

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Nick Taylor

INTERVIEWER: Nadine Mackenzie

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NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking. Today is Wednesday, the 25th of May, 1983. I am interviewing Mr. Nick Taylor at the Glenbow Museum. First, thank you for having accepted to participate in our project. Can you tell me, where were you born and what did your family do?

NT: I was born in southern Alberta, a town called Bow Island. Actually I was born right on the farm. I used to hold that out as a bit of a, I was the oldest of 5 children so I used to hold that out as sort of something extra that the others hadn't, they'd gone to the hospital in Medicine Hat and were born in a maternity ward but I had actually been born right on the farm. So my father and mother are both farmers. My father had come from the Maritimes and had worked in the lumbering industry mainly but had taken a homestead originally down near the U.S. border, he and some brothers because if the crop failed they could always make a little bit of money running booze across into the United States. And my mother was from Belgium, she accompanied her, it would be her mother and dad, my grandmother and grandfather out around 1908 to the Bow Island country and they had taken a farm and they were actually fairly big farmers. My maternal grandfather was the first one to bring in a thrashing machine, a steam engine thrasher to southern Alberta. My father and mother met in 1926 or so I guess, married in '27. He was a labourer on the farm, for getting a few dollars together before going back as a lumberjack, so they got married and raised 5 children.

NM: Were you the only one to go into the oil business?

NT: Yes and no really. I don't know. No, I have a brother, actually there were 2 brothers and 2 sisters, I was the oldest of 5, one brother has been in the oil business all his life too. He did not go to university but he sort of got his education in the school of hard knocks you might say in steam fitting and in sulphur plants. Gasoline plants, that's his specialty. The other brother started on the rigs, because there's a lot of oil business down in southern Alberta. It actually started there. Rudyard Kipling referred to Medicine Hat, a town near Bow Island as a town with all hell for a basement, referring to the natural gas that used to come up out of the wells. Actually when I was small the pipes and the fittings were so poor in the town of Bow Island that they leaked gas and when it rained you could see the gas bubbling up through the mud puddles. We would take a tomato can and poke a little hole and put a match in the tomato can and set it down on top of the bubbles and in a couple of minutes take the match off and light the gas and the tomato can would either fly in the air or you'd get a blue flame. That shows how bad the pipes were. The gas in those days was so pure, of course, as it still is today but today it's doped so that you smell it if it leaks into your house. In those days they hadn't thought of doping the gas so gas used to

leak into people's basements and somebody would go down smoking a cigarette or something and that would be the last we'd hear of them or their house. It was fairly common knowledge. But that brother worked on the rigs for awhile and then he went into electricity, into work in British Columbia. And I have 2 sisters, one of them married not an oil man and the other sister is a lab technician. So I guess you might say, out of the family of 5, 2 of us stayed in the oil business.

#040 NM: Where did you go to school?

NT: My initial schooling was 2 country schools, one called Sunny Meade, the other called Cherry Coulee. It seemed like the early pioneers would think of names that, if you know that area of the country you'd see what I mean, they'd think of names that were the very opposite almost of where they were. Maybe it was homesickness but it's very bald prairie. If you crawl up onto of the windmill tower you can see Chicago on a clear day, they say. There's no trees or anything and we always used to tell the story that we had a faithful dog that had watched your sheep and guarded your chickens against hawks and stuff for years and years. When it got to be 10 or 12 years old, as a treat before it died, you would drive it all the way to Taber or Lethbridge, 70 miles away, so it could see a tree before it died. So you can imagine this bald country with rattlesnakes and dust and one school was called Cherry Coulee, I don't suppose there had ever been a cherry around for years. And the other was called Sunny Meade, well it had sun all right but to me the idea of milk and honey wasn't there. So those were the small country schools which I enjoyed very much. They were a real cross section and stood me well later on in business because they were Hungarians and Englishmen and all the new immigrants that had come to settle the country, Germans and Russians, there was the damndest mixture. As a Scots, English, a little bit of Indian mixture, I was in a minority.

NM: Did you think at this time to go into the oil business?

NT: No. everybody thought of people working in the oil business but I don't think it was thought of as a permanent career. Most people thought of going to work on the rigs as they called it, in the winter time.

NM: They didn't think of going into the farm?

NT: No, they would think of it as supplementing their money to help them get some cash money to help build up a farm or they would think of it as some cash money to help them go to school. The oil business was really run out of the United States and this was just sort of a branch of it, a little gas and oil. It was the contract business we were looking at, the rigs and the roustabouts, the rough necking, some of the pipelining work but that type of thing was all thought to be good pay but you used it as a crutch to go somewhere else.

NM: As summer work.

NT: That's right. So after the country schools I went to Bow Island School. I don't think I was that impressed with oil either, but I had become very interested in geology really, more than I . . . I don't think oil had not much to do with it, I think farming had more of an impression of getting me into geology and the love of nature and the outdoors. I finished my high school in Medicine Hat and I first started to rub shoulders with some oil then because that was the early part of the war, there was a sort of step up in exploration. I

remember seeing seismic crews and geophysical, I should say, gravity meter crews and the odd oil rig around and thinking, I never even then thought of it as a career so much because it was too much under foot. When you're young you're interested in romance and everything. I wanted to be a diamond prospector in Africa, not an oil prospector in Alberta, that was too dull. Anybody could do that.

#074 NM: So after high school what did you do?

NT: Well, I finished a little younger than most. I was actually finished Grade 12 by the time I was 15. Not because I was very brilliant, it was just in the small country schools it was easier to take a kid all by himself in a grade like I was, in grade 1 and put him into grade 3 provided he was halfway intelligent. That was a lot less fuss than moving a grade 3 back to grade 1 I can assure you, you didn't have to argue and fight with the parents. So I was I think, probably a little better than average student all right, but not a genius by any means. So I got promoted ahead at times for convenience so at 15 I finished. But I was a big raw boned laddy and could box and fight and was a fairly good size. So the war was on and everybody dreamed of being a war hero. So I fibbed my age and told people I was 17½ or 18 and I joined the Navy after high school. This was about 1944 and I was lying about my age.

NM: Did they discover that?

NT: Well, they found out after about 3 months. It didn't bother me that bad because what they decided was that, although by this time I was 16 you see, that if they classified me as a probationary ??? in the Royal Navy I was okay, 16 was okay. And they sent me to Royal Rhodes, which was the naval college of that day, the Annapolis of Canada. So I didn't mind. I remember the only embarrassing thing about it at all is when I was called into the commanding officer's office, his secretary was a girl had been dating and she was a full 19 if you can imagine and I had told her I was 18 ½ or 19, I think I had told her I was 19. And oh, was she angry, she sat there typing at the typewriter and looked at me and said, boy the Navy is robbing cradles nowadays and I felt about an inch high. But that was the only embarrassing part about the lie you might say.

NM: And how long were you in the Navy?

NT: Oh, it wasn't that long, let me see, about a year and a half. Also you see, at Royal Rhode, I was able to take part of my engineering and then take engineering at the University of Alberta and still be in the Naval Reserve as they call it, with the idea that university would take 6 months of your time then you would spend 6 months back at sea and study to be an officer. By the time I was into 2nd year of engineering the war ended. Then the 2nd year of Royal Rhodes, say after about a year and a half the war ended and I had my choice to sign up for the permanent stay in or to get out and I was so relieved. I'm afraid the discipline of the Navy, to an old farm boy just didn't quite measure up. But in the Navy I'd met and I worked with a number of people from northern Ontario that were in the mining business. I know my interest in geology on the farm and then as I say, I'd always dreamt of prospecting in Africa or South America, it all triggered me off so I decided to take Mining Engineering and Geology.

#108 NM: So that made you go into engineering?

NT: That's right, yes. And of course, as the years went on, 1948, a year before I graduated, they hit oil here. I fell in love about that time too, with a young lady taking education that was over from Wales. She'd been in ballet and arts over there and she was in the ballet company in Edmonton. So somebody matched us up at that time, I used to play some football, be a boxer and that so they thought it was a match between beauty and the beast. So I'd fallen in love. The idea, although she was quite prepared, she thought we were going to go out to Africa or that, but then when the oil industry. . .

NM: So you still had the idea of going to Africa?

NT: Oh yes. I was always still going to Africa or South America, definitely not to stay here by any means. But then with the oil erupting underneath your feet and all the wonderful jobs that were being offered in '49. I remember coming down to Calgary and having, I think, 3 jobs within 1 week. Not 1 week, within 1 day of interviews. I was in the Palliser Hotel, across from the Palliser Hotel and one of the secretaries, although I didn't recognize, I should have, she was pretty enough but I was getting close to getting married. She mentioned to me as she was going out, you're Mr. Taylor aren't you, you were up to see my boss, well, he would like to see you again. So I went back upstairs and it was Ferd Morse with the City Service Company. They were just coming to Canada, they had no office, just his room in the hotel and if I was willing to go to work for him for \$250 a month and he would pay me out of his expense account. If they moved up which was sure they would, then they would give me a regular salary and I would be a regular employee, but in the meantime I was to come down to the hotel every day and work on maps and he would teach me a little. So as I was leaving the hotel, in the lobby, Russ Burns of Union Oil saw me, he said, we're all ready to hire you, I said, I just got. Then I met a guy on the street, I just went outside the hotel and Wilson, the head engineer for Imperial Oil said, boy, come back in tomorrow we'll have a job for you. So I had 3 jobs all by the time I come down the elevator and out. So I stayed with City Service, I made my first promise, my first bed there. I've never really regretted it.

NM: And how long did you work for them?

NT: I worked there, that was '49 through 1955, which was 6 years.

NM: And what was your job consisting of?

NT: I started as geologist and ended up as chief geologist. City Service, there again, like back in country school when I was being pushed and promoted because I was the only one in the class, there wanted me to be in a bigger class, the same way they were pushing and promoting Canadians, so they pushed me up. One of the things as chief geologist I had quite a number of people working for me, that were a lot younger, mostly Americans. That had its bits of friction at times, that was a little hard but City Service wanted to develop a Canadian entity. Unfortunately I left in 1955 and maybe hurt the whole Canadianization process. I often wondered. City Service was doing so well Canadianizing at that time. They had another man by the name of Bill Clark, who was with them and they gave a great deal of authority as a Canadian and both of us Canadian quit. Not because we were that unhappy with the company, just that the opportunity to get much better pay and other things with other companies. Although City Service, I wouldn't say

threatened, they thought it was a promise, I thought it was a threat, that I was to move to Columbia as their manager or assistant manager which they thought was a fantastic promotion. However about that time, as I say, fate interrupted, I already had a couple children and president of City Service had died just a few months earlier and exploration manager maybe just a month earlier. It sort of brought home to me how fleeting fame as these were big names in the company, yet when they died there was somebody stepped in. They were hardly missed and their names were hardly recognized within a couple months on reports. They went so fast. So I said to myself, gee. . .which I wanted to be, I wanted to be a career person up to them, I was going to rise to the top of the largest, well at that time it was the 8th biggest oil company in the world and I was going to make it the biggest, you know, a big empire. I had ambitions as only a farm boy that's read the classics and has had his imagination run away with him. Instead of prospecting with Africa I was going to be on Wall Street and be the king. . .

#163 NM: And very successful in Alberta.

NT: That's right. This little boy from Alberta. Then when those 2 died and they were replaced so quickly I suddenly said to myself, is this what I want out of life. So when the Bogota, Columbia promotion came up, I realized that once I did that I was cutting my roots and that I would have to be a corporate man the rest of my life. By this time I was putting roots into the community, I'm not so sure, did I have somebody getting ready to start school, and I was interested in the school board, I was interested in politics, I was interested in framing the society my children were going to grow into. Another company came to me and said, we want to set up in Canada and you can look after all our exploration and everything, it's called Honolulu Oil Company and it was more money and I said, to hell with it, I'm not going to make a corporate career. I will go with this new oil company, learn a little bit more and then maybe, as long as I can stay in Calgary that is more important.

NM: You forgot about the Bogota thing?

NT: Forgot about a corporate career at that time. And I never regretted it I don't think.

NM: What did you do with Honolulu Oil?

NT: There again, geology. City Service I'd done their geology and we'd pretty well operated on the plains. But I was one of the first men to bring out the concept of doing seismic and drilling in northern Alberta in the winter time. The Americans used to all come up and they wanted to work in summer, it seemed logical. That cold, inhospitable climate. But you see, I had worked in the summers in university up in the Arctic. I had worked up at the Arctic Ocean, and Baffin Island, I'd worked in Yellowknife and Great Bear Lake. And I knew that the best time to move equipment and get around was in the winter. 40 below is not bad if you adapt for it.

NM: You get accustomed to the cold.

NT: Well, it's not so much accustomed, it's the point that you learn how to live with it. You can't stand the cold, if you're lost without clothes you're going to freeze to death no matter how accustomed you are. But you learn how to run exhaust pipes through water tanks to keep them thawed out and you learn that you take a little snow off the ground,

the frost penetrates and firms it up so that what had formerly been muskeg or bog you don't sink in anymore. And I was the first one I believe, to introduce the Americans to that in 1949, 1950. Actually, '48-'49, and '49-'50. And it's just become widespread, even to this day more work is done in the wintertime in the north than it is in the summer. It's considered the natural thing to do but in those days that was, it was crazy. Don't forget most of the geophysical and drilling contractors were from Texas and Oklahoma and they thought it was downright uncivilized to work at freezing but at 40 below freezing, you've got to be nuts, they all wanted to go back south. It took a heck of a lot of convincing and pushing to say, winter's the time to work, you go south in the summer. They'd say, you crazy man, even the birds know better than that.

#202 NM: Honolulu, the name for an oil company is a bit strange, no?

NT: The reason Honolulu was picked was because they were a number of planters and capitalists. They used to call them the Big 6 in Hawaii, Dole Pineapple, Madison Steam Ship Line, Baldwin and Cook and a number of people, felt they were being victimized by the fuel oil they had to import in in the early part of the century, around 1905, 1910. So they formed their own oil company to import fuel oil into the Hawaiian Islands. I believe it was actually a British colony, the families certainly went back to when they were British, before they became Americans. But then they had invested money in California in a couple of wildcats and made a lot of money and became an oil company and they called it Honolulu Oil. When they moved to Canada, as part of the whole Honolulu, Seaboard, and Barnsdahl, they were a 3 way as they called it, they were a 3 way partnership, they came to Canada. Later most of them sold to Texaco anyhow but Honolulu survived for a number of years. They explored all through the west, and then I was able to indulge my fantasy because I controlled their exploration policy, of going up into the high Arctic and into the Mackenzie basin. So once again, back now as a soft rock, an oil geologist rather than a mining geologist, I found myself into the mountains of the Yukon and in the lower Mackenzie Delta. I put Honolulu into them in those early stages. But Honolulu in turn, you see, I went with Honolulu in '55 when it formed and it sold out in 1960, in only 5 years to what we call Standard of Indiana or Staniland, it's called Amoco today. One of the old Rockefeller ones then. So I went on my own this time, this time I decided, I'd gone with the big American company, I'd gone with the little American company. In each case, I thought I'd been very influential in them making a lot of money. I'm not so sure I was as smart as I thought I was and I'm not so sure I was as good as what some people said at that time. So I went on my own and I learned a couple of things very, very quickly. When I went on my own and had no money, just trying to put ideas together, I found it very difficult indeed, as different from the days when there was money behind me. But maybe even more so and this had more of a political value to me because I'd always been kind of, I must admit, in the middle or left of centre, maybe I got that from my father who was a great believer in co-ops and United Farmers. You might call it an egalitarian outlook. But I had started to get the right wing idea that the poor maybe were poor because maybe they deserved to be poor and maybe some of the unfortunate in this world weren't trying hard enough or anything else. Suddenly I went on my own and I didn't

have that big money behind me that I did with Honolulu or City Services, I suddenly noticed in 6 months the friends that used to want to go golfing with me, that used to want to go to parties and that used to want to travel here or there or go take in the theatre or take in fishing, suddenly they disappeared. I said to myself, I wonder what happened to me, maybe I'm using the wrong deodorant or something. But I got to analysing it and I realized that so much of us are what people think we are, you know, and what they think they can get out of us. When I was a wheeler dealer with the oil companies and was able to dispense contracts and jobs and things like that, I naturally was very much the centre of attention. But I was stupid enough to think it was my own ability and my wit and my charm that was bringing. . .

#254 NM: So you must have been very disappointed.

NT: So I came down to earth with a big thud. And it didn't do me a darn bit of harm at all. But it gave me a good basic to start, and the first 5 years on my own, from '60 to '65 were very, very tough.

NM: And you were in Calgary?

NT: Yes. Many the time I'd have quit and gone back to a job if somebody would have given me one. But it was kind of a depression then, nearly as bad as it is today.

NM: Were you on your own or did you have some employees?

NT: Oh no. Well, first of all, I called myself Taylor Management you see, I was of firm conviction after that many years, and by that time I had nearly 11 years in the oil business, managing 2 different companies, or managing the exploration part anyhow and development of 2 different companies, I was firmly convinced a lot of money was wasted. A lot of Americans were sending money up here, Germans, and they were not doing it. So I immediately went around telling everybody that they could have the benefit of my brains and experience for a few measly dollars. Well, it turned out that you don't tell anybody with money that because everybody with money thinks they're a genius, otherwise they wouldn't have money. I mean, that's one of God's little facts of life. So that was right off the bat, I was doing it the wrong way. I found out that the last thing they wanted was my advice. If I had any ideas to drill or anything. . . so very quickly, within one year that being a consultant, telling people on a per hour basis, giving them advice, was very, very difficult to make a living. Once you give them one bit of advice that was it, you couldn't reuse it again. So I then found out, well, let's be an independent. I would buy a little land or I would get some land cheap or I would get an idea where there was some oil on somebody else's land and I would go to that person, I would say, will you let me have half interest for drilling a 6,000' well, say half interest on 4 sections. They'd say yes, but you haven't got any money, I'd say, I know, I haven't but I think I know who has you see. And some people will say, well, buzz off, we don't want any in between men, but other ones to which I'm eternally grateful would say, well, we've tried, can't get anybody, if you do, fine. So then I would go around to some people with money and tell them. . .

#288 NM: And where were these lands, in the north or. . .?

NT: Oh, all in Alberta, everywhere in Alberta pretty well. And I would say, if you put up the

money to drill the hole can I have 1/8 or 5%, whatever it is, the best you can do. And after a couple of years, that was very lean pickings because there's no money in it, I hit a couple and then I got a little money going.

NM: Were there a lot of people doing this type of. . . ?

NT: Oh yes. Actually, at that time there was Bill Siebens who later retired very well with Siebens Oil and Angus Mackenzie who founded a number of oil companies overseas, did very well in England. There were a number of people peddling deals, Whitey Bosland was another one I remember, Jack Pierce did a few of those too. He was a little farther advanced than some of us at that time because he'd been at it a little longer, he'd come up from Wyoming I believe, although he was a Montrealer. I would say there was about 6 or 8 of us peddling. But mind you, oil companies, there were still only about 30-40 oil companies too.

NM: Not too many of them comparing to how many we have now.

NT: That's right. So it was fairly crowded. So I started making some money that way. As a matter of fact, personal income, I probably had as much then as I do now. What happened is that I went back to my dreams of building but this time instead of being president of someone else's worldwide corporation, I was going to build my own.

NM: And how many years did you keep your own company?

NT: Well, you see, from '60 - '65 were very lean years indeed, but then about '63, '64, I think, I stumbled into north Swan Hills. Shell had some land which I talked Shell into farming it out to me then I went to Dome and Dome took it over and drilled and gave me a right to buy back 1/8 after the first 2 wells were drilled. They came in as good oil wells. So that helped me and at the same time I run across an old railroad company in Saskatchewan that had a lot of mineral titles in potash lands. So my old mining engineering training helped some there too. So I optioned that and sold it to Scurry Rainbow, which is now Home Oil. So those are 2 deals which made me quite a little money. I don't know what they made me, they must have made me \$1-2 million, somewhere in there, and I should have stayed. I should have retired, put it in a bank, I would be better off.

NM: But you did not.

NT: Then I just kept rolling. Every time I made a half million or a million dollars in this life, and sometimes I made more, I put it back on the table and rolled the dice again. It's going to be nip and tuck when I die, whether I will be broke or very, very rich. And if you wait 2 years longer, I'll be broke.

NM: End of tape.

Side 2

NM: So how many years did you keep your first business?

NT: One of the problems that after I went on my own in 1960 I mentioned a few tight years but then money started to come in. But then I found I was working too hard trying to cover too much of an area as a private company. Yet I didn't have a good way of rewarding people that came in. Everybody wanted to have a stock option. So about the late 60's I decided to form a public company where we would sell shares in the market.

The easiest way to do that at that time, at least I thought so, was buy an almost bankrupt public company and then sell yourself to it for millions of shares, so that you ended up . .

NM: And then you put it on the market?

NT: That's right, yes. And you ended up with a large part of the company and yet it was listed on the stock market and then you could offer employees that came with you, stock options. So I took the, I think 3 major companies out at that time, I think I had Citizen Pipeline, Taylor Exploration and Taylor Management. I rolled them into, I wanted one name. I was in talking to the stock exchange people in Calgary and I couldn't think of a name and the guy that was running the stock exchange was Jock Thompson, he was a Scotsman. Taylor is a Scottish name, it's the largest set or the largest family in the Cameron clan, and the Cameron's are a big clan. The Cameron's clan is famous for backing Bonnie Prince Charlie in the revolution of 1745 when the Catholics tried to come back to take over Scotland. I was widely known as a Catholic and also a man that plays the bagpipes occasionally, so Jock knew I was a Catholic Scotsman and a name Taylor. He said, well, the logical leader of the Cameron clan is the Cameron of Lochille???. So he said, why don't you call it Lochille, you Catholic bastard. So I said, you know what, there's not many names around, it's got a nice ring to it. So that's how the name Lochille Explorations started.

#038 NM: And which year was it?

NT: That, I'm having trouble recalling. I think it was 1967 I believe it was. I'd have to go back to my records. If it's important enough I could go through them but I'm going to be out a year or 2 one way. It might even be '66 but I think it was '67. I was fairly fortunate, I'd filed land in the Arctic and people started to move north, it was very good years. Then '68 through till mania hit the country and I decided I wanted to try to be a member of Parliament. So I jumped into that. I've always had politics as an interest, my father was very interested in politics. As a matter of fact I think my father felt that next to being a clergyman, or called to the clergy, or a priest, the highest calling you could be was a politician. Not that he respected all politicians, he always argued but he always felt a politician who was motivated properly had a better chance to do more for mankind than anyone so I was quite interested in politics. Picking the Liberal party I suppose was a blend of my mother who was Conservative blue, Francophone and Belgian, and my father who was a left-winger, semi-Socialist so I suppose I come down the middle. In the middle I come down as a Liberal. And I ??? interested in school, and of course, then the great C. D. Howe, who had been a great minister of munitions and supply after the war and sort of a builder, an architect of modern Canada. I was a great admirer of his. So it seemed natural to become a Liberal. But I'm afraid I was zigging when the prairies were zagging because the prairies had been Liberal way back in the 20's but they'd lost in the 30's and the 40's, they looked like they might be coming back some. I didn't pick them because I thought they were going back or anything else, I'm afraid I was rather naive in politics in those days, I picked a party that I thought philosophically was close to what I believed in, rather than a party that I thought might win. Now that the years are gone by I can see that

you can be a Liberal in the Conservative party, you can be a Conservative in the Liberal party, it's hard to be a socialist in the Tory party and it's hard to be a fascist in the socialist party, I'll agree that's stretching it a little far. But in general there's that middle so I think I could have survived as a Conservative I suppose and been more to the left of centre.

NM: So you had 2 careers at one time, politics and the oil.

NT: Yes. I never thought they were exclusive. A lot of people have always said to me, I remember Jack Gallagher saying to me once, you know Nick, you're a great oil man, you're doing well but you would just be the richest man in Canada, probably one of the greatest oil men in Canada if you forgot about politics. It takes away, it's cost you millions it must have. Well Jack, it's flattering to think that, I'd always like to say that I've been able to compete in amongst all these sharks with one hand in behind my back and come out looking all right but maybe down deep you've got it all wrong. It's quite conceivable that being in politics has helped me be a businessman. Because I think that the intellectual ghetto that you have a tendency to fall into in business and the companions you make starts blunting your mind, starts dulling your mind after awhile. Politics keeps you a little more on your toes than business does really. As far as moving around. Secondly it gets you outside, you can meet so many more people. And I think lastly, I think politics gives you the aptitude, especially if you're a small oil man like I was or am, and don't have that much capital. Politics you win and you get people to do things, you win their minds and their hearts by your personality, your argument. You don't always have the reward to offer that you want. Now don't get me wrong, some do but when you're a Liberal in Alberta there's not a hell of a lot of rewards to offer. So you need to do it a great deal on charm, guile, logic, whatever you want to call the damn thing. Whereas in business you may think, and remember back when I told you that I went on my own, all of a sudden all these people that I thought. . .

#084 NM: That were your friends.

NT: All my friends, my fair weather friends disappeared. Well, the same thing happens in business. A lot of people will say, boy, they're great commanders, they know how to run things, manage things, that's fine because they're signing the bloody cheque. I often say, I'd like to see how good you are at running things and in command of things if you go out and do it in politics where you've got to do it on charm and try to convince somebody of your view of posterity, whatever it is that's coming down the road is the only thing you've got to offer the man. Then you'll see how great a leader you are. Anybody can be a leader when you've got a pay cheque. So I think that is a good training too, the politics. Once you learn what you have to do and how you have to analyse and understand people's motivations and appeal to them, that could be a help in doing business. In other words I guess I'm summing it up, I think it's much easier for a politician to become a successful businessman than it is for a successful businessman to become a successful politician.

NM: What about the question of time?

NT: There are different qualities you know. Time's a funny thing, you only have so many

hours and you sleep so many hours. Now if you argue the time I took away in politics hurt my business then you can argue that the same thing, that the time that a man spends with his family or travelling or reading or golfing hurts his business. Actually if that time that you use doing something else renews you, reinvigorates you and relaxes that corner of your mind,. I think man, woman, is made up of, every person is made up of a whole bunch of little corners and some of them just have to rest.

NM: So you think it's a question of organization?

NT: That's right sure. I guess after all this jerking around in circles is really saying that my politics, this is why I argue I think my politics has helped my business, it has been my relaxation, it has been my change of pace. I guess you might say politically that business has been my change of pace from politics. Maybe I'd have gone crazy if I'd have stayed in either one or the other.

NM: Who was the most influential person in your career in the oil patch?

NT: I think Jack Gallagher was the man who impressed me most in the oil patch.

NM: You have known him for a long time?

NT: I didn't work for him but I've been in partnership with him and I've been on committees with him and I have a great deal of admiration. I had a great deal of admiration, I still do today. I think he's being pushed out prematurely, I think that people at Dome that are the bankers and the little old number crunchers that they have there, with their myopic view of business and society are going to regret today that Jack left. Because of a few months of bad trouble they're willing to forget the years and years that you had him there. He I think impressed me more than most people have in the oil business. The other guy that impressed me a lot was Ernie Disler???. He's dead now. He was my 2nd boss at City Service, my boss from about 1952-'55 or so. He was a very enthusiastic man with a lot of drive. Business wise, 2 of the men that I've been most impressed, I think I like Doc Seaman. Not that I've been that close to him but I've just always liked the approach that he's had. I don't know whether he's one of your ones being interviewed, he should be, Doc Seaman with Bow Valley. He's an impressive man. Id' have to go back, I should have had a little more time to think about it but I can't. But Jack Gallagher sticks in my mind more. There have been men that I can't forget. The other one was Bobby Brown from Home Oil. He died, he went bankrupt after getting the company up so far. Bob Brown, he impressed me, he was quite a goer. That's about it. In politics of course, Lester Pearson was probably even above, both business and politics, the most impressive man that I was in close contact with in my life and had a great deal of influence on me.

#134 NM: Do you recall any funny anecdotes when you were on your own?

NT: Well, when I have to try and think of something funny. In the oil business eh. It's kind of interesting that I have a problem because I'm supposed to be a witty speaker or a good after dinner speaker but right off, to ask me about something funny in the oil business, no, I can't put my finger on anything. There's been many, many times, sort of humorous incidents that happened, particularly when I lived in Peace River with my wife. That's where I met Peter Bawden, Peter Bawden started his drilling company. I remember Peter having a whole load of fish that he had hauled some groceries to Hay River and he got all

this frozen fish and brought back to Peace River in March and we had about the only chinook of the winter that you got in Peace River. Bawden desperately, and I was helping him, driving around Peace River, giving fish away, trying to win a few favours because the damn things were thawing out and they were going to rot. He had a whole pick-up full of lake trout. I remember that as an interesting thing. I don't know, if you know Peter today, he's fairly much a stickler on social matters and to see him in old clothes trying to get rid of a bunch of fish before they turn rotten was kind of humorous. I'm trying to think, a lot of the other ones that come to mind are censored, I wouldn't be able to tell them to a mixed audience. Or even, I'm not so sure to a male audience. Some of the language that would happen. Humorous incidents, they may not be so humorous in this day of women's lib, running into 2 old prospectors in the north with a very young Indian girl between them, who was doing all the cooking and the heating and they were so tired they were laying in their bucks, looking like they were dying. Stories like that that you come to and that's about as . . . Also I suppose, one time, where everybody was betting outside. This was again in a mine, there seemed to be more fun in the mining camps, where we heard this cook was a little afraid of bears. So we put some guys fur cap on a stick you know, and it was in a tent and we made snuffling sounds like a bear and stuck the fur cap around the corner, figuring it would terrorize the cook and drive him right out through the wall of the tent. Instead there was a hell of a bang, it scared us half to death. What he had done was fired off both barrels of a shotgun that he had. Blew my friends fur hat all to hell and gone and scared us so bad that we ran about 100 yards and were hiding behind trees because we were afraid that he would start shooting at us.

#174 NM: These type of jokes happened a lot in camps?

NT: Yes, in camps. The other one of course too, a favourite one was when a man was sitting in the toilet you would throw a stick of dynamite that you had taken the powder out of. You just had the stick and you would put a very short fuse and you would throw it in and to see him come piling out of there as fast as he could with his trousers around his knees. Some people could do 100 yards with their trousers around their knees in 10 seconds. Even faster than many of the football players that we pay \$50,000 a year to watch. But that's the coarse country humour that you expect on the camps. I'm trying to think of something a little more refined. I'm having trouble, if you give me time I'll come back.

NM: Did you do any discoveries in the oil patch?

NT: In the oil patch it's hard to take credit for any discovery. I know, you always hear people saying they discovered this and they discovered that. You might say that you were in charge of a company when that particular company discovered something but you may not have had that much to do with it. There are oil fields that I had more to do with than most. Paddle River for instance was a play that I wanted to drill when I was with City Service and they didn't believe in it. So when I went to Honolulu I took the deal from City Service. So most of the Paddle River oil and gas, which is northwest of Edmonton, I would say I was the first at. And north Swan Hills, that was the deal I really made my first money on. You would say I'd had a lot to do with that. And Bucken oil discovery in the North Sea. Bucken is one of the first Scottish, he was Lord Tweedsmuir, one of the

Governor General's of Canada, he was the Governor General of Canada when I was a little boy. And he wrote a book called, I think it was King Solomon's Mines by John Bucken, which gave me the hope of wanting to prospect for diamonds in Africa. So when I hit an oil field in the North Sea and it had to have a Scottish name I couldn't think of a better Canadian Scottish name than Bucken oilfield. I was a part of that, I wouldn't say I was the sole one. In none of these ones are you the sole one because you have other geologists and engineers. But you might say that you're the prime pusher behind them. And there are other smaller things, a gas field out near Atley on the east side of Alberta, that was essentially put together by me and still owned half by ????. I guess there's Clive, I forgot about the Clive oilfield, I was the chief geologist with City Service when we hit that. That was largely my . . .

#208 NM: What do you consider the highest achievements in your career?

NT: I would think my family if I can be excused that. I had 9 very healthy kids, physically. Mentally sometimes I wonder about them. So far they've stayed out of jail, there's 2 lawyers and a couple of school teachers, a political scientist and architect. They've all trained in their own careers, airline pilot, 7 daughters and 2 sons. I'm quite proud that they're not only, of course, this is to do in partnership with my wife of course, she had more to do with it than I did. But if I was making my career I would say my family life, I think. . .

NM: As coming first.

NT: That has been. . . so many of my friends have had so many problems with their children and their wives and their health. Of course, health is one of the things that there's a lot of luck involved. But I'd say the highlight, what I would take most pride in, would be my family. I sometimes feel bad that I don't tell them that often enough. I often think that they don't think that I appreciate them. They think I'm maybe too critical. But I would say that. As far as the oil business is concerned, I've done quite well but that's largely because I was a blue-eyed Anglo Saxon with the right degrees and arriving on the scene at the right time. I'm not saying that all blue-eyed Anglo Saxon geologist grads from 1948 or '49 have become millionaires, but I will say nearly all millionaires from '49 were blue-eyed Anglo Saxon graduates. In other words it went a long way toward pulling it. If I was born black, pulling a rickshaw in Calcutta, my life today would be a lot different. So I'd say things like that, they're a lot more to do with luck than they are. Whereas a family thing you can take a little pride because you're starting out with a bunch of others. But there again, there's luck involved, I'm not going to try to write that off. You know as a mother yourself that your children, it's like an arrow, the slightest little bend here may put it out a mile. An arrow that's bent an inch when it's 4' away from the bow will be yards off target when it's a quarter mile away. And that's the same way with a child's personality. It will only be a little bit off when it's 4 years old but it can be, by the time it's 20 it's way off.

NM: But in the oil patch, what do you consider was the most important things you did?

NT: Most important move I made. I would think the north Swan Hills discovery with Dome that gave me the start. Now I didn't use it properly, probably I should have retired and

went into full time politics. The other thing that is close to it is going public with Lochille, becoming a public company. Also ranking just neck and neck with that is finding oil in the North Sea. That was a big gamble, really I could have broken the company, I gambled everything on it. I could have been bankrupt and it came through.

NM: You went yourself over there in the North Sea?

NT: Well, and I had employees too. But I borrowed and begged and stole all the money I could to keep up my share of it and it came in. It come close.

NM: Can you tell me about your company now? Do you have plans for it?

NT: Oh yes. I'm 56, if I can get underway . . . I don't intend retiring, I just want to work a little less or a little slower. I have hobbies, I love deep water sailing, I love travel and I love politics, I love business. So those are 4 things that I intend to try to indulge in. Not necessarily in equal doses. On the oil company side I'd like to build it into, I'd like to see Lochille become, outside the state owned oil company, one of Canada's most famous and biggest Canadian owned companies.

NM: How many employees do you have?

NT: I don't know. In Canada I don't think I have that many, I think I have 20. In the United States I have about 7 or 8 and in Europe about 7 or 8, in the Middle East about 4 or 5. That pretty well does it.

NM: If you would have to redo your career again, would you do it differently?

NT: Oh yes, in the business sector I would. I might make different business deals. Oh yes, I mean, I've got 20-20 rearview. For instance I went into the frontier too early, I would have put much more money into shallow gas in southern Alberta. Made more money there, that way the cash flow, I think I would have build Lochille different, I could have built it faster and quicker that way. But I'd still be in the oil business. Politics, I bet I wouldn't have run for provincial leader in 1974. I mean, I've had 8 years leading a political party that got no place. I'm not regretting I did it, it's broadened my experience, I've learned a lot but it's still griping as you can gather. I like to lead, I like to win and it's just been nothing but a succession of defeats, one after another after another. So I would do that differently of course. But the general thrust of my life I wouldn't do differently. I would marry, I would go into the oil business, I would be a geologist, I would form Lochille and I would go into politics. But within each of those, well, I wouldn't say in the family home career, I would never be so lucky to marry as well again if I was recycled. I can't imagine how I'd improve on that but I can see how I could have improved on my political and economic thing. My family life I don't think I could have improved on that, I've been very fortunate.

NM: Do you have any publications?

NT: Papers that I've put out. No. I wrote for some years, about 5 or 6 years, a column every 2 weeks for the rural papers, on everything and anything, mostly politics of course. But quite often on travel or agriculture in the Middle East or things that caught my fancy. I just used to love to write it, I used to call it, A Better Way. And I had quite a following.

NM: Did you write about oil?

NT: I used to write about oil too, yes, occasionally. Just more from the human interest point of view. And they were always short, they would be about 15 column inches each week.

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May 1983

Side 2

NM: Thank you very much Nick Taylor.