and why would. . .you know, it seems to me that if Gulf had some information they obviously wouldn't want somebody else to have, but they're setting themselves up now to give it away?

CS: It wasn't a case of really actually giving it away. It was an exchange of information so that there was no way that. . . so that everybody could get a better idea of the geology of the province or the whole area. It was an exchange of information just to facilitate exploration. It was an excellent idea. There was always the tight holes which did not have to be released. I can't remember just exactly what the timing was on these tight holes. This is why Imperial got kicked out originally was because they didn't have to give out any information. So they wanted to get some kind of bylaws which would really get some control, get some teeth in it so that you had to give out certain things and also. . . of course, these bylaws were changed regularly throughout the whole life, probably still are being changed to a certain extent. Until it got down to where you, under certain conditions, you could apply to the executive for a tight hole status on a well. If you were drilling into a land sale or several, mainly that was the thing they got the tight hole status on. And it was given until after the land sale. Some of them had them for longer, depending on how things were going, just to protect the operator from having to give away information or get out of the Scout Check. That has happened many times that the executive decided it didn't want to give it to them, so they would get out of the Scout Check, they were just suspended for a period of time. Yes, I left the Scout Check, actually scouting back in 1950. Of course, it has changed an awful lot since then.

#173 JW: So then you weren't a scout for a very long time Clark, were you?

CS: No. Very short period of time.

JW: Then I take it you went to Home Oil in 1950?

CS: Yes. I came to Home Oil in October of 1950. I came with the idea of going into the land department. I came as a scout but with the idea of going into the land department. Home had just moved their geological offices from Edmonton to Calgary at that time. Aubrey Kerr was their exploration manager, chief geologist all rolled up in one and they were just hiring a lot of people. They'd hired a few geologists. So I was a little disenchanted with scouting at that time, I wasn't that fussy about it so I thought I would change horses and see if it was better. Later I was happy I did. I know I could have gone back into geology if I'd wanted to with Imperial. I was classified as a geologist with Imperial Oil and could have gone back I believe, into geology, because they needed people, especially for well

site work. But I decided I'd come to Home and try that out for awhile, which lasted 30 years exactly.

JW: What were some of the first differences you noticed between Home Oil and Imperial Oil at that time, 1950, from your point of view?

CS: Really, there wasn't a great deal of difference. Imperial of course, was a much larger company but I was in Edmonton and the main office was in Calgary, there were only a few people and it was very informal. You didn't have any meeting problems and you know, it was really good in Edmonton because it was just a small group of geologists up there and they had an office on 108 Street in Edmonton. And I worked out of that office and it was quite free and easy and it was similar here in Calgary. The one nice thing about working for a company before they have anything, they're spending money so that you don't have a lot of accountants to account to. But coming to Home was somewhat, quite similar. I'd come to work for Aubrey Kerr, who had been trained at Imperial and his time had been, he'd had 6 or 7 years with Imperial by that time. So other than being a smaller group, it was a very similar operation.

JW: What was your first duties at Home Oil then?

CS: I was attending the Scout Check. Also at that time I used to go out and check Home's seismic lines to see that they were properly cleaned up and that the holes were plugged and this type of thing. Then also, it wasn't too long after that that we got another scout in and I used to just part-time scout and I started sitting wells then.

JW: Who was the other scout that came in then, do you recall?

CS: Dennis Scott was one, and Steve Tippett was also, he became their scout after that, he was an Australian, a draftsman and he became their scout after that. But Dennis Scott I think, was the original scout there.

JW: I take it then, if you were out on the seismic lines, doing this part time checking as to how well they'd been cleaned up and so forth, they were contract seismic crews that Home had?

CS: Yes.

JW: Do you remember who Home was contracting their seismic to?

CS: I don't, no. I know that Northwest used to do a lot of their computing work, this type of thing but I don't really know who was doing the actual physical seismic.

#239 JW: Who was head of, had R. A. Brown taken over Home Oil at that time yet?

CS: No. No, that was just prior to Brown's taking over, Major Lowry was still the head of Home Oil at that time. They were I guess, getting into such a tax position that they pretty well had to do something. So they had hired Aubrey Kerr as their chief geologist and exploration manager and he was putting together a group of people, which were really getting started when Federated or Brown got control of the company. It was only about a year or so after I came there. Everything went pretty quiet there for awhile, during the sort of, the takeover and the new regime. Actually we weren't that active at all. I think I was only on about 1 or 2 wells. Well, it wasn't that long after I came to Home that I was put in charge of well site geology. I used to go around to the wells and check them out. But at that time Home used all their own geologists on the wells.

- JW: Home, they were principally in Turner Valley, had they expanded significantly out of Turner Valley by 1950, were they in Leduc or other fields?
- CS: Yes, both in Leduc and Redwater. Home had gone in and bought some land, I can't remember just how many, they had about 12 wells I believe, in Leduc and 3/4 of the well on each quarter, something like that. Then they had some land in Redwater, I really don't know how much land they had there, I do recall ??? had said that they had paid for the well before proration was put on them. They just opened them wide up and produced as much oil as they could. But that was mainly outside Turner Valley, I think, all the production that Home had.
- JW: Did you ever meet Jim Lowry at all?
- CS: Yes.
- JW: What do you recall of him, what kind of a . . .?
- CS: I met him only once or twice but he was a very . . .well, he was a major, and Army major, Major Lowry they called him and he was . . .
- JW: Even in the office he was . . .?
- CS: Yes, pretty much. Some of the people in the office were really afraid of him, I don't know why. He had quite a bark and I've heard it said, I never heard him say it but his feeling about offices were that you have no carpet on the floor, they were unsanitary. You used tables, you don't need desks with drawers in them, you either file it or throw it away. So his idea was I think, that you used tables to work on and put your stuff in the filing cabinet, you don't have rugs. You see, we were up in the old penthouse in the Loughheed building here, the old Grand Theatre building. That was quite a place too in the summer. It was so hot up there because this place sat right up in the centre of the building with a tar roof all the way around it and a wall about 4 or 5 feet high around the perimeter of the building. And this old thing was sitting up in the top there and it was extremely hot in there. People wouldn't even work in there today, I don't believe they would.
- #304 JW: No air conditioning?
- CS: Oh no. The only air conditioning was the air that came up the elevator shaft. But that didn't last too long, I guess we were there until 1953 when we moved over into the Brown building, which has just recently been torn down.
- JW: You sort of painted a stern picture of Major Lowry, that doesn't sound like it would be a very relaxed environment that he would create to work in, that you would be on your guard or at least. . .
- CS: Well no, he, at that time, spent his time in Vancouver. So he only made the occasional visit out here so there was no problem. His brother, Bid Lowry was sort of in charge of the land and I don't know what all he was looking after there, he was sort of the local guy but Bid was a more relaxed person. He was a nice fellow, what I remember of him. Then there was a fellow by the name of Hudson, I think actually he was in charge of land, I think probably Bid Lowry was general manager. Aubrey Kerr would know all the details, I don't know them.
- JW: You mentioned then that you primarily became a well site geologist with Home. Where were your travels then and where were you working?

- CS: The first well that I was on was out in the Buffalo-Atley area out east of Brooks, north and east of Brooks, right along the river there was the first well. That was prior to the takeover by Federated. Actually, I think that was really the only well I did sit on, under the old Home Oil regime. From then, after Brown took over, John Carr became the chief exploration geologist and I think Aubrey was made chief exploitation geologist. From then on, I sat wells for the next 5 or 6 years. I was on numerous wells around the country, Pine Lake is one I recall. George Fong, who is now the chief geologist for Home Oil again, used to complain that he got the top hole and I got the bottom. All the slow drilling, he got the fast drilling at the top. Then I went from there over to. . .oh, numerous wells around. Sylvester Creek is one I recall in the fall of 1953, '54 I guess that would be. That lasted through to the spring. From then, we went back and I was on the Bergen unit??? well, which was the first well in the Harmatton-Elkton field.
- JW: Okay, let's turn the tape over here.

## Tape 3 Side 2

- JW: Before we get on to the ??? Harmatton field that you just mentioned Clark, you mentioned that you had been a well site geologist for a number of years, through the early 50's and I know that just recently, in 1983, you were doing a little well site geological work as well. I wonder if I could ask 2 things about that, what are the characteristics of a good well site geologist? Maybe describe the job a little bit and what are the characteristics of a good well site geologist, and then third, what are the differences between well site geology, say in 1950 and 1983?
- CS: To answer your first question about a good well site geologist, I feel that to be a good well site geologist the person has to have a fair knowledge of drilling. My 3 main requisites, as far as I'm concerned, a knowledge of drilling, a knowledge of geology and common sense. Those are the greatest things you can have. I was talking to the late Rod Morris one day and said, the way I look at it's about 1/3 drilling, 1/3 geology and 1/3 common sense and he said, well, I wouldn't really agree totally with you, I think it's 50% being there. And that is really, you know, to be a good well site geologist you must be there. And you can't be off to the bar somewhere or off visiting someplace. There are times of course, when you can get away from the well but as long as they're drilling you must be there. This is basically it. You don't have to know that much about geology, the main thing is to be able to recognize the different rocks, recognize porosity, and you must, to be a good well site geologist, you have to have a general idea of the geology around, the other wells. Get all the information you can before you go out to the well on the surrounding wells, then you have something to work from. You know the variations. The difference, this is the real difference between the 50's geology or the 40's and 50's well site geology and the present day, those days there was no . . .the facilities were very poor. Especially your housing on the rig. You had a small shack, usually about 8x16 feet, with an old army bunk in one end and Coleman oil stove beside the door and a little bench, desk thing in the other end of the shack and a small, either electric hot plate or probably a propane burner to dry your samples on. Usually there was a tester or a core

hand or Schlumberger people in your shack all the time because it was the only building on the lease other than the rig. So consequently when these people came out they had to have someplace to get out of the weather and usually you'd shovel it out about once a week and then once in awhile you'd have time to clean it out properly. Today, they have very nice buildings for you, the well site geologists. Most of them are air conditioned now, they have full cooking facilities in them, a full bathroom with a shower. Usually 2 rooms so you don't have to work on your bed. It's considerably different. The one main difference though is that with the old bits, 12 hours or 14 hours was the life of a bit. So you had a trip in there. Now 100 hours, so you need better facilities for living because you're there pretty steady, you can't get away from it that much.

#055 JW: So the 12 or 14 hours when they had to change bits was a break for you?

CS: Oh yes. After 12-14 hours then they would have a trip. They might have made a little faster hole while they were drilling but then they had, especially when you got deeper, you had lots of time when they were tripping. Although they used to trip much faster in those days too. Tore up the hole. . . but that's basically the difference in well site now.

JW: What kind of technical equipment did you have in your shack then, in 1952 say?

CS: Basically the same as we'd have now except that I don't remember having a fluoroscope for example, but basically it was the same equipment, microscope, that was your main piece of equipment. There were some mud loggers in those days and I think they're probably used more widely now than they were then. They made sort of an inroad in the late 40's, early 50's and then for some reason or other they weren't used to any extent until I would guess, maybe the last 10 years, they've been more widely used.

JW: You were working then pretty closely with the drillers on those rigs weren't you?

CS: Oh yes. You had to keep, well, I always attempted to keep on good terms with the crews. The basic reason is I like to be on good terms with people that you're working with to start with but if you get off on the wrong foot they can foul you up. They catch your samples so they can foul you up so quick and you won't even know it. At least, if you do find out, you won't be able to detect it. At least in those days they could. It's not so easy now because they have a lot better equipment on the rigs and they. . .well, the crews are more interested in the geology. In the earlier days a geologist was just a nuisance on the well. The crews had the attitude that they were just drilling that well to keep the rig going.

JW: And you were just tolerated, was that the. . .?

CS: More or less, that was the way it was in the early days, of Leduc and back in those days especially. Before geology was considered to be, well. . .the crews didn't consider geology to be of any interest, you were just a nuisance on the well. They had to be educated. I think some of them probably still feel the same way, but nevertheless, they are considered a necessary evil shall we say, now. And really, the well site geologist is the control person as far as the hole is concerned.

JW: You mentioned when Federated took over Home Oil that there was a period of transition where things weren't significantly different. Did they change significantly later, after Federated had made the transition and. . .

CS: Oh yes, the company became much more active. Brown was a real entrepreneur and he

seemed to be able to get money anywhere he wanted to. So we became very active. I think they stopped paying dividends, Home used to be one of the highest, paid the highest dividends of any company and I believe they either reduced the dividends or stopped paying them altogether. The Home stock took a real slump because of that but we became very active. And they started to really get going then. Well, the first well that I can recall was the well at Pine Lake that I mentioned before, that George Fong and I shared. Then I was I believe at that Sylvester Creek well, out near Nordegg, sort of northeast of Nordegg was the second well I can recall being on, which was a dry hole. The we came back and things started to happen after that, that was the fall of 1954 when Home, the Bergen unit well, was a Home, Canadian Superior, Shell endeavour, which was just on the west side of the Harmatton-Elkton field, right on the west edge. The well was abandoned, I believe it could have been produced from the Elkton, in the upper zone but it was eventually abandoned. That was more or less the indicator for the Harmatton-Elkton field and we moved over to the east, drilled another one and it was gas cap, so they went in between and there was the oil lay of the field. Then the Carstairs field, the Carstairs gas field.

#122 JW: In Harmatton, was Home the principal, were they the ones drilling the well and doing the geology or were they. . . ?

CS: Yes.

JW: So they were the. . .

CS: Home was the operator of the well, the Bergen unit well. At the same time Hudson's Bay was drilling the first well in the Sundre field, which is a sort of northern extension of the Harmatton-Elkton trend.

JW: You mentioned Hudson Bay, I know George Fong came to Home from Hudson Bay and you also mention that Home Oil, with Brown at the helm became much more aggressive. I would assume also they were hiring staff. Were they raiding other companies, where did they get their people, was it a head-hunting operation?

CS: I suppose to a certain extent. Let's see, we had George Fong and John Carr came from Federated. Several of Home's people left when they took over, quit. I'm trying to recall now, Alice Walker was hired from Gulf or BA. No, they hired a lot of student geologists. Alice Walker, Hank DeBrune???, now I don't recall what company he came from to Home. They were the 2 more senior geologists that were hired in the early stages. Then there were numerous students who they would pick up every year and they'd do well site work. That was one of the drawbacks was, at that time the company used all of their. . . all of the well site geology was done by their own personnel. A lot of the people who were fairly ambitious, these young fellows would come and maybe stay for a year and they couldn't see anything but well site geology in the future. At that time the oil industry was beginning to develop pretty rapidly so they would take off, go to another company where they could do something besides well site geology. I've always felt that well site geology was a great waste of talent. Once a person had done a few wells they had all they needed there and they would be much more valuable to the company looking for plays and this type of thing. Also it's pretty difficult when you're out on a well 24 hours a day, you don't have much time to keep abreast of what's going on in the geological world. You're

out of the main stream and you're sort of isolated to a great extent so if this goes on and on too long, well, this is what a guy's liable to end up doing for the rest of his career rather than really developing his geologic talent.

JW: Did the discovery at Harmatton, in the Elkton fields, did that sort of turn the company around or was that a big boost for Home Oil?

CS: Oh yes. Well, it was that and the succession of discoveries in the next 3 or 4 years. Home then went over and discovered the Carstairs gas field. From there they went to Virginia Hills, then to Swan Hills. This was what really gave Home Oil growing pains.

#172 JW: There was Drayton Valley in there too, weren't you involved in the Drayton Valley area in '55 or so?

CS: Yes. I went out there, I think Home really, I got their first land and started drilling Drayton Valley in the spring of 1955. I went out there in, I was there most of the winter, 1955, '56. But Home was well on the way then, this was just another bit of their operation by that time. I'm sure that increased their reserves considerably but basically, they were, shall we say, pretty well made by that time, with the Harmatton-Elkton, Carstairs, Virginia Hills, Swan Hills discoveries.

JW: At Drayton Valley, do you recall what the conditions were like there? I think you had mentioned difficulty with people for one thing.

CS: The early experience that I heard from other people, in the spring and summer of 1955 I believe it was, it was mud, mud, mud, that's all there was. They dubbed the rubber boots, Drayton Valley slippers. It was rain, rain, rain, constantly. I wasn't up there at that time. I didn't go up until November of 1955. And it was cold, god that winter was cold there. I don't think I saw a thawing day that entire winter, I was there from November to March. But conditions were somewhat primitive, especially in the early part. The town was beginning to develop pretty well by the fall of 1955 but initially I think, you know, they had trailers and these old industrial type housing for an office and everything. We didn't have our own teletype, we had to share a teletype with one of the supply companies, we had an hour in the morning or something of that sort. We were tapped into theirs from 7-8 in the morning I believe it was. Beyond that we had no contact with Calgary except by phone which, on a normal day, took somewhere from 4-6 hours.

JW: How come?

CS: There was a microwave link from Drayton Valley to Evansburg. There's where the bottle neck was because they were on surface lines from Evansburg to Edmonton and Calgary and there were only so many surface lines, very few. I've heard it said, I never tried it, but you could phone via Vancouver a lot quicker than you could phone via Edmonton. Because there were so many people in Drayton Valley at that time and the activity was really at a high pitch. You could depend on 4-6 hours during the day to get through.

JW: Do you recall the story, in 1957, of Swan Hills and the company, Home Oil, missing out on an important land sale?

CS: I don't know the actual details of that. That was that south block that Amoco and Gulf, or Pan Am and BA, got. I really don't know the details, I understand that Home missed it by a very small amount of money. I heard that Brown wanted to go considerably more

money but we were bidding with Pure Oil I believe, I don't think Pure was really involved up here to any great extent at that time. They would not go along with it and consequently Home didn't get the block, which was immediately south of Home's original block.

#232 JW: Briefly then, you got involved in some overseas work later on didn't you?

CS: Yes. I came out of Drayton Valley in the spring of 1956 and I started the present well site operations department in Home Oil, which is still going and actually, which I ended up in afterwards. But in the meantime I was out of it and it was taken over by a fellow by the name of Gordon Beard. Then I did just general geology around and in 1963 Home got some land in the UK, in Yorkshire and from then on, till the fall of 1968 I worked on that project from then on. Mainly back and forth to England, we used to fly over to England for 6 weeks and back. They would send a drilling man, there were 2 of us, Murray Craig and myself were the geologists that went back and forth. Well, they drilled the early wells in England, then in the fall of 1966 we moved my family over there and set up an office in Pickering, in Yorkshire. We lived there for 2 years. That was after the discovery of the first Lockton gas in Yorkshire.

JW: And indication of the North Sea, any interest out there yet?

CS: This was just about the time that the first gas discoveries were made in the North Sea. That was shortly after the Bronican??? discoveries in Germany.

JW: There was no interest at that time by Home Oil to get involved, since they already had a presence over there?

CS: Oh yes, Home were involved in the North Sea actually. Not until some time later than that, I don't recall just when they got their first concessions in the North Sea. Home I think, drilled, I don't recall how many wells Home drilled in the North Sea but of course, the oil in the northern part of the North Sea had not yet been discovered. It was just gas in the southern part.

JW: Okay, then you got involved in Alaska a little bit, on the north slope.

CS: Yes. Home had I think, a block that they had farmed in from Arco, on the north slope. Arco drilled the first well, the Nora well there. Near the end of that well, I think 4 or 5 of us were taking 2 week stints on that just for first hand information. Brown wanted to have some first hand knowledge all the time on what was going on so we used to fly up there and spend 2 weeks on the north slope and then back to Calgary again.

#293 JW: That turned out to be a pretty disastrous proposition for Home didn't it?

CS: Well, they spent a lot of money and didn't find any oil, let's put it that way. I don't know if it hurt Home particularly, the actual drilling of the wells I don't think hurt Home particularly.

JW: You came back and then when did you retire from Home Oil?

CS: I retired at the end of October, 1980.

JW: Right. Then you came back and were manager of the, what was . . .?

CS: Well, yes, for the geological operations department, after that. . . Pretty well after I came back from England in 1968 I was doing some geology looking for pinnacle reefs

basically, is what I was doing, combining geology and seismic. Then I . . .

JW: Did you ever find any?

CS: No. Gordon Beard, the fellow who had succeeded me in that job originally, became very ill and he died in 1969 or early '70, then I succeeded him again, and I took over the job and I stayed in that job until I retired.

JW: Looking back on your career Clark, what do you recall as the highlight of your career in the industry? Was there one period of time or one event that stands out?

CS: Probably the time I was in England was what I enjoyed the most. I was on my own over there. We had an office in London but I was looking after it all over there and I enjoyed that I think, as much as anything. I think that was probably the highlight of my career.

JW: Good. Who were the most influential people in your career in the industry?

CS: Oh without a doubt, Aubrey Kerr and John Carr. I would say that especially Aubrey Kerr, who I would guess sort of opened the door for me because of being a non-professional, somebody had to sort of . . . I guess my talents were recognized if you want to put it that way, more so than I had ever thought of. Aubrey was the one I think, that was pretty instrumental in getting me into geology. Then when I came to Home Oil I'm sure that John Carr was a bit sceptical when he first took over and after a couple of wells he didn't want to let me off the wells because he said that he felt comfortable when I was there. Which was of no comfort to me really, other than the fact that he had confidence in me. But those are the 2 people mainly who I think were very, very instrumental, well, there is no doubt about that. In different ways really. Aubrey was sort of the initiator of my opportunity to do something and John Carr was instrumental in that he just carried it on afterwards. He was the person that, well, it was his doing that I was able to do what I did. He could have kept me on menial jobs or something like that but he didn't do that, he wasn't the type of person. I don't think today that it would be possible for anybody to even, you know, have any thought of any success in the geological world without any formal education. And at that time, well, the entire society shall we say has become a lot more tight knit than it was at that time. Like, I'm an active member of the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists and I have been since 1953. It was the Alberta Society of Petroleum Geologists then. And I'm still an active member with them but I think there are very few of us without professional status.

End of tape.