

The following transcript of
William “Bill” Armstrong’s interview

on

Memories and Music

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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THEME:

B.M. Thank you Doug. On Memories and Music this afternoon I'm pleased to have Bill Armstrong as my special guest. Bill came to Sudbury almost forty years ago and is quite happy to spend his retirement here, although he does enjoy visits back to his home near Parry Sound. However, before we begin our visit with Bill, let's return for a moment to Doug McLaughlin for a sampling of the music for today.

(MUSIC)

B.M. Well, William Bill Armstrong, I'm very glad that finally I've caught up with you. I've been after you for a little while to get you as our guest on Memories and Music and I'm very glad that you're here today. Bill, we've got quite a little bit of ground I want to cover. We've had a little chat before we started the program. I suppose we should start at the beginning, I said that you come from near Parry Sound, where, just where are you from?

B.A. Well I'm from Sprucedale, that's a town, it's south thirty-two miles from Parry Sound.

B.M. Now that's Parry Sound, be south of Parry Sound?

B.A. More almost east.

B.M. East? And do we see that on the ~~sixty~~⁶⁹ nine going down at all?

B.A. No, no....

B.M. ^{But do we see} ~~where~~ a turn off to it anyway?

B.A.you leave ~~sixty~~⁶⁹ nine about one mile south of Parry Sound and take 518.

- B.M. Oh, is that that turn-off just after you pass that mill, Mill Lake there, and on the left, you turn left?
- B.A. I think there's a couple at Humphrey Drive and a couple more after you go over the bridge there.
- B.M. Yes.
- B.A. It's after you pass the south bypass to Parry Sound.
- B.M. Yes.
- B.A. On pass that there's a the 518 and it says Orville, and Otter Lake.
- BM, Oh Orville mostly.
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. (I know somebody else from Orville) Is Bobby Orr from Orville or is he from Parry Sound?
- B.A. I think he's originally from Parry Sound.
- B.M. But they didn't name Orville after him?
- B.A. I don't think so....
- B.M. No.
- B.A.that I know of, no.
- B.M. O.K., let's back up a little further Bill. I like to see how far back we can go. Your parents for instance, were they, did they come from somewhere to go to Spruce-dale?
- B.A? Well they came not very far from ~~Orville~~ ^{Katrine}. About ten miles ^{away} from....
- B.M. Well ~~Orville~~ ^{Katrine}, that, when we used to go down the old highway to Toronto we used to pass ~~Orville~~ ^{Katrine} didn't we? On highway 11?
- B.A. Well there's two parts to Katrine. There's one part, the old part over by Bill Lake, and then this new part where you pass there....
- B.M. Oh really.
- B.A.it's kind of built up....
- B.M. I didn't know that.

- B.A.the old highway went through there you know.
- B.M. Yes. Well now your parents came from Katrine, and had they come from somewhere to Katrine or were they raised there? Or was your grandparents there?
- B.A. My parents were raised right there, but my grandparents they came from down around Ackton or Guelph. That's where they came up in that....
- B.M. And they left that country and came up north did they?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. A farm?
- B.A. I guess the land was free grab about that time there you know.
- B.M. Yeah it was cheap. ^{I suppose} that's it eh? So they came to farm up there?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. Where are your, well what ancestry, what ethnic group do you belong to Bill? Are you English, Irish, Scottish?
- B.A. My dad's parents and grandparents came from Ireland.
- B.M. Did they?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. That's why you have that stubborn streak in you still?
- B.A. It shows, ha ha ha.
- B.M. Ha ha ha ha ha, I'm only joshing you there. So alright there's a family goes back....O.K., your father came from Kaprine to Sprucedale, not to farm?
- B.A. No, he bought a hundred acres of land there but it was mostly bush. We built a house there and lived in the house and we had horses and a couple of cows you know but....
- B.M. Just enough to keep you....
- B.A.yeah, they didn't go into too much farming.
- B.M. Would that be, now Sprucedale immediately I ask the question, is it named because it was a great country for Spruce? ~~was~~ that the kind of timber that was there ~~do you~~ think?
was

B.A. I really don't know for sure, the post office now was, the town is, when the railroad came through they built the post office near the railroad....

B.M. (unintell.)

B.A.it originally was out a mile and a half.

B.M. Is it a village, Sprucedale?

B.A. Oh yeah, there's about, I think five hundred people...

B.M. Oh a good size eh.

B.A.population.

B.M. Was that lumbering there then at that time?

B.A. That was lumbering yeah.

B.M. In your days. Well now when your dad bought this hundred acres what would he be doing? Would he be, would he be cutting logs? How (unintell.) are logs?

B.A. Ah some pulpwood, some logs and at that time there was quite a sale for railroad ties and....

B.M. Oh yes.

B.A.and quite a few cedar posts.

B.M. That was the thing eh.

B.A. ^{MM} They had a hub factory in Sprucedale too.

B.M. A hub?

B.A. A hub factory....

B.M. Now you'll have to tell people that are listening. A lot of people don't know what a hub factory is.

B.A. Well that's what, they used to make the hubs for the wagon wheels.

B.M. Oh sure. They were made separate from the wheels.

B.A. Oh yes, they made the hubs in there and....

B.M. Out of wood?

B.A.out of birch. It had to be a special....

B.M. Yellow or white birch?

B.A. Yellow birch.

B.M. Yellow birch.

B.A. Special yellow birch and they had that hub factory there right up 'til, I guess about 1936 someplace along there, and then it seemed to....

B.M. Well I suppose wagons started to go out then.

B.A. Wagons kind of went out of yeah.

B.M. O.K., you're raised, or talking about wagon wheels, now I can remember as kids our wagon wheels had what they refer to as a tire, and iron tire on them, but you'd take them off something and use them as hoops didn't you? ~~For-fun~~ For fun, did you kids do that also?

B.A. They were pretty heavy for that.

B.M. Well some big ones, but there were smaller ones Bill. Some of the smaller ones I think that we used to use at times.

B.A. The wagon wheel tires were....

B.M. They were pretty big and heavy weren't they?

B.A. Yeah, they were pretty heavy.

B.M. I never ~~new~~ knew ^{the} the hub....

B.A. Bar hoops were a lot better.

B.M. Yeah. The hub was quite a size and it fitted over the outside of the axle didn't eh....

B.A. Yeah.

B.M.of the wheel.

B.A. ~~Yeah they put the~~ Yeah they put the, after the (unintell.), I guess they went to Orilia probably. They had a wagon factory in Orilia ~~didn't they~~ eh, and they put the casting inside the hub and spokes and all....

B.M. It was the....., did you go to school in Sprucedale?

B.A. Yes, I went....

B.M.S What year were you born incidently?

B.A. 1915.

B.M. 1915, so you're not sixty-four years of age aren't you eh?

B.A. Yeah I am.

B.M. O.K., Sprucedale and you went to school, that would be about 1920, '21, just after the first world war. There was sort of a depression on then I guess. Did you know anything about that then?

B.A. Well it was pretty tuff, pretty slack alright there.

B.M. Was your dad working?

B.A. ^eWill just mostly in the bush work and....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.pulp wood and....

B.M. Just, of course you had your own, you'd grow a lot of your own stuff I suppose. You were self-sufficient were you?

B.A. Well, not really. We had a garden of course you know.

B.M. Yeah. Did you have a cow?

B.A. Oh yeah, we had a couple of cows and....

B.M. A few chickens eh?

B.A. Oh yeah, and chickens.

B.M. A pig and so forth.

B.A. But it was pretty....

BM. Yeah, you didn't have any spending money....

B.A. No, you didn't. ~~MMMM~~

B.M.or anything like that for....

B.A. I used to deliver mild in little quart pails for a fellow next farm ~~there~~ to us. He sold milk around the town and to people, and he had a few cows.

B.M. Alright, in those days he would sell it, the mild direct from the cow?

B.A. Yeah, direct from the cow, yeah.

B.M. Not pasteurized....

B.A. No.

B.M.not separated....

B.A. No.

B.M.nothing.

B.A. No, nothing, no.

B.M. It'd be thick and creamy eh?

B.A. Well it was quite a bit different anyways from what you get now.

B.M. Yeah, in fact there would be a few bugs in there too wouldn't there probably?

B.A. Well he, he was pretty, he was a German fellow you know and....

B.M. Everything pretty clean.

B.A.he seemed to understand.

B.M. You said quart pails....

B.A. Well.....

B.M.not quart bottles?

B.A. Not very, no he didn't use, he mostly had just little five pound honey pails and syrup pails.

B.M. Any kind eh?

B.A. Any kind, yeah.

B.M. I see. Not returnable or anything like that eh?

B.A. Well we brought the pail home when you went back with the next pail....

B.M. And then when you went home....

B.A.and you'd clean, ^{or wash} that pail....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.and that pail then again the next day.

- B.M. This was one thing you did as a kid in Sprucedale did you?
- B.A. I did that for a long time for him.
- B.M. Well tell me, a kid growing up in a community of four or ~~ifve~~ five hundred ~~peie-peie~~ people, there's no movie house there was there?
- B.A. No, no movie, no.
- B.M. So what did ~~they~~ do to keep out of trouble, keep out of mischief or did they get into mischief? What did you do as kids?
- B.A. Well they had an old skating rink there in ~~the~~ winter time....
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A.and they used to clean that up a bit.
- B.M. Outdoors?
- B.A. Outdoor.
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A. Well no not exactly, it wasn't, it had a roof on it there.
- B.M. Was it covered?
- B.A. Yes, it did, it was ~~covered~~ that one, they ~~tore~~ it down later on though.
- B.M. Say, you were pretty modern then eh?
- B.A. Modern there for awhile there.
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A. They tore it down, we used to have to draw the water with the horse and sleigh you know.
- B.M. Oh to flood it eh?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. You just didn't turn the tap on in those days.
- B.A. No, no, you had to, used to draw the water with a barr^el and the horse and sleigh and....

- B.M. When you were a kid down there, did you do any ~~s~~kiing?
- B.A. Ah, a little bit yes.
- B.M. Cross-country skiing Bill, or was it a combination of both? eh in those days?
- B.A. Yeah, I never really got very good on a pair of skies. I don't know, I seem to, I couldn't handle them I guess.
- BM. Well how far did you have to go to school? Did you happen to just....
- B.A. I was pretty lucky on that. I was only about, about a mile.
- B.M. Only about a mile, and you walked naturally. ^{Today} You know ~~why~~, you can't let the children walk that.
- B.A. No, no.
- B.M. Mustn't do that.
- B.A. I'll say there was lots walking four miles there to you know.
- B.M. Oh yeah. This was a school in Sprucedale?
- B.A. Yeah, right in there.
- B.M. Was it a one-room school or....
- B.A. No, that was a four-room school. You could go right up to grade twelve there.
- B.M. Really?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. You went to high school there.
- B.A. Oh yes.
- B.M. Why in that little community? I thought you would have to go to Parry Sound or something for that.
- B.A. No. They had a train that travelled pretty well on time for the school and the pupils came right from Deep-Riv Harbour....
- B.M. As far away as Deep Harbour?

- B.A.Deep Harbour and Orville and all went to high school there.
- B.M. Is that so?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. (unintell.)
- B.A. And there was quite a few, well if you lived the other way out of Sprucedale, they mostly ~~eight~~ either had to find a place to stay in town, or....
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A.they'd come in and stay during the school season eh?
- B.M. Oh sure.
- B.A. Some of them walked quite a ways ^{though} too you know.
- B.M. To go to high school?
- B.A. Three, four miles to get....
- B.M. Of course in those days, there were fewer people that when on to high school. After you got your, which today is grade eight, which was senior fourth, a lot of kids left. They were ~~thirteen~~,--fourteen or fifteen, they would leave school, right?
- B.A. Oh ~~yeah~~ yes. Yeah, fifteen that was....
- B.M. Yeah, you were out working then weren't you?
- B.A. Oh yeah you were ready....
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A. You'd look for a job.
- B.M. Well I want to talk about some of the jobs that you had Bill, but first I want us just to take a brief break here because our good friend Doug has some music in store and we want to enjoy that, then we're going to continue.

(MUSIC)

- B.M. Bill, as I said when we paused there momentarily, at the rightful age of fourteen or fifteen, most kids of your era went out to work didn't they, and I suppose

you were one of them were you?

B.A. ~~Yeah-~~ Yes, I got my first job in the sawmill when I was sixteen. You had to be sixteen at that time to....

B.M. Was it the law?

B.A. Compensation....

B.M. Oh yeah.

B.A.they....

B.M. Was the sawmill in Sprucedale?

B.A. No, it was eight miles from Spucedale.

B.M. And what did you do to go to work?

B.A. Oh no, we stayed right there.

B.M. Oh did you? Like in a camp?

B.A. Yeah, they had a bunkhouse and....

B.M. mmhh.

B.A.you stayed right there and you worked from seven in the morning 'til six at night.

B.M. Seven 'til six, yeah.

B.A. One hour off for lunch and....

B.M. Pretty noisy in there?

B.A.Saturday too.

B.M. Yeah, and worked Saturday.

B.A. All Saturday and all....

B.M. Was it pretty noisy in there?

B.A. Uh....

B.M. Farmers with their old saws screeching away all day.

B.A. Yeah, it was noisy enough all right, but....

B.M. What did you get paid? Do you remember?

B.A. A dollar a day.

B.M. A dollar a day.

B.A. And this would be in ~~a-bout~~ about 1929 or '30. It'd be '31.

B.M. '31, eh? Right at the top of the depression.

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. You got a dollar a day and your board?

B.A. A dollar a day and your board yeah.

BM. Big money.

B.A. Big money, yeah.

B.M. Oh ~~as~~ sure I'd say. Six bucks a week.

B.A. Yeah, ha ha.

B.M. Boy, you were rolling.

B.A. A millionaire, ha ha.

B.M. Was that just a, was the sawmill just operating in the summ~~er~~er?

B.A. Ah, yes. He just run mostly in the summer.

B.M. And what about the winter? What did you do in the winter?

B.A. Well they had a bunch of bush....

B.M. Oh, so you went in the bush and cut a lot.

B.A. I never, I never worked for that, for that man. Like that's what we called Files Mill....

BM. mmhh.

B.A.but I never ~~er~~ really worked for him in the bush. I went to South River and worked in there.

B.M. Well there was a big lumber, there's still lumbering. ~~There's~~ the big mill down at the South River isn't there, or the lumber yard there?

B.A. Oh yes, they've got the big mills still going down there.

- B.M. Was that, in your time, was that, there was no virgin timber there then was there? The real big stuff?
- B.A. Ah, some yes.
- B.M. Was there?
- B.A.1 Yeah.
- B.M. Have you seen some of those big ones....
- B.A. Oh yes.
- B.M.that they talk about? Three foot at the but and more.
- B.A. I, in fact, ~~well~~ the last winter I worked in the bush, we fell birch trees. Well I seen the logs go out on a truck, one log, with a little one on each side to keep from rolling off.
- B.M. One log on a truck?
- B.A. One log, yeah.
- B.M. This is birch?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. Yellow birch?
- B.A. Yellow birch, yeah.
- B.M. (whistle), man oh man that would be a size.
- B.A. Five foot six ^{Cross-cut saw} ~~cut~~ you could just, you know you ~~had~~ had to go around the tree.
- B.M. I was going to ask you, how you....my next question was how did you cut them down?
- B.A. Yeah five foot six cross-cut saw and....
- B.M. You couldn't get right through eh?
- B.A.when you were going through the ~~one~~ center there,
- B.M. You'd have what, three, three and a half foot at the....
- B.A. Oh yes, easy that size.
- B.M. And this is hard wood?

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. Well that'd be a job after you got that down, to l^op all the branches off because, what, you're ~~cut~~^{just} using the trunk of the tree aren't you?

B.A. Well you didn't, if it was nice and straight and not ~~paper~~ tapered too much, you took a sixteen-foot log off it, and, ~~if~~, but if it was tapered....

B.M. Yes.

B.A.too fast, you took maybe a ten or something you know and....

B.M. So when you fed it to the mill, you could cut it.

B.A. Yeah, if a hardwood log is tapered too much, you lose too much on the, on the first slab.

B.M. I see.

B.A. So they....

B.M. They'd take a shorter, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

B.A. Cut a shorter one.

B.M. And that goes to the sawmill and would be cut. What would that be used for mostly then, Bill do you know? What would they use it for?

B.A. Well they used a lot of three inch birch and stuff at that time. I don't know where....

B.M. Three inch? Three inch wide?

B.A. Yeah, thick. Three inch....

B.M. Three inch thick?

B.A. Yeah, and....

B.M. Whooh.

B.A.I don't know what they, whether it went to some other place for refinishing ~~it~~ after that.

B.M. Yeah, maybe.

B.A. It was shipped out of there anyway ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ you know.

B.M. O.K., with this in the winter time where you'd be working in the bush....

B.A. Yes, I....

B.M.in a bush camp.

B.A.I worked, I put ^{down} ~~these~~ winters in the bush camps.

B.M. O.K., you tell me your experiences. Bush camps, we have had a variety of them. Some have said they're great places. The food has been excellent, others ~~have said~~ say that there's been no great thing, ~~there~~ beans three times a day, so what's your experineces?

B.A. Well, I never really worked in a ~~big~~ big bush camps like maybe twenty men or something like that, but I would never have any complaint on the food, on the food and it was always....

B.M. The combination was good?

B.A.good yeah.

B.M. And you didn't have to wear one suit of underwear from fall until spring eh?

B.A. Well, we used to try and wash them once in awhile....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.if there was some place to..

B.M. But the bathing facilities weren't too great I assume.

B.A. No, ha ha ha.

B.M. ha ha ha, well in the thirties that's about all that you could get anyways wasn't it eh?

B.A. Oh yes, that's all there was for....

B.M. You were lucky to get that.

B.A. Was not too much schooling in and you know....

B.M. Sure That's true, and did you work a dawn to dusk day there also Bill?

B.A. Yes, you were in the bush by daylight and you stayed there until it was dark and but in the fall, usually that was in the fall so you know, it wasn't really daylight til ~~seven~~ seven o'clock or seven thirty before you

could ^{really} start falling trees.

B.M. Pretty cold in the winter time too eh?

B.A. Oh boy, that....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.that was cold.

B.M. I'll bet.

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. And it was all of course, no chainsaws in those days.

B.A. No chainsaws no.

B.M. And horses in the bush.

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. They'd have to do all the work.

B.A. Old horses.

B.M. Now, you also, you went and helped build that first road into Algonquin park I guess did you?

B.A. Yes, I went up in there, I'm not sure, around 1932 someplace or '31 that I went in there but there was twelve hundred men there working for....

B.M. This is one of the government roads camps we're talking about.

B.A. Yeah, they had the, I think they had five camps in there, with about a hundred and, hundred and fifty, two hundred men in each camp, and the camps were spaced four miles apart....

B.M. Oh.

B.A.and you worked two miles each way and the other camp came two miles to meet you, you know.

BM. How did you get in there?

B.A. I went in on the train from Sprucedale...

B.M. Yes.

B.A.and went to what they call Canoe Lake Station at that time, and then we walked about ~~three~~ miles or

four miles through the bush to the camp.

B.M. To the camp?

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. Somebody had been there and built the camp before?

B.A. Oh yeah, the camps were all....

B.M. Were they pretty good camps?

B.A. They were, they had wooden floors and walls up four feet and tent roofs....

B.M. And tent roofs, eh.

B.A.tent roofs, and there was about thirty-five men in each ~~each~~ camp, ~~with bunks, double bunks with straw pallets and so forth.~~

B.M. With Bunks?

B.A. Double bunks.

B.M. With straw pallets and so forth.

Now were you there in the winter time?

B.A. Ah....

B.M. I was just wondering about heating those things in the winter time.

B.A. I was there quite late in the fall, though I wasn't...

B.M. No.

B.A.there right exactly in the winter, but they did run all winter, they did run all winter.

B.M. Now what, you're working for the government and you're sort of on pogie, what fabulous sum of money were you imbursed for your efforts here?

B.A. Well, ten dollars a month and your board.

B.M. And your board?

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. O.K., how was ~~the~~ your board?

B.A. Well, I found it all right. ~~It~~ It was great, yeah.

B.M. Yeah, a lot of men I know worked in the, there's something to be said. The people there said it was terrible it wasn't really terrible, because at the time when there were hundreds of thousands of people unemployed, what it did in escence, it gave you a little bit of ~~peekt-meen~~ pocket money and it gave you something to do instead of sitting around being dissatisfied eh?

B.A. Oh yes.

B.M. And also, we got a lot of roads built.

B.A. Yes, they had a lot of fellow, young fellows from Toronto fight in there.

B.M. Yes, I know oh lots of them came up here. Road [?]Camps Solo, and the transcanada, lots of the Trans Canada was built during that period.

B.A. In fact, the young fellow I worked for, he was, they called him, at that time, they called him strawbosses ~~se~~ as you know....

B.M. Yes.

B.A.and he was a clerk from Simpson Store in Toronto.

B.M. Was he? As a matter of fact, I've sometimes thought that wouldn't be a bad idea for the nine hundred ~~B.A.~~ thousand that are reported to be unemployed today that would do, good to get out and do a little work like that, wouldn't hurt anybody would it?

B.A. No.

B.M. But I'm afraid I'm in a minority saying that, so I better shut up/ Bill, you also worked, that part of the ~~eeu~~ country is been good to you, you worked at Limber Lost Lodge up there?

B.A. Yes, I went

B.M. When, what year was that?

B.A. I went into Limber Lost Lodge in 1936.

B.M. '36, that's, Limber Lost Lodge ~~was~~ ^{not} one time was a name that you associated with about the best accomodation that you could go to at a summer place.

B.A. Oh yes it was the place....

B.M. The place people came from Toronto to go to Limber

Lost.

B.A. Oh yes.

B.M. Was it big place then?

B.A. Yes, they had a dining room there with a hundred and fifty seats.

B.M. Seat a hundred and fifty people eh?

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. O.K., what were you, what did you do there?

B.A. Well I worked in the barns most of the time whenever the tourists were there, I helped look after the horses and....

B.M. These were ~~rid~~ riding horses eh?

B.A. Riding horses yes.

B.M. I see.

B.A. You refer to them Oslar, and looked after the horses and put the horses on, but I wasn't an instructor ~~-----~~ or anything like that....

B.M. Oh.

B.A.they had other men there that took them out and instruct you how to ride a horse and....

BM. Who ran Limber Lost Lodge? Who owned it?

B.A. Well this was Gordon Hill. He was raised right around there and in fact he was a brother to the Lem Hill ^{that} used to be in Hill Clark Francis here in Sudbury.

B.M. Was he really? A brother of, yes, the Hill Clark Francis that had the lumber and their up north now.

B.A. Yeah, I think there up around Hailebury or New Liskard there.

B.M. Yeah. So Hill had Limber Lost Lodge eh?

B.A. Gordon Hill, yes. That was Lynn Hill's brother.

B.M. Was that a ~~swe~~ seasonal job or was anything there in the winter time?

- B.A. Oh yes, that place went steady. They had trains used to come from Toronto for ski, ski weekends.
- B.M. Even back then too eh?
- B.A. Oh they'd have taxies, and they had a bus,....
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A.and they'd meet them all at the train and bring them in there for the weekends. That was a big, a big due. Friday night and Saturday.
- B.M. What's with Limber Lost now Bill?
- B.A. Well, right now it's pretty well ~~shurt~~- shut right down as I can understand. ~~There~~ They're going to try and get it going again. I guess that they're having problems with the sewers and....
- B.M. ~~Enviromentalsal-p~~ Environmental problems eh?
- B.A. Yeah, environmental problems yeah.
- B.M. And that's not....now of course, being at Limber Lost, also was another ~~place~~ for you because I believe it was there that you were fortunate enough to meet someone that you've lived with for ~~some~~ quite some time right?
- B.A. Yeah. I met my wife there. She came in there, well in fact she left the farm to work in Toronto. At that time the, pretty near all the girls from the farms, they went to Toronto to look for a job....
- B.,M Yeah.
- B.A.they had done housework, and....
- B.M. Or service or something.
- B.A.and she came back home there, and she got the job at Limber Lost....
- B.M. ^{But} Now didn't you tell me, or mention it, we were talking about this briefly before, that she lived only a few miles from you in Sprucedale but you had never met?
- B.A. Yes, we were raised only five miles apart, but ~~we didn't meet 'til we went to Limber Lost.~~
- B.M. You didn't meet until you went to Limber Lost.
- B.A.didn't meet until I went to Limber Lost, no.

B.M. Isn't that interesting. Now that would be in 1936, but you weren't married then?'

~~B.A.~~

B.A. No, no, well I stayed at Limber Lost there for, like she didn't come in there 'til pretty near the last year I was there.

B.M. How long were you there?

B.A. I was there from 1936 and '37, but then in '38 another ~~e-si~~ cousin of ~~thei~~ this Gordon Hill that owned Limber Lost, Gordon laid me off on the barns. He had to get another man into that knew more about training horses than I did, so he laid me off, so I got a job with Hue Hill. This was ~~Geden~~ Gordon's cousin, and he started, he had a lumber camp there that winter....

B.M. Oh.

B.A.so we had known one another like from before too.

B.M. Yes.

B.A. She was there.~~tee~~

B.M. That's beautiful country in through there?

B.A. Oh yes.

B.M. Is that anywhere near Arrow Head Park there, in that, where Arrow Head Park is now?

B.A. That's off, Arrow Head is off Algonquin Park Road isn't it?

B.M. Well, no you actually come off the highway. You come out the Algonquin ~~Park~~ Park Road and it's just up a couple of miles back on the highway before you get to that Algonquin ~~Park~~ Park Road. But it's just beautiful back in there eh? Beautiful country.

B.A. Arrow Head, I know when I went into the road camps there, they had two big boy's, boy's camp, and a girl's camp.

B.M. Well this is a provincial park I'm talking about.

B.A. Oh yes, I see.

B.M. An open thing. Now, Bill that brings you up, you came to Sudbury in what, 194.....?

B.A. 1940.

B.M. ~~1940~~ '40.

B.A. In May ~~in~~ 1940.

B.M. May of 1940.

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. I want to talk a little bit about that, but again let's pause so that we can enjoy a little music with Doug, and then we'll continue.

(MUSIC)

B.M. Bill you came to Sudbury in 1940.

B.A. 1940.

B.M. Why did you, I'm curious as to what induced you to come up here. Had somebody told there was work available?

B.A. Well I had finished work there. We, we cut seven hundred cords of stove wood for the lodge, for Limber Lost Lodge, this cousin of Gordon's there, he....

B.M. Right.

B.A.got the contract, so when we finished in limber camp that winter, Hue said, well when the ~~law~~ log haul starts there's a lot of men that he don't need....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.so Hue said I can't lay you people off he said in the middle of winter, so he got this contract from Gordon and we cut the seven hundred....

B.M. Cord wood eh?

B.A. Yeah. There was ten of us, and we cut seven ~~hundred~~ hundred, it was stove wood, see that lodge was heated with woodstoves at that time.

B.M. (unintell.)

B.A. Oh yes, and boiler, they had a boiler....

B.M. For hot water eh?

B.A.for hot water, and that was all heated....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A. So anyway, I finished up there and I didn't have anything to do, Ernie Paul, I don't know if anyone remembers him or not, he was up here and....

B.M. Ernie Paul?

B.A. Or he was a policeman at Creighton.

B.M. Oh yes, that's where the name rings a bell.

B.A. And he, he had worked with me at this, at the lodge too, so he was up here, so I wrote him a letter, and he said that there was an opening and he figured I might get on.

B.M. O.K. now, you came up here in a, how did you come up here?

B.A. Well I had a Model T Ford.

B.M. And you bought that for how much?

B.A. Ten dollars. I bought that car for ten dollars.

B.M. What year was that?

B.A. In 1926.

B.M. 1926? And ~~want~~ what year did you buy it, 1940?

B.A. Ah, 19, no I bought that car in 1938.

B.M. So' 1926, so it's twelve years old, and you bought it for ten dollars?

B.A. Ten ~~dollars~~ dollars yeah.

B.M. And it was in good working order?

B.A. Well, I did a ~~little~~ bit of work on it, but....

B.M. Was it a touring car or....

B.A. Oh yes, yes, a touring.

B.M.with the side curtains and so forth?

B.A. Well I guess it had side curtains on it at one time.

B.M. But it didn't have it when you had it eh?

B.A. No, ha ha.

B.M. And that was the one with the three pedals on the floor.

B.A. Three pedals on the floor yeah.

B.M. And the gas with a spark up on the steeringwheel.

B.A. Crank out in front.

B.M. And the crank out in front.

B.A. Yeah, and a.....

B.M. And a little bit of a motor. There was no that anybody could fix almost.

B.A. Oh yes, you didn't need too many tools in those days, and, ~~but~~ but I drove that car from Sprucedale to here on five gallons of gas. ~~That~~ That's something that I've never been able to do since.

B.M. Sprucedale to Sudbury?

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. Now at that rate, you'd have to go over to highway 11 and up, ~~wouldn't~~ wouldn't you?

B.A. You come up highway 11 to North Bay....

B.M. Then take 17.

B.A.and then take 17.

B.M. Sure.

B.M. I mean, you couldn't come 69, and that would be eighty, hundred, that'd be a hundred and fifty miles or more.

B.A. At that time it was a little bit more than that because you went in, all through all them little towns.

B.M. Yeah.

B.A. Vernor, and...

BM. Oh, yeah. ↗

B.M. Three hundred and fifty miles or more on five gallons of gas, you're getting about thirty-five miles to the gallon on your....

B.A. Thirty at least you know.

B.M. Yeah.

B.M. What were the roads like then when you come up here?

B.A. Pretty well all gravel.

B.M. Yeah.

B.A. Sturgeon Falls flat was....

B.M. But was that in that stretch?

B.A. Yeah, it was cemented or paved, I don't know what was....

B.M. That was one of the early ones I know, and you got a job of course when you came up here eh?

B.A. No, not right away. I came into Sudbury on the first of May, and I went down to the Inco Club there, but it was line up for about two hundred men....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.and they called us in about ten at a time and they said if you're not an experienced maner and don't belong to Sudbury, you might as well keep on going, so I went back the next day, and the day, and the same story, so I looked around, went out for a little drive around the city one day and I saw a guy who was building a house, digging a basement ~~there~~ there, and I asked him if he needed any help and he said sure. So I worked there for him for three weeks. One day it was raining and we couldn't work at the house, so I went back down to the employment office and hired me right in, just like that.

B.M. You know, when you (unintell.) that Bill, you just, it shows one thing, and I think the same thing pertains today that it did forty years ago, that if a fellow really wants to get out and hustle he can get a job of some sort. Isn't this so?

B.A. (unintell.)

B.M. You've always managed to get yourself a job, and I know a log of young people today who are willing to get up and get out, they can get something to do anyway eh?

B.A. Yeah, it seems to be that way alright.

B.M. But if you sit around and say somebody should provide you with a job, this is the attitude that I find rather disturbing. Nobody owes you job in that respect.

B.A. No.

- B.M. I think you have to go out and do a little bit of hustling yourself. So you're not one that likes to be idle at any time, are you?
- B.A. Well, there was no unemployment insurance running in them days. You, there was no welfare....
- B.M. That's right. If you weren't earning it, you didn't get anything did you eh?
- B.A. Even in these road camp jobs, after you got your check, they had relief wrote angle ways across them in bih letters there. I don't know why they had that, but...
- B.M. That's what the pogie was called in those days, was relief wasn't it?
- B.A. But.....
- B.M. This was a different term
- B.A.I didn't see much relief about it/ I'm telling you you worked....
- B.M. I can remember I was in Toronto during the depression when you couldn't get a job, you just couldnt....
- B.A. No.
- BM.get anything period.
- B.A.k Oh ~~h~~ no.
- B.M. You sometimes wondered today how people managed to get by because I think you would get, maybe a pogie voucher for a little bit of, couple of bags of coal once in a while, or something of that sort, but somehow rather, you managed to come through. So you got a job finally in 1941?
- B.A. I started on the twenty-third of May in Creighton, 1940.
- B.M. 1940 eh?
- B.A. Yeah.
- B.M. And you stayed in Creighton all the time?
- B.A. I stayed right ~~here~~- there yeah.
- B.M. Good men.
- B.A. I liked it.

B.M. Oh yeah. ~~When~~

B.A.k When the North Mine started there, they had a lot of jobs in the board, but I don't know I liked Creighton I think/

B.M. Where were you, five, six (unintell.)

B.A. I was up the, what they call the bottom of five shaft. That's, was fifty-two level and now it's thirty-eight hundred I think they call it.

B.M. And that's, what were you doing most of the time Bill?

B.A. Well I sent in the stopes for a few days when I first, not too long a time in the stopes, but then Wilf Moore, he....

B.M. Wilf was over there. I know Wilf well.

B.A.he needed someone to muck in the drift....1

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.so he got me out of the stope and put me in....

B.M. Those were they days when you had muck.

B.A. They had muck.

B.M. Was there, did they have a plate underneath when they blasted first for you?

B.A. They were supposed to have.

B.M. Yeah, (unintell.)

B.A. (untell.)

B.M. Anyway, we finished on that drift, and then they sent me graveyard for Martin Horn.

B.M. Oh yes, sure Martin was there.

B.A. I....

B.M. He was a great, he came from Cobalt.

B.A. Is that right.

B.M. Yeah, he came from Cobalt miner.

B.A. I went graveyard there mucking another drift, and when the drift finished, Martin, he didn't bother sending me

back, so I stayed graveyard five years....

B.M. Did you?

B.A.and that's when I started on the trolley....

B.M. Oh yeah, you tried a lot of muck in your time then eh?

B.A. ...and then when the war finished there, they broke graveyard shift up, and they sent us, well I was day-shift ~~there-fer~~ for awhile there, and then this thirty - eight ~~hu-bered-~~ hundred, in fact it shut right down about that time.

B.M. How did you like working graveyard all that length of time? Some people can't....

B.A. Ah, I never really got used to it....

B.M. No, you didn't even after all that time eh?

B.A. Not....

B.M. Other people thrive on it.. I know a couple of fellows at Frood, that just loved it.

B.A. Oh yes....

B.M. They just thrived on it.

B.A. They got some Tom Simmin up here at Creighton, I think he worked about twenty-five years on it....

B.M. Yeah, and wouldn't work anything else.

B.A.John Moore, I don't know if you know....

B.M. Yes I do.

B.A.Johny or not, I think he holds the record....

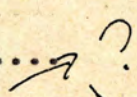
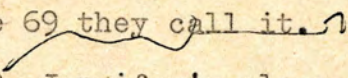
B.M. That's right..

B.A.for the time in graveyard.

B.M. Oh yeah.

B.A. And ah....

B.M. It's a matter of opinion. I don't, I worked some graveyard, but I had it steady. Well if you adapt your life accordingly, I suppose you can get, become accustomed to almost anything can't you eh?

- B.A. I guess so, there are some fellows that just love that graveyard you know.
- B.M. Well you worked at Creighton until you retired?
- B.A. Yes, I was right on that, I was right on the trolley there when I finished up.
- B.M. And you retired now, about over threeyears from that job eh?
- B.A. ~~Yeah-~~ Yes, I retired at Christmas time in 1975 but I wasn't officially on pension....
- B.M. Oh yeah, you always back up.
- B.A. k.....until the first of April or '76.
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A. I ~~ad~~ had fourteen weeks holidays there.
- B.M. You have a family in town here haven't you?
- B.A. Oh yes I ~~ave~~ have ~~two.~~ two., a boy and a girl.
- B.M. Your son is with Inco?
- B.A. Roger, yes, he, yes he works at Garson. He's a maintains forman in Garson.
- B.M. That's nice. And your daughter?
- B.A. Ah my daughter, her and her husband have a little store out at....
- B.M. And it's name...? 
- B.A. ... (and it's called) Jennifer's place.
- B.M. You might as well give it a plub Bill.
- B.A. At plaze 69 they call it. 
- B.M. Plaza 69, Jennifer's place, sure.
- B.M. That's your daughter that runs that does she?
- B.A. My daughter and her husband.
- B.M. That's nice yeah, and you live on Copper Street?
- B.A. On Copper Street yes.

B.M. And you're going to stay there. We're going to talk about just one or two other points in that connection Bill, but again let's take a brief break so that Doug can favour us with some more music and then we'll finish up.

(MUSIC)

B.M. Just before we finish Bill, just one or two points that I wanted to talk to you about, when you, you lived on Copper Street for almost all the time?

B.A. I went there on Copper Street in 1943.

B.M. Were there many houses on that street at that time? Are you along the end of the street?

B.A. Well, I was on the end at....

B.M. At that time?

B.A.when I moved there, I was on the end....

B.M. Yes, but they've extended it.

B.A.but now, there's a subdivision up past us there.

B.M. Well there were mostly Italian people living along that street weren't there? (unintell) gardeners?

B.A. ^{we moved} I ~~belonged~~ ^{around} to around to several ^{they were all good} of the real good gardens there.

B.A. Yeah, there's a lot of nice gardens there.

B.M. You'd have to keep your end up pretty well there eh?

B.A. Well we tried.

B.M. I bet you did.

B.A. My wife, she's the gardener. She's....

B.M. Is she?

B.A. Oh yeah. She's a lot better at ~~that~~ that than I am. She likes to work in the garden there. That's....

B.M. You like to spend the time at your son's camp there?

B.A. Well we go ~~down~~ down there....

B.M. Whereabouts is that?

- B.A. That's ah, it's in from, there used to be a lumbering place they called Packsly. It's behind....
- B.M. Oh Packsly sure.
- B.A.behind Grundy Park.
- B.M. Heard Charlie Bibley talk about Packsly quite a bit. It was on the railroad line wasn't it eh? Packaslay I think.
- B.A. Yeah, that was big lumbering town.
- B.M. mmhh.
- B.A. They had a railroad there that went from there to Lost Channel.
- B.M. But can you get in by car now to where....?
- B.A. Oh yeah, you can.
- B.M. I thought you might have gone back to the old country where you, not the old country, but the country you came from around Sprucedale way. Is that....
- B.A. No, my family's all here and everything....
- B.M. Yeah.
- B.A.so....
- B.M. Well do you visit back there at all Bill?
- B.A. Oh yes, I go back there. My mother's still down there....
- B.M. Is she?
- B.A. ...and I ^{have} got two sisters living there.
- B.M. Is your mother still healthy?
- B.A. Well, I wouldn't exactly say she's too healthy. She's got arthritis pretty bad.
- B.M. Who hasn't.
- B.A. Still heg gets around anyways.
- B.M. How old is she?
- B.A. She'll be eighty-one in August.
- B.M. She won't leave ~~at~~ eh?

B.A. No.

B.M. You wouldn't want to live back down there again eh?

B.A. No, no, I....

B.M. This is the place for you?

B.A.I like Sudbury.

B.M. You do eh?

B.A. I'll stay here.

B.M. You're ~~still~~ pretty active still aren't you?

B.A. Well I get around. I do most of ~~min~~ my own, all repairs.

B.M. (unintell.)

B.A. Yeah, home repairs, and car repairs.

B.M. You did quite a bit of work on St. Paul's Church up there on Regent Street too didn't you?

B.A. Well I helped in 1958 when....

B.M. When they built it?

B.A.when they built it. That was the second time ~~arun~~ around. Like they built it before that....

B.M. I know.....

B.A.and then they rebuilt it.

B.M. Tell me something, have you ever built, I've said this ~~before~~ many times about other churches, that's the only church I've ever been in where the coat racks, or whatever you want to call it, are ~~set~~ up in such a manner that there's no confusion. You go in ~~sen~~ one side, pick your coat up, and keep on going and come out the other side right?

B.A. That's right.

B.M. Was ~~this~~ designed that way? Every place else you go, there's great confusion. A guy gets in, and he's got to come ~~out~~ back out, and he's blocking the next guy from getting in. Who designed that? Whoever did was one of the smartest guys.

B.A. I don't know. There was Gerry Saunders.

B.M. Well it could have been Gerry yes.

B.A. And Johnny Venders, they were all on that committee that Patty Atkinson, I don't know him.

B.M. But you know about the cloakroom up there?

Ba. Oh yes.

B.M. It works so well.

B.A. Yeah.

B.M. It's one of the few places. It's a plus. Now, you, you're not a musician, but ~~do~~ you like fiddling contests is that right?

B.A. Yeah, I like to travel ~~around-~~ around and listen to them.

B.M. Did you, ~~is at~~ that from something back down Sprucedale way? Did you used to listen to them down there, or was....

B.A. They had lots of squaredancing and....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.that's the ~~he~~ type of music mostly in my time in the country anyways.

B.M. Yeah, well that was the popular thing you know. Well you'd know Jimmy McLelland was around here then?

B.A. Oh yes, I know Jimmy. I even worked with him for awhile.

B.M. Did you?

B.A. When he was on that graveyard shift....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.at Creighton.

B.M. He's one of the best fiddleers around here, and he writes fiddle music too as ~~as~~ far as that goes. Do you, do you travel very much Bill, I mean....

B.A. I don't get too far away, but I go down to Shellburn and Perth, and we went to Wilberforce last year. They had a big due there.

B.M. Yeah. So you follow them around eh?

B.A. I follow them around.

B.M. That's kind of fun I suppose isn't it eh?

B.A. I see Paul Watson is going to have one this year, and Bert Trolls, and....

B.M. Yeah.

B.A.all that.

B.M. Well, it's nice to go to a place, but it's nice to come back to Sudbury too?

B.A. Oh yes.

B.M. You wouldn't want to live anywhere else would you?

B.A. No, I like Sudbury anyways.

B.M. More than happy here.

B.A. Well I spent most of my life here now.

B.M. That's right, the biggest portion of your life.

B.A. The biggest portion.

B.M. Bill, I'd like to end on that nice pleasant note, and I know that you and I, people that have lived here for any (unintell.) length of time, pretty well sold on this being a good place to live aren't we?

B.A. Yeah, I don't know one, can't see ~~ay-anything-~~ nothing wrong with it at all.

B.M. No. Bill, thank you very much.