

Interviewed: March 22, 1976

TALLYMAN & BOAT RIGGER:

Mr. & Mrs. John Turner,
4171 Chambers Street,
Vancouver, B. C.

- Came to B. C. in 1920 from Scotland.
- Landed in Vancouver and started to work at the Fraser Saw Mill.
- Then he got a job on the Union Steamship on the old Comosun in 1922.
- For \$55.00 @ month and board which was considered good for those days.
- He met a fellow on the boat whose brother managed Wadhams Cannery and he went to work at Wadhams as a fireman for the first year.
- Then he went to Imperial Cannery to help with the fall fishing.
- Manager was George Philips; Bill Rennie was Foreman; Percy Bichnall was Iron Chinkman; Claude Strong was Head Tallyman; Ken Fraser was the 2nd man and he was a spare.
- They invented the first weighing machine for weighing canned salmon in B. C.
- Bill Rennie invented that machine, and American Can Company bought it from B. C. Packers.
- Ken Fraser was only a boy at the time; his dad owned the Imperial Cannery (?) and he sold it to the B. C. Fish & Packing Co.; they used to live in Kitsilano.
- Ken and he worked as Tallyman together; Ken Fraser is now manager.
- Jimmy Gordon cooked the salmon, also Andy Gerrick.
- Betty Philips (?) was just a young girl...she was a singer.
- He quit B. C. Packers at Wadhams and went to Canadian Fish at Goose Bay, Rivers Inlet, Stan was the manager.
- In the fall, he came down from Rivers Inlet to work at the Gulf of Georgia Plant and the manager then was George Skinner, was later stranded on Cape Scott for 30 days.
- He packed fish from Kitsilano to the Gulf of Georgia Plant.
- He lived in the Seagull Hotel (?) now called the Steveston.
- The single White men lived there in the hotel.
- There was a big Indian population which lived in shacks on the dyke close to the cannery.
- During the season, White people lived in ^{better} more permanent houses away from the water.
- The Japanese also lived on the water in company houses; less tax was paid if the house was on the water.

- And there was bunk-houses for the Chinamen who were fed only two meals a day.
- They got mostly rice and dried fish and they were "tickled to death" to be working in these conditions.
- They worked for the C.P.R. in the winter time.
- The Indians resided there just for the salmon season.
- The Japanese were permanent residents.
- There was a big discrepantie between the wages of the Whites and the wages of the Indians and Japanese in the canneries.
- There was generally a contractor, and one set price which you either take it or leave it.
- The Chinese contractor guaranteed so many cases of salmon, calculated on the previous years returns.
- A broker would advance money to the cannery to get the plant going.
- The cannery manager made deals with the chief of an Indian tribe for so many workers, but the Chinese contractor hired and paid the people on the line, including Whites.
- Lem Cheuⁿ was the name of one contractor for B. C. Packers at Wadhams.
- They paid the wages, they supplied the labour and even up north on the Skeena, they had to take their own pigs and chickens up on the boat and they built a big house for them near a creek.
- Everyone got along but they pretty well stayed to themselves.
- Worked at the Gulf of Georgia for two years and then went to Canadian Fish Co. where he remained and he just retired last November.
- He will be 75 on the first of May.
- He was the head rigger, rigged all the boats.
- Now all the boats are done at Brittainia.
- When he went to B. C. Packers, Charlie Gillespie was the manager.
- Manager of the Gulf of Georgia was MacLean; Harvey Stuart is the manager there now.
- Roy Bichnall is still alive and president of the Gulf of Georgia Towing Co.
- The harbour at Steveston used to get quite rough when the wind blew from the south-east but today it's more sheltered.
- Cans used to be made by hand; they used a steam box.
- He built one at Moses Inlet and at Goose Bay.
- He did all the rigging for Canadian Fish, doing wire splicing and rigging.

- He worked on the Can Fisco which was recently sunk.
- Gordon Wilson was his boss and they rigged all the seine boats for the Canadian Fish Co.
- Gordon Wilson is still working for Canadian Fish Co.
- The cans used to be shipped up in a flattened condition and then they were re-cycled and used to can the salmon.
- The old style process of using the steam box gave a better product this was how they got a vacuum in the tin.
- A machine is described which cuts the head off the salmon.
- Most of the cans today are lacquered, because the tin is so poor, the lacquer is used to help preserve the tin during shipping.
- During the depression one year, he only got 6 weeks work.
- He worked with other fishermen, building the golf course on Joyce Street at 50¢ @ hour, four days a week.
- The old B. C. Electric tram service was very good from Howe Street to Steveston.
- His son and Richie Nelson graduated together from U.B.C.
- When the first war was on, new immigrants who didn't have Canadian citizenship, didn't go to war and they remained in Canada to get the jobs left behind by the Canadians.
- It was the same during the WW II.
- The companies resist early attempts at union organization.
- He recalls a meeting at Wadhams 1930, to organize .
- The Province newspaper was very strong against the union and misrepresented what was going on.
- One year, Nelson Bros. used script instead of cash in their stores to purchase goods dissuade cash buyers from taking their fish.
- Mrs. Turner worked in the cannery at Goose Bay.
- She worked before she was married in the smoke house.
- He got his job through her father.
- She was the floor lady who did everything on the line replacing people who did a break.
- He interrupts with a story about picking up fish at Kitsilano and having to give the fishermen a bottle of whisky before they could get the fish.
- She was working making kippers back in the old country; her father was a fisherman.

- She also made kippers for Canadian Fish Co.
- The fish is split up the back and smoked.
- He is now on a pension from the company.
- He describes one strike at Rivers Inlet; he had a boat called the Isaac from Steveston.
- B. C. Packers took over Moses Inlet.
- He packed fish there; there were so many fish they couldn't get them all in boundary line, then was just below McTavish.
- Story of Johnny Hanuse who was shot at Rivers Inlet.
- When he went to Kildala Cannery there were about 100 boats which belonged to Indians from Alert Bay, Prince Rupert.
- The Owikenos had few boats.
- Dave Bernard is Johnny Hanuse's brother, he changed his name.
- Simon Walk~~er~~^{Kus'}'s boat and boat from Don Groves had turned it into a gillnetter.
- Mr. Turner used to do blacksmith work on the boats on the week end, at Rivers Inlet, putting "shoes" on the gillnetters, to protect the propellers.
- Talks of May Day celebration on Sointula and they had a big parade, big banquet, and celebration.
- He knew ~~Lewis~~^{Lewis} who made the first net drum around 1925 or 26.
- The Finns were very strong on unions.
- Most of them worked in the coal mine near Port McNeil.
- In 1922-23 there was a pulp mill at Swanson Bay, owned by the English, it was shut down by the Americans, the Zellerback Company.
- They were going to start a mill at Beaver Cove but it never started... "Politics shut it down".
- Swanson Bay was an up-to-date pulp mill then, with a larger capacity than Ocean Falls.
- The pulp was going all over the world.
- The union boat also went to the gold mine at Surf Inlet on Princess Royal Island, which was owned by the rich American Gugenheim.
- The mine produced a lot of gold at \$30.00 @ once but they had to go down deep for it.
- The lake there is six or seven miles long, the dam is for the power plant.
- Canadians went in and staked claims along side of ~~it~~^{it} and he wouldn't pay for them so he shut the mine down.

- He owned all the boats that ran from Seattle to Alaska and the Pioneer Gold Mines at the Portland Canal.
- The dam is still there at Surf Inlet.
- Captain Findley was the skipper on the Comosun at that time.
- The Union Steamship line was one of the finest companies to work for and for the passengers as well.
- The C.P.R. broke them.
- The Province newspaper started to run this country then (?) and still does today.
- He has a crow bar made at the Gulf of Georgia made out of a Ford axle.
- There used to be a copper mine at Antioch as well.
- The copper was towed down in barges.
- Frank Calder used to travel on the boats working for the N.D.P.
- Guy Williams ran as a conservative and lost and eventually wound up as a liberal senator