

The following transcript of
Paul Labatte's interview

on

Memories and Music

(broadcast April 19, 1981)

was created by the Sudbury Public
Library as part of a

Summer Canada Project

in 1982.

SUDBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

"MEMORIES & MUSIC"
INCO LTD.
CIGM

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: Paul Labatte, 1898-	TAPE NO: 126
POSITION: Pensioner	TRANS.: Raymonde Lafortune
DATE: April 19, 1981	DATE OF TRANS.: June 1982
INTERVIEWER: Gary Peck	SUMMER CANADA PROJECT

THEME: Three pioneers of Skead, Paul Labatte, his wife Catherine and Alvina Dafoe share their past experiences about the growth of Skead, Bowlands Bay and the Lake Wanapitei area; lumbering, fishing, trapping in the Lake Wanapitei area are described.

G.P. Right now I'm enjoying the hospitality of Paul and Catherine Labatte in Bowlands (unintelligible), Alvina Dafoe, the daughter of Newton Cryderman and we'll be talking with the three pioneers of this area in a few minutes. In particular we'll be talking with Paul Labatte about Skead, Lake Wanapitei area shortly after the turn of the century. Now before we do that I'll turn the program back to our music host for today.

(MUSIC)

G.P. In the program I'd like you to tell us how you came to Bowlands Bay, I understand you weren't born in this area.

P.L. No. I wasn't born in this area. I was born in Lafontaine.

G.P. Where's Lafontaine?

P.L. Lafontaine is just . . . from Thunder Bay to Lafontaine is about three mile, that's where.

G.P. Over near Thunder Bay?

P.L. Yeah, that's my home place.

G.P. You were born there in 1898? Just prior to the turn of the century?

P.L. Yeah, yeah.

G.P. And why did you come over to this area?

P.L. Well the company brought me here.

G.P. Which company is that?

P.L. Manley Chew.

G.P. Manley Chew Company brought you over, eh?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. And what line of work did you do for the Manley Chew Company?

P.L. The boat and motor, look after all them boats up there, for the driver. We had one, two, three, three boats on the . . . one at Paradise; and we had one at Bear Lake all motors, gas motors, all battery in the motor . . .

G.P. Yes.

P.L. One cylinder in the Fairbank motors and all that. I used to go up there and get 'em ready for the spring, then we'll hire somebody to run 'em. But me, I was just learning the big boats for a while. But then they put me on the big boat there, about . . . well it'd be about twelve feet wide; and about thirty-five feet long, use to hold about fourteen bottles of gas . . .

G.P. And they had, they were gas motors?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Were they . . .

P.L. But we had a big tub here but the tub use to rub you see.

G.P. I see. Where was the Manley Chew Company doing their logging? North of Lake Wanapitei?

P.L. North, yeah. Paradise Lake and . . .

G.P. Paradise Lake and . . .

P.L. And up north there at the bridge, what do we call that township there?

G.P. Up the River, anyhow.

P.L. Up the River, yeah.

G.P. Okay?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. And your line of work was to provide transportation to and from this, this corner down here.

P.L. Yeah, yeah, I carried some mail and everything.

G.P. And take the mail up to them and take food in for the cook and . . .

P.L. Oh, we had a great big scow we use to take the stuff off. Mr. Cryderman and her they used to, sometime we need them, they'd tow their scow up there.

G.P. This would be Newton Cryderman?

P.L. Yeah, Newt.

G.P. I see. Was it Bowlands Bay, where you actually moved to?

P.L. Massey Bay.

G.P. Massey Bay, you called it.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Was that the original name for Bowlands Bay?

P.L. Yeah. Massey Bay, yeah.

G.P. First name for it . . .

P.L. Was three house here, eh? You and there was Rioux up here and Bowland that's all.

G.P. Cryderman's, Rioux and Bowland's.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. How would you spell Rio? R- . . .

P.L. R-I-O-U-X, eh?

G.P. R-I-O-U-X.

P.L. Yeah, yeah, old man Rioux.

G.P. Right, and how would people get up to Massey Bay at that time?

P.L. Well it was just a wagon road . . .

G.P. How did they get up here, though, from Sudbury, for example?

P.L. The wagon road from, you know, where the airport is?

G.P. Yes.

P.L. You pass the airport, where you turn there to go to Garson?

G.P. Right.

P.L. To go to well that's, we used to have go there, that was all horses there.

ANON We had the railroad too, the big station up here putting all the . . .

P.L. Oh, I know.

ANON You know it's not all, they don't go to Massey Bay, you know . . .

G.P. So quite a bit came up here via the rail as well?

P.L. You, you mean the . . .

G.P. Where was the railway station located?

ANON Right up at the cross.

P.L. Well Manley Chew everything coming . . .

G.P. Right where they cross coming into Bowlands Bay, where it crosses the road?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. I see. It was fairly close to there.

P.L. We had a station here just for the purpose to unload the stuff you know.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. To load the tug but that . . . we used to take in about ninety to a hundred car loads of heavy . . .

G.P. How many?

P.L. About ninety car loads.

G.P. Ninety?

P.L. Yeah. We had seven hundred men up there.

G.P. You had seven hundred men up there?

P.L. Seven camps. And haul horses I bet you was . . . we had even people fixing their repair and the harness and everything there.

G.P. Was a large operation then for sure.

- P.L. Oh bigger, that was big outfit.
- G.P. You, you knew the owners, Manley and Chew, they use to come up here?
- P.L. Oh yeah, brought up down below.
- ANON Was Manley Chew.
- G.P. Oh, Manley Chew, I see.
- P.L. Yeah, Manley Chew we (were) brought up together down there.
- G.P. Right. What kind of a person was he like?
- P.L. Very nice. Very . . . nicest outfit I ever worked for.
- G.P. Is that right?
- P.L. Yeah.
- G.P. Where would he get the workers? Where would he get that many people? They wouldn't just be from this area.
- P.L. Montreal, Sudbury . . .
- G.P. Montreal, Sudbury . . . What kind of wages was he giving them?
- P.L. Well it was what I was tell you there, some was getting two fifty a day . . .
- G.P. Two fifty a day.
- P.L. And that's, that's, you had to be pretty good job. I think in the bush it'd be about sixty dollars a month and board.
- G.P. Sixty dollars a month . . .
- P.L. Yeah. Be about that as far as . . .
- G.P. Right. And how long was the working day then?
- P.L. Oh, gees! You start up dark in the morning and come back dark at night, and have a lunch in the bush . . .
- G.P. In the bush somewhere.
- P.L. Yeah.
- G.P. So you were exhausted at the end of the day I would imagine.
- P.L. Yeah, yeah. And then a man had to cut with three men, and that was all big timber you know. You had to cut eighty logs a day.

G.P. Had to cut how many?

P.L. Eighty logs.

G.P. Eighty logs?

P.L. Yeah. Three men with a cross-cut saw.

G.P. Three men would have to cut eighty logs?

P.L. That was the count.

G.P. That was their count?

P.L. Yeah. Someday we, smaller stuff we use to make a bank you know?

G.P. Yes.

P.L. So we run into the big stuff, so we could be even you see?

ANON There was no chain-saw in those days.

G.P. No, so you're using those large cross-cut saws?

ANON Yes, yes (unintelligible).

G.P. And you were cutting mainly pine would it be?

P.L. Oh yeah pine and stuff like that.

G.P. Mainly pine.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. I see.

P.L. White pine and red pine, they had to be cut, I think, twelve inch on the butt. You can't cut smaller. And now they cut everything.

G.P. Was the Manley Chew Company the main one operating in this area?

P.L. Well the one he was at Spanish.

G.P. Was it Spanish . . .

ANON No, no, no, no, no . . .

G.P. Emery as well?

ANON No, no.

P.L. Spanish (unintelligible) Lake, but they all come down this way.

ANON Victoria Harbour was first.

P.L. Oh yeah that's before.

G.P. Victoria Harbour was the first one in here.

P.L. Yeah, that's before me.

G.P. Each company had their own logging stamp.

P.L. Yeah, oh yes.

G.P. Well how would you describe the Manley Chew stamp?

P.L. Heart.

G.P. It was the heart?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. What was the Victoria Harbour one like?

P.L. 'H' I think. Victoria Harbour (unintelligible).

ANON Spanish was H.

G.P. Spanish was H?

ANON Yes.

P.L. And who was a diamond?

ANON I don't know. I don't remember actually, I know my dad was . . .

P.L. Yeah, I know your dad . . .

G.P. There was one with a diamond as well?

P.L. Yeah, the diamond that's Spanish, but who?

G.P. I remember seeing one shaped like a bell.

P.L. Yeah?

G.P. Shaped like a bell. Now is that W.J. Bell?

P.L. Oh, that could be that, eh?

G.P. Which company?

ANON Arnold and Bell, Arnold and Bell.

G.P. Arnold and Bell, the one shaped like a bell was Arnold and Bell, eh?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. I see. So Manley Chew's was a heart did you say?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. And you, did you stamp each log? Or would you . . .

P.L. Well yes, we had to stamp every log.

G.P. You'd stamp every . . . How many stamps would there be in a camp because there would be so many logs, you would have quite a few of those . . .

P.L. Oh that's nothing, just a big hammer and just hit the head and one stamp.

G.P. Right.

P.L. You see?

G.P. But you would have more than one of those stamps I would think?

P.L. Oh yeah it'd be a dozen . . .

G.P. There would be a number of people who would be doing that work.

P.L. That was like a city up there.

G.P. How far north of Lake Wanapitei would that of been, the operation?

P.L. Well that be, we start at, from Paradise Lake up to Telfer Lake to North River; and they cut the other side of North River, to where Capreol . . .

ANON And how many mile is that? Forty mile up river?

P.L. No, no be, Manley Chew would be about seventeen miles to my trapping camp.

ANON Yeah, but never mind your trapping camp.

P.L. Yeah, but that's how far he cut. They cut Long Lake.

G.P. Seventeen miles beyond, it would be . . .

P.L. Yeah, seventeen mile and then he cut to where the North River,

see?

G.P. Yes.

P.L. He cut all that there.

G.P. When would the logging season begin? When would they start cutting?

P.L. We start cutting in the fall.

G.P. In the fall, what, October? Late October?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Cut throughout the winter and then . . .

P.L. And then in the spring we had to drive.

G.P. You had to drive?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. You'd bring them down . . .

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Down the rivers. Can you describe the route that would be taken for the Manley Chew logs that would be coming down . . .

P.L. Well Mowat creek we had some there.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. And we had some North River coming down. That's the only two places, in Paradise Lake and Long Lake . . .

G.P. Alright, coming down to where?

P.L. Coming down here.

G.P. To Lake Wanapitei.

P.L. And then they goes through the dam; and then we take 'em to French River; and then they go from there to Midland.

G.P. They'd come down the Wanapitei River . . .

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Down to the French River.

P.L. Yeah.

- ANON Listen now, they were at that log at the mouth of the river, they have a raft . . .
- G.P. Yes.
- ANON With a boom around, and that's towed across with this big boat the (unintelligible). I have pictures . . .
- G.P. Alright. Okay.
- ANON That's towed down the dam and then they . . .
- G.P. The large boat is towed across, towing this raft across down to the dam . . .
- ANON Then let it go and it comes out at Midland.
- P.L. Yes.
- ANON That's where the mill was.
- P.L. Yeah, but all wood had to go along the French.
- ANON Yeah, but you're not in there (unintelligible).
- P.L. No, I stay here but that was another crew taken that time.
- G.P. They would, they would raft them across Georgian Bay as well, would they not once, they got there?
- ANON No, no after they come from the . . .
- P.L. Three tugs take the logs, boom that there. Three sets of boom there, maybe. If we cut ten, seven, ten, they take in two too.
- G.P. Yeah.
- P.L. But they had three big tugs.
- G.P. What was the most dangerous work in the logging camps. I understand it was dangerous work. For example, the drives in the spring would be dangerous, the possibility of . . .
- P.L. The dangers of drowning.
- G.P. Of drowning, the possibility of cutting oneself.
- P.L. We got some drowned and some cut their selves.
- G.P. Yes.
- P.L. We had the doctor come every once a month, eh?

G.P. A doctor would come in once a month?

P.L. Once a month give you some pills . . .

G.P. A doctor from Sudbury?

P.L. Yeah. Dr. Burroughs and Dr. Polack went up there.*

G.P. And they would come in once a month?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. What other visitors would you have coming into the camps, w
would any . . .

P.L. Oh, just trappers . . .

G.P. Any ministers, clergymen come in?

P.L. Priests would come in, ministers whatever they want to come.

G.P. Yeah?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Would they come in once a month?

P.L. Oh no maybe twice in a winter, you know?

G.P. Right.

P.L. But then when it froze here, when we run out of stuff we used
to freight . . . They had a big shed at Milnet, you know . . .

G.P. Milnet, yes.

P.L. Well they had a great big stable there for the horses and
everything. We use to take the stuff in, that what was short
with the team of horses all around and . . . but gees, you
can't take too much you see . . .

G.P. No.

P.L. That's why we use to put everything by boat. It's cheaper.

G.P. You mentioned that Manley Chew had seven hundred people working
at one time . . .

P.L. Oh, yes.

G.P. How many would there be in a camp? In one camp?

*Probably: Dr. Charles M. Burroughs
Dr. Stanley S. Polack

P.L. Well some camps might be a little over a hundred, some ninety or more . . .

ANON Had a hundred and eighty . . .

P.L. Sometime, some would be a hundred and eighty . . .

ANON Had a hundred because I washed for them, and I know.

P.L. Oh yeah.

G.P. So there'd be about a hundred and some of them, anyhow; and more in some; and less in some.

P.L. Yeah.

ANON Yeah. Yeah. Cause I stayed at a number of camps and . . .

G.P. Is that right?

P.L. I was married then and then she went trapping then.

G.P. What was entertainment like up there?

P.L. We had lots of fun.

G.P. Lots of fun . . .

P.L. I never worried about anything there. On Sunday they play the fiddle and everything.

G.P. Some people would play the fiddle and . . .

P.L. All kinds, gees . . .

G.P. Different musical instruments then . . .

P.L. Oh they enjoy theirselves, they was all happy . . .

G.P. You had to make your own entertainment.

P.L. Oh yeah, but you had some people pretty smart in there, you know.

G.P. Sure. What was the nationality of most of the people?

P.L. French. English.

G.P. English. French.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. They all got along?

P.L. In Sudbury, oh yeah.

G.P. Yeah.

P.L. Some you know. There'd be the cook and you know . . .

G.P. They'd all have to get along wouldn't they?

P.L. Oh, we got along, no trouble there.

ANON Had no choice.

G.P. You'd have to when you're out that far.

P.L. They used to get, they used to get quite a bunch from Montreal . . .

G.P. Is that right?

P.L. But Sudbury, they used to . . . Pete Bobbie here, was living here, the company'd give them a dollar ahead to pick the man, you know . . .

G.P. Yes.

P.L. To come in the bush. You should see the tracks they coming in back and forth to bring the men in. But the train use to stop here and get them off from Quebec, not Quebec, Montreal, see?

G.P. Yes.

P.L. Oh, we got along.

G.P. You must, well every once in a while you must have gotten people in there, who weren't really good at that kind of work.

P.L. Oh gees, you should see somebody take a broad axe there, and square them dams, the bridge.

G.P. Yeah.

P.L. It's just as nice as . . . you could be a sawmill.

G.P. Oh some were very very good.

P.L. Oh I'd say so. A fellow make a dam, you know, he had to haul square timber you know.

G.P. Sure.

P.L. These broad axes there would be just as nice as you would ever see. Great big logs that big.

G.P. Is that right?

P.L. They made quite a few dam, you know, one dam at Paradise and one at Long Lake, and then . . .

G.P. Alright. I think we'll break at that point and we'll come back in a few minutes. But first we'll turn the program back in a few minutes. But first we'll turn the program back to the music host.

(MUSIC)

G.P. Welcome back to Memories & Music our guest is Paul Labatte and, Mr. Labatte, you worked for Manley Chew Lumber Company for about twelve years and then, I understand, around 1930, you began working part-time with Lands and Forests.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. With the forestry in this area. What was the nature of your work with the Lands and Forest? What type of work?

P.L. Motor, run their boat and . . .

G.P. Ran their boat . . .

P.L. Fix their pump. Her husband work with me but he's dead now.

G.P. Right.

P.L. We use to be the mechanics there in the shop, here.

G.P. Alright. This would be in connection with forest protection . . .

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. For the forest fires in the area.

P.L. Yeah. Yeah.

G.P. Did they have forestry towers back at that period of time?

P.L. Yeah. Oh yeah.

ANON I have nice pictures of towers . . .

P.L. That was the best it would be, then an airplane there.

G.P. You were in favor of that rather than the airplanes, were you?

P.L. Gees, an airplane all day in the bush, up in the air there. By the time you come back the fire is gone the other way.

G.P. You'd rather be up, sitting up in the forestry tower, eh?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Some major fires in this area at that time, what would you have during a season back in the '30s? A number of bush fires in a season?

P.L. I say so. They used to get some near close to a hundred fires . . .

G.P. What caused them?

P.L. Lightning . . .

G.P. Lightning mainly?

P.L. Yeah, lightning and, I suppose, blueberry pickers . . .

G.P. Blueberry pickers as well.

P.L. Careless people in the bush.

G.P. Right.

P.L. Fishermen as far as I can see.

G.P. When you were working for the government back then what was your salary? Were you paid by the hour?

P.L. Yeah. No, I was paid by the month, maybe.

G.P. By the month and you only worked for . . .

P.L. I think it's around seventy-five a month. I must have my cheque about seventy-five or eighty, a hundred and two.

G.P. A hundred and two dollars a month?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Well, a lot of, a fair amount of money then was it not? Eh?

P.L. Oh yeah, quite a bit.

G.P. You added to that by fishing in the summer with your dad?

P.L. Well, no, no, no, that's, when I was with the forestry branch, I . . . When I was on permanent I stay here.

G.P. Yeah. But when you were working part-time . . .

P.L. I went back for my dad.

G.P. And he was a commercial fisherman in Georgian Bay?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Midland, Christian Island, Bayfield . . .

P.L. Yes, yes.

G.P. Etc. Etc. Alright, forestry was your main line of work throughout your life and you retired from the Lands and Forests, after what twenty-seven years, I guess, it was?

P.L. Twenty-seven, I was there longer than that but that's only a twenty-seven year pension.

G.P. Okay, they . . .

P.L. It should be thirty-five.

G.P. They recognized you for twenty-seven but you think it should have been thirty-five.

P.L. Oh yeah, well, see, you had to pay so much a month when that open.

G.P. Right.

P.L. And I payed so much you know and I could not pay anymore.

G.P. That was back in 1965, when you retired? 1965 is the date on it. What are some of your memorable experiences, working with the Lands and Forests?

P.L. Well fighting fire.

G.P. Yeah?

P.L. So on, wherever I could go and help. Take the people across with the boat.

G.P. Right.

P.L. Jobs Matagamasi and all over.

G.P. Could you describe some of your memories of that period of time? There must have been some very disastrous fires.

P.L. Oh yeah. Really bad but we use to fight the fire there, stay there until dark. And break of day it would start up again.

G.P. You'd take backpacks in?

P.L. Yeah. Oh yeah. Packs yeah. Carry all your hose on your

back and pump . . .

G.P. And take pumps in as well.

P.L. And canoes if you need it.

G.P. Pardon?

P.L. And canoe.

G.P. And canoes and you'd bring the pumps up to the swamps and the creeks and try and put the fire out that way.

P.L. I seen it start here and go up to Matagamasi and went up to Rawson Lake. Took us all night with about twenty-five men and bunch of canoe to go and put the fire there; and it was going to be, I think was about twenty-eight when we got done. Was there three days. And we had to pack all our stuff back, you see. But when they start to get the plane and everything, and then it was different. The first thing they got they had a little Moth, you know, that only carry with two men; and . . .

G.P. The Moth?

P.L. The Moth, yes.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. Just a little plane like they fly here you see? So that's what they had for a few years till they get some bigger machines, see? And after that they got good machine.

G.P. Who were some of the pilots, the early pilots?

P.L. Oh gees, wait.

G.P. Dick Overbird did you mention?

P.L. Yeah, Dick Overbury* he was the one with the Moth. And the one Jack Dillon, Jack Dillon he was . . .

G.P. D-I-L-L-O-N?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Yeah?

P.L. He was on the for the Beaver, him. He was patrol here with the Beaver plane I think that time, yeah. I don't remember . . . We had a little . . . Well we had a helicopter at last.

*See Dillon, J.C. Early days. 1961. (R352.0713 ONT)

At last we used to get some helicopters to take our stuff in, that's a help us a lot see?

G.P. Right. Any local pilots? People from this area?

P.L. Oh yeah. When we run out of plane, they'll hire a plane from here get some from Quebec, here.

G.P. They would hire them . . .

P.L. There'd be two, three, oh yes.

G.P. They would hire them from that far away?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Where was the divisional headquarters for the Lands and Forests. Was it in Sudbury?

P.L. Sudbury. But we had one here . . .

G.P. You had a headquarters here as well?

P.L. Here, too, yeah, but headquarters would be Sudbury.

G.P. By here you mean in Skead?

P.L. Yeah. Yeah.

G.P. And how large would the workforce be? In Skead?

P.L. Skead? It'd be about seventeen man I think.

G.P. Seventeen full-time?

P.L. Not all permanent.

G.P. No . . .

P.L. There was only a scaler, myself . . .

G.P. Yes.

P.L. That's about all, two, three men. Shut the thing down in the winter and they . . . then I'd go back to the shop, me. I was about fifteen winters in Sudbury, in the shop.

G.P. Working in Sudbury at the shop.

P.L. Yeah. Regent Street.

G.P. Right. Do you recall any, any reminiscences about, encountering injured people in the bush when you were fighting fires, rescuing people . . .

P.L. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I took a load of men across Lake Matagamasi; and it was pitch dark, you know; and they had a track along Matagamasi; and I told them, I said: "Don't you fellas walk that track." You know, we'll take in the bush on the side, you know?

G.P. You're talking about a path?

P.L. Yeah. They had a railroad going . . .

G.P. Yes. Oh, railroad track.

P.L. Railroad track they made for the mine, but the mine was not running.

G.P. What mine was that?

P.L. That's Crystal mine.

G.P. Crystal Gold mine.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. I see. So we're over on the east side of the lake, are we?

P.L. That would be . . .

G.P. On the east side okay.

P.L. But then, you know, we had this gang of men, eh? Pitch dark. I told them: "We're going to try and land her." But then (unintelligible) some of them took to walking on that track, you know . . .

G.P. Yes.

P.L. There was only two board between, it was only a train track. He never fall down, you know? Dark, I'm hanging on to anything. So alright, I started with the boat from there and I went right up to far end of Matagamasi took the bush a man there. Gees I come back, I saw the man. "What the heck happened here now?" So then I come back. I said: "Gees you must have fallen off that track." Must be him fall off the track and hurt himself. But, by gees, he fall off the track he was just moaning. He broke his back.

G.P. Moaning and he broke his back?

P.L. Yes. No lumberjack anyway, you know. But they use to call him "Bouffon" in them days, you know. You get some of them was drunk too you know. So anyway, how the hell I'm going to get that in the boat to drive that there, that was quite a feat, from here by gees, from here to Frank, you know?

G.P. That would be how far . . .

P.L. Well from here to Frank, we'll say about a hundred feet.

G.P. Alright. But geees I had to drag him someway. Them days, I don't think they learned us the first aid, then. That's, that's my first time.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. So I got him in the boat, brought him in. Gees you know, we call here; and the doctor come; and got him. He said: "Gees, a broken back." He said: "I don't think he'll ever work again." That's one, accident I had and I grappled for quite a few people drown here for the government . . .

G.P. You grappled for quite a few.

P.L. Oh yeah.

G.P. You were working for the government then when you . . .

P.L. When they want help.

G.P. Yeah. What were the reasons for the drowning did they get caught in storms, did they just careless or . . .

P.L. Storm, storm . . .

G.P. Storms mainly.

P.L. Yeah. Oh yeah.

G.P. I haven't really spent much time on Lake Wanapitei, but I understand there can be quite a gale across there. It can get fairly rough at times.

P.L. Yeah. Well I tell you what fools 'em here. You get south wind or southwest.

G.P. Southwest wind.

P.L. You see. Here you'd only see the breeze.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. And they don't know what it is around ten, twelve mile out here . . .

G.P. By here in the Bowlands bay area, yes.

P.L. But you get a gale here thirty-five mile an hour or fifty knot; and you'll see the breeze alright. Well you start with

a small boat, you won't go very far either, down you go. That's why they swamp. It was true. Two got drowned. The airplane could not land there, so I went with the boat, me; and I had the doctor with me. I went where they had 'em on the shore you, know.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. About a mile from North River you see?

G.P. Right.

P.L. So well I got into the river and we walk around, you know. It would be about half a mile. So we went and see. I think was one, one living; and the two other was dead, just drowned you know; and the boat was there. But then I had to come back. Me, I can't stay there, see? I had to get this boat back in to the fire see?

G.P. Yes.

P.L. So this blooming doctor, he said: "You go back." "You're not going back?" I said. "I'm going to go back." So he wait, he went back with the ambulance by the road; and me I come back alone. And oh, gees, it was stormy; and I come back here.

G.P. He was afraid that somebody'd be grappling for him.

P.L. Yeah. Oh gees. Well you see some funny thing you know.

G.P. Oh sure.

P.L. You take just like I was tell you Cassleman & Bennett.* That was quite a thing you know, gees.

G.P. What was that?

P.L. When they got shot there. It was eight days looking for them.

G.P. I don't know the story. When was this?

P.L. Oh that's, how long would that be? Yeah.

G.P. The '20s or '30s?

P.L. She got the book some day there for the see . . .

G.P. 1930s.

P.L. 1930.

*Bill Cassleman; Gilbert Bennett. See Sudbury Star, June 2, 1939, 1939. p. 1, 10.

G.P. Yeah.

P.L. The canoe they find across the lake. Her dad pick it up. And then, when we seen that, we knew something happened there. So, they got the police, you know; and we went over there. When we got over there, the water pail was on his docks, that's Mountain Creek, that goes to the camp there . . .

G.P. Yes.

P.L. His washing was there. But gees close to the dock, I don't know what the hell it is, grass is all burnt you know, looks funny. I said: "There's some dang funny thing happened here." But Cassleman always had said, he can't live with them, they was all time bother him, you know, he was nice a lot. But he shot both of them and threw them in the creek; and us about eight days looking for that; and then we went to catch Cassleman you know? I had Beaudoin* with me and Beaudoin said: "Well," he said, "What d'you think? You couldn't get nothing off Cassleman," he said: "He had some horse there pretty fast." He said: "I fall off my horse." He was all bruised. I said to myself, "It must be a fight you." You know? So Beaudoin said: "I know," at last he said: "You'll have to come out Cassleman." He said: "Come out?" "Yeah," he said: "We'll have to take you out." He said: "I'll have to let go of my horse." Was in the spring, so they (had) to go in the field you know. So that was a thing there you see? But then, he took the bush and he jump in the river and he drowned himself. And us eight days looking in the bush.

G.P. And he drowned himself, eh?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Is that right, eh?

P.L. Gee talk about a thing there, you. And their, their people . . .

G.P. He was in his seventies at the time?

ANON (Speaking in the background)

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Yes. Sure.

P.L. And her people there from the North River, they hear one shot; and that was the shot, see?

*Constable Joe Beaudoin

ANON I have a magazine here, the airplane come from Toronto, there was no airplane in North Bay then.

G.P. Not at all, eh? No airplanes. They came out from Toronto.

ANON Come from Toronto (unintelligible) you see a magazine? You ever see a magazine? You ever see a magazine of (unintelligible)

P.L. Cassleman oh, we got that, your father's boat, your father's boat and everything . . .

G.P. Alright, we'll take a break now and when we return we'll talk about, a little more about the history of the Lake Wanapiteir area.

(MUSIC)

G.P. Paul Labatte is our guest today on Memories & Music and Mr. Labatte you indicated that you've been involved in commercial fishing and hunting and trapping.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Trapping from the onset? When you first moved here you started trapping I assume?

P.L. Well I . . .

G.P. You were involved in it from fairly early, early . . .

P.L. Quite a few years . . .

G.P. Sure. What have you trapped in this area?

P.L. I trapped here and I . . .

G.P. What have you trapped? Mainly beaver?

P.L. Beaver. And whatever beaver, what there is here beaver, wolf and . . .

G.P. What other animals have you encountered?

P.L. Then we got a camp at Paradise.

G.P. You have a camp at Paradise.

P.L. Yeah, that's where I do some work there; and I trap there too.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. But that always been my, my choice place you know . . .

G.P. Paradise.

P.L. That's the first place I land with the lumber company. And you know I always liked that place.

G.P. You like that, it has some fond memories for you?

P.L. Yeah, that's where the Poupores use to be . . .

G.P. I see.

P.L. You see.

G.P. So you've trapped fox, beaver, otter?

P.L. Otter, whatever yeah. Skunk.

G.P. Skunk, eh? Anything that came along. What's the main animal you're going to find in this area, though, is it a beaver?

P.L. Oh gees, beaver, a beaver and there's fox and things like this. Lots of dog but too many.

G.P. Yeah, it's assumed they stayed away. When you were trapping back in the '30s, what would you get for a beaver pelt?

P.L. Oh, pretty fair price in them days. You're only allowed ten beaver.

G.P. You are allowed, you had a quota, you were only allowed so many a season?

P.L. The beaver was so scarce, they only allowed ten a long time ago.

G.P. You were allowed ten?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. What would you, what would they give you a pelt then?

P.L. Oh, pretty fair price.

ANON It would depend on what shape it was in.

G.P. Pardon?

ANON It all depends on what shape . . .

G.P. It would depend on the quality of the fur, the colour etc.

P.L. Well the fox and things like that was good price in them days, they was good price. Beaver was good price too, in them days.

We use to sell to Jack Leve and what do you call that outfit, Lafrance. We use to get fair but not as good as we get in North Bay.

G.P. You would sell in Sudbury and in North Bay?

ANON No we use to sell just Sudbury.

P.L. We use to sell here first.

G.P. I see, you'd sell in Sudbury . . .

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. But the prices would be better.

ANON In North Bay.

P.L. Lafrance and . . . yeah. But then you see the government opened the place, eh? Then we got a better price there. So we send all our fur there.

G.P. In North Bay.

P.L. In North Bay see?

G.P. So you sell there now?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Did you have any competition when you were trapping? Were there many trappers in this area back in the thirties?

P.L. Oh a few. All dogs and snowshoe days you know? But the fur buyer from Sudbury, they'd go right to the trapper you know? They get a team of dog or something here and, they go up and see the trapper and buy their fur right there, most of it. You remember that?

ANON That was quite a while ago.

P.L. That was quite a while ago.

G.P. So certainly that was long before the year of the snow-mobile, so the snow-shoe was your main way through the bush.

P.L. That's all we had.

G.P. What would be the extent of your trap line? How many miles would we be talking?

P.L. Them days, I think, them days we could trap, trap for trap, wherever there was beaver.

G.P. Wherever, wherever you wanted, wherever you could walk to and . . .

P.L. Wherever there was beaver.

G.P. You'd have camps would you?

P.L. There was no such a thing as a boundary.

G.P. No. Would you have a camp where you would rest? Stay overnight . . .

P.L. Oh yes. They have a camp.

G.P. Then go on to other areas and stay and then go back.

P.L. All come back. Walk maybe ten mile, then come back.

G.P. What's this area like for bear?

P.L. Oh, lots of bear.

G.P. Lots of bear . . .

P.L. Now . . .

G.P. Lots then?

P.L. There was some then.

G.P. More now?

P.L. Oh gee, I don't know. I think so, eh? No?

G.P. What about deer and moose?

P.L. Oh there was deer and moose but now we got hardly no more. But the time they shut down, the partridge for seven year, they shut down the moose licence for seven years; and then they come pretty thick; and everything, now they got it down pretty near zero again. But partridge seems to be coming back, but . . .

G.P. Think it's coming back a bit.

P.L. Yeah. If you was catch with killing a partridge you payed twenty-five dollar fine in them days.

G.P. You'd be fined would ya?

P.L. Yeah. For seven year that. And there used to be enough partridge here. We used to walk from where I used to go with

the tug there, in a boat, to the landing, you know, there was three mile there where the horse was through, they come and get the stuff . . .

G.P. Right.

P.L. Well you, could just take a gun there, and fill a packsack of partridge there in no time.

G.P. No time, no problem at all, eh?

P.L. Oh yeah, they just like bees, it was not too many men then. You know just an old lumberjack, he never bothered too much.

G.P. He couldn't be bothered?

P.L. No.

G.P. Would many people come up to this area, tourists come up here for hunting?

P.L. Oh yes.

G.P. Back in the thirties and forties.

P.L. Oh yeah, yeah.

G.P. And where would they stay?

P.L. Oh gees, some . . .

G.P. Some would come up with tents and they would go in the bush themselves. Would some fly in, I suppose, when . . .

P.L. Oh gee, I don't think, they never no fly in them days.

G.P. Back in the forties.

P.L. No. I don't think so.

G.P. No, eh?

P.L. No, I don't hardly think. I got picture here when they first. They used to go across there. I went and got a bunch at the Crystal, they had a bear . . .

G.P. Near where the Crystal mine is.

P.L. Yeah, they had a bear and a moose, and they got, froze in, in there.

G.P. They were hunting a little late in the season?

P.L. Yeah. Well it freeze early here.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. I got a boat froze up last fall, up here at river in October. River froze up about four inch thick, see?

G.P. So you had to go across and get them?

P.L. Yeah, we went with a bunch there, and with the tug. Broke ice. I don't remember, I took Mr. Cryderman with me, to go and pick them up.

G.P. Any reminiscences about exceptionally large moose or deer that were shot, or large bears or . . .

P.L. Oh yes, there was oh lots of bears then.

G.P. Any come in to the town site? Would you ever have problems when they were coming right up to your door?

P.L. They'd go in to the lumber camp there.

G.P. Wandering in looking for food.

P.L. I seen 'em bust, you know them, it's hard to believe, in the Mol'barrell. Them days our syrup was all black molasses, we used to buy that by the barrell.

G.P. Yes, right.

P.L. And Mr. Bear he bust that darn barrell. He had all the molasses . . .

G.P. All over . . .

P.L. Yeah. In the shed, you know. Oh gees, way up north. So we had to watch him like (unintelligible). But we had to watch him in the camp. But sometime the men would watch him, I'm afraid he, he won't go outside and he's afraid the bear himself, you know?

G.P. But this was an ideal area for hunting is what your saying?

P.L. Oh yeah it was really good and good fishing too you see, it was all canoe and small boats you know? One cylinder and things like this.

G.P. Okay, we'll, we'll stop at that point and we'll wrap the program up, when we return we'll talk about the fishing in the area.

(MUSIC)

G.P. Paul Labatte is our guest today on Memories & Music. Mr. Labatte in lake Wanapitei, what are the kinds of fish that one would encounter there?

P.L. Well Whitefish, trout, ling . . .

G.P. Lake trout . . .

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Ling?

P.L. Ling.

G.P. Yes.

P.L. There was no herring, but the government, we stocked it with herring it's the herring now.

G.P. Right.

P.L. But now, I don't know what happened in the lake, somebody put some smelt in, there's lots of smelt.

G.P. Lots of smelts, eh?

P.L. Yeah. The worse thing they ever put . . .

G.P. Are there bass in there?

P.L. Oh yeah, good bass.

G.P. Small mouth, large mouth?

P.L. No small mouth.

G.P. Small mouth.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Pike?

P.L. Oh yeah, pike.

G.P. And pickerel?

P.L. Pickerel yeah.

G.P. What about bullhead, do you have bullhead?

P.L. Yeah, them ling, there's lots of them. Not bullhead, ling they call 'em, you know?

G.P. Ling.

- P.L. They're pretty near like a bullhead, but they're good to eat, see?
- G.P. So there's quite a variety of fish in there?
- P.L. Oh yeah, there's quite a variety, yeah.
- G.P. Right, when we took the break there a few moments ago, you were commenting on the fact that pickerel, you don't think, were native to the lake itself. They came in by what way?
- P.L. Matagamasi.
- G.P. Matagamasi. They came down from there into the lake.
- P.L. Into the lake yeah.
- G.P. And when the people first encountered the pickerel in the lake, they were suspicious of it.
- P.L. Oh, they wouldn't eat that.
- G.P. They weren't so sure they were going to eat it.
- P.L. No, no.
- G.P. And now, of course, that's changed.
- P.L. Well that's all they want to fish.
- ANON That's all they want now.
- P.L. Well when I was fishing in Georgian Bay, we could hardly sell pickerel. The only pickerel you could sell you had to leave it round and sell it to the Jews. So the Jew, you know . . .
- G.P. There were only certain people who would buy the pickerel you're saying at one time.
- P.L. The Jew, yes. A long time ago, yeah.
- G.P. Is that right. You're a commercial fisherman? And you have been for years.
- P.L. I've been with my lad for commerical. Here it's just like a . . . What I got here is just a test license to take the rough fish out, you know? I can't go right ahead like business, you know? I just go so many weeks.
- G.P. When you talk about the rough fish, what are the kinds of fish you're referring to?
- P.L. Whitefish, sucker . . .

G.P. Sucker I see . . .

P.L. Stuff like that.

G.P. Right. This has been a quite a good area for tourists, I would think, in terms of coming up here to go fishing.

P.L. Oh yeah.

G.P. You've seen some large fish come out of the lake I imagine.

P.L. Oh yeah, there's some nice fish come out of the lake.

G.P. What are we talking in terms of a large lake trout that would have come out?

P.L. Well the best I ever seen here, here is thirty-five pound.

G.P. Thirty-five pound lake trout, would that have been caught in the winter?

P.L. Oh, no it was caught in the summer.

G.P. Caught in the summer.

P.L. But somebody caught a big one this year. I don't know how big it is.

G.P. This summer or winter?

P.L. This winter.

G.P. This winter?

P.L. Yeah. And this winter we got enough, half of Sudbury here with car on the lake.

G.P. Half of Sudbury was out here fishing, you believe.

P.L. Yeah, approximately, fishing steady.

G.P. Well they must have been catching some if that's when you came out.

P.L. Oh, they were catching some, real good fishing this winter.

G.P. What's the best bait for lake trout out of that lake?

P.L. Oh they use minnow I don't know what they have.

G.P. They use minnow, but what do the people around here use who catch them?

P.L. Well we use minnow too. I think worm is good.

G.P. You don't have a special bait?

P.L. But long time ago, we never bothered with that.

G.P. No.

P.L. We use to take, you know the steak there, the red, out of the steak?

G.P. Yeah.

P.L. You cut a chunk out of that, put that on your hook and you put that down, it's come kinda reddish your worm . . .

G.P. Yes, right.

P.L. And we use to catch all the trout we want with that.

G.P. All you wanted with that.

P.L. Yeah. And our troll here we use to make it ourselves, most of it, with a tin can, or like an otter tail, you know, an otter tail troll there?

G.P. No, I'm not . . .

P.L. It turns way like this? Yeah.

G.P. I see.

P.L. We use to make it ourself. Catch as much trout with that and you'd buy one. Still (unintelligible) charley horse . . . I started to work today got a damn cramp in my hand.

G.P. Is that right? What are some of the lodges in this area in connection with fishing, that people would stay at. What would be some of the lodges?

P.L. Lodge, there's only West Bay.

G.P. West Bay Lodge is operating today?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Is that the only that's operating?

ANON For the summer.

G.P. For the summer?

P.L. Yeah.

- G.P. Back twenty, thirty years ago, what would be the names of some of the others in this area??
- P.L. Well there's only Rioux and Walter, and Briscoe.
- G.P. Briscoe camp was located where?
- P.L. Matagamasi.
- G.P. Matagamasi. And the other one was Rioux?
- P.L. The other one was . . .
- G.P. Lakeland Lodge.
- P.L. Yeah.
- G.P. When you say Rioux, you mean owned by Rioux?
- P.L. Yeah, but what, I think the one, the tourist camp you worked there, you at that camp at the Crystal? Old Johnson, old Sam Johnson had the . . .
- G.P. Sam Johnson had a camp . . .
- P.L. Yeah.
- G.P. When you say the Crystal, you mean out by Crystal mine?
- P.L. Yeah. Yeah.
- G.P. There was a camp there?
- P.L. Yeah. They use to have a house there, you know? And all square timber and that. When the mine shut down I don't know who, they started tourist, that's where they start a tourist camp there.
- G.P. Right.
- P.L. And he was trapping too . . .
- G.P. Where would the tourists come from for this area?
- P.L. American.
- G.P. Mainly from the United-States?
- P.L. Oh, American and everything, from Sudbury wherever.
- G.P. And you'd get some people coming up here from Sudbury as well?
- P.L. Oh yes. Yeah. Lots of them.

G.P. Who were the main lodges in the area that would rent boats? Would they rent the boats from the lodge for example. That's where they'd get the boat?

P.L. Oh, they get boats, yeah.

G.P. What are some of the pioneers in the area? You mentioned Newton Cryderman a number of times.

P.L. Yeah. Rioux was a pioneer. He had about, he'd take passenger across the lake.

G.P. What was Rioux's first name?

P.L. Alf Rioux.

G.P. Alf?

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Alphonse Rioux.

P.L. Yeah, and he run the boat. Mr. Cryderman, he took lots of passengers, too, in his tug, smallest tug in the lake.

G.P. What was the name of it?

P.L. Romona, eh?

ANON (Speaking in the background)

P.L. Yeah. He use to take passengers. He used to take all the people around the lake . . .

G.P. For a pleasure cruise?

P.L. Yeah.

(End of Side I continued on Side II)

P.L. So much to go right around the lake.

G.P. He'd charge them to go around?

P.L. Around yeah. That's most of his living he done and prospected eh? Your dad, eh? Eh?

G.P. He didn't become exactly wealthy doing that?

ANON No.

P.L. No.

G.P. It would be enjoyable though, he'd get the life, for sure.

P.L. I'm not rich neither, eh?

G.P. Yeah. And Bowland you mentioned, Abe Bowland his first name was?

P.L. Abe Bowland, yeah he used to . . .

G.P. Abraham Bowland?

ANON . . . son of John Bowland . . .

G.P. Son of John Bowland.

P.L. He lived right on the corner in . . .

G.P. Bowland's Bay is named after who?

P.L. John Bowland.

G.P. John Bowland.

P.L. Yeah.

G.P. Would he have been the first person in that area?

ANON Yes.

P.L. Oh yeah. Yeah.

G.P. The first . . .

P.L. Old John was nice there.

G.P. John Bowland was.

P.L. Oh yeah.

G.P. What'd he do for a living?

- P.L. Well he was one of them lumber outfit, making a dam and everything else . . .
- G.P. I see that's what brought him here was the lumber company?
- P.L. Yeah, lumber. Yeah.
- G.P. Okay, and Newton Cryderman was involved in prospecting, and is that what brought him here?
- P.L. Yeah.
- ANON Yes.
- G.P. Prospecting . . .
- ANON He had a small farm and the boat . . .
- G.P. Okay, and John Higgins was another early se- . . .
- P.L. John Higgins run some camp up here at Higgins Point there. He had camps there.
- G.P. Higgins Point?
- P.L. Yeah. He was a walker for that outfit.
- G.P. Yeah.
- P.L. But that's way back, eh?
- ANON That would be Victoria . . .
- P.L. Who?
- ANON That would be the Victoria. Wasn't the company . . .
- G.P. Victoria Harbour Lumber Company?
- P.L. Yeah, I know. I don't know, I don't know who it is. I know Victoria up north, where we are . . .
- G.P. Yeah, any other, older people that we've left out, some of the early settlers, perhaps left out.
- ANON Mr. Burly [phonetic] was at the . . .
- P.L. Who?
- ANON Mr. Burly was at the Crystal, do you remember Mr. Burly?
- G.P. Those are the main people in this area anyhow?

P.L. Yeah. Yeah.

G.P. Looking back Mr. Labatte and you're eighty-three years young, I assume you've enjoyed this area. You've lived here virtually most of your life.

P.L. Well that's . . .

G.P. What have been the advantages of living in this area? In particular what, what did you really like about it?

P.L. Well good air . . .

G.P. Good air.

P.L. Good water.

G.P. Good water.

P.L. Fish and lots of work, I never . . .

G.P. Lots of . . .

P.L. I never know what it was never to have a job.

G.P. You've never been out of work. There were lots of work around here.

P.L. Now I got to do my own.

G.P. Yeah.

P.L. When I retire, I went guiding for Walter . . . ten dollars a day there.

G.P. But you've enjoyed it very much in this area?

P.L. Oh yeah, I enjoyed every minute.

G.P. Okay. Well I think we'll end the program at that point Mr. Labatte and on behalf of Memories & Music thank you.

P.L. Thank you.

G.P. Certainly it has been enlightening for me. I've learned quite a bit about this area and I certainly appreciate the opportunity of talking with you. So thank you.

P.L. There's a hang lot more yet, but that's enough for now.

G.P. I'm sure there is. We'll catch you another time okay?

(END OF TAPE)