

The following transcript of
Alvena Dafoe's interview
on

Memories and Music

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: Alvina Dafoe TRANSCRIBER: Bonnie Savage
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THEME: Reminiscences about the community of Skead and Bolands Bay; talking about the major fire that went through this area back in the 1950s.

G.P. Today on Memories and Music our guest is Alvina Dapoe, daughter of Newton and Catherine Cryderman, granddaughter of John and Abigail Cryderman. John Cryderman of course being an early prospector in this area, and on today's program we'll be talking about a number of topics relating to this area including some reminiscences about the community of Skead and as well Bolands Bay and in all likelihood we'll be talking about the major fire that went through this area back in the 1950s. However before we begin our conversation with Mrs. Dafoe, we'll hear from our music host for the day.

(MUSIC)

G.P. Mrs. Dafoe, born Alvina Cryderman, is our guest today on Memories and Music and welcome to the program Mrs. Dafoe. You were born in Sudbury May the sixth, 1910, I believe you mentioned, and....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.how long did you spend in Sudbury before you came to Bolands Bay?

A.D. I was four years of age when my parents moved out here to Sudbury, and my father was prospecting at times, and ran a steamboat on this lake.

G.P. On this lake?

A.D. Yeah.

G.P. Your dad being? His name?

A.D. Was Newton Cryderman.

G.P. Newton Dryderman and your mother was....?

A.D. Catherine.

G.P. Catherine....

A.D. Yeah.

G.P. Catherine Cryderman. Her maiden name?

A.D. Was Lisk. Lisk, L - I - S - K.

G.P. L -, oh Lisk.

A.D. Lisk, yeah.

G.P. And you came to Cryderman, er came to Bolands Bay rather, when you were about four years of age.

A.D. Yes, and he bought a boat and put a steam engine in it and boiler, so that he could burn....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.wood in it which was less expensive than the motor that he had in it before and he could get his wood from anywhere along the shore of the lake because there was a lot of driftwood there. So he, this wasn't expensive to operate and he did take prospectors, trappers, lumbermen, and everyone you know, across anywhere they wanted to go on Wanapitei Lake.

G.P. On that boat?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. What was the name of the boat?

A.D. The name of that boat was Yasmar, which didn't last more than about seven or eight years and then my brothers built another boat, and named it Romona.

G.P. How would you spell it?

A.D. Huh?

G.P. The second one was called....?

A.D. Romona.

G.P. Romona. How would you spell the first one?

A.D. Well it's Ramsay....

G.P. Ramsay....

A.D.backwards.

G.P.backwards.

A.D. Yes....

G.P. Alright.

A.D.and so that was what he did and he just had to buy a five gallon can of (unintelligible) oil....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.is about all the expense there was to it other than the work they had to do, cutting the wood and towing the big booms of logs across to the dam on the old Wanapitei River until he floated down to the sawmills down below.

G.P. mmhh. Were there other members in your family?

A.D. Yes, I had an older sister, the oldest in our family, and I had a brother Milton and there was Warner and myself and Gordon.

G.P. Your sister's name....?

A.D. Was Naomi.

G.P. Naomi, and when you came to Bolands Bay, I call it Bolands Bay, is it....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.Massey Bay.

A.D. It was Massey Bay originally....

G.P. Originally.

A.D.but because Mr. Boland was the first resident....

G.P. John Boland?

A.D. Yes. John Boland and his son Abe, who never married, just lived with his father here until the father passed away and then he moved into a cabin he had built on the lake shore....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.down near the dam. So he was sort of the hub here. He used to keep people over night. Some of the lumbermen

or the walking bosses, the foremen and that, come in going travelling back and forth between Sudbury and....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.the lumber camps. They would stay overnight with Mr. Boland sometimes and in the summer they travelled across by boat of course, and in the winter, well they had around by Milnet they had the horses and sleigh.

G.P. John Boland was the first person in this area?

A.D. Oh I believe he was.

G.P. First settler?

A.D. Yeah.

G.P. Do you remember him?

A.D. Yes I do. I remember....

G.P. How do you remember him? What was he like?

A.D. Well I remember him as a man that was quite stern....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.you know. He was not, and of course at the time when I remember him he must have been in his seventies.

G.P. Yes.

A.D. He had a long white beard. He was a tall, slim man, and he was out supervising things, anything that went on.

G.P. Anything that went on, he'd be out would he?

A.D. Well yes, around, near his home....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.so, but then his son, he was also...did a small...a little prospecting around.

G.P. His son?

A.D. Yes, and he worked for other people whenever, not...I've never known Abe Boland to work, have a steady job.

G.P. That was his son?

A.D. Yeah.

G.P. Did he just have the one son?

A.D. As far as I know, that's all the children he ever had.

G.P. Did you ever meet his wife?

A.D. He had no wife here.

G.P. No.

A.D. When he came to Bolands Bay, he was a widower, whatever. He had his son with him, that's all.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. That's what....

G.P. What did your dad do for a living here? Did he, was it operating the boats? That was part of it.

A.D. Yes, yes, and doing prospecting of course. He always was part-time prospector.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. He also did assessment work on claims for other people who could not, you know get to the bush to....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.do their own assessment work. They hired my father to do it, and then we did have a cow, we put in a garden, my mother grew, bought some apple trees, and we, the crabapples all grew but the other....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.larger variety of apples....

G.P. Did you start off in a log building?

A.D. Oh yes.

G.P. Hand-hewed logs.

A.D. Yes, it was made of very large logs, huge logs....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.and it was only five logs high, and it was old, some boom timbers that were cut into lengths for, to build the house.

G.P. Do you remember it as a very cosy house?

A.D. Well yes, it was very cosy. We had of course, wood box stoves....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and the wood range for cooking on, naturally, and the house was warm and cozy. It wasn't very big, so, you know, the wood stoves heated it.

G.P. Your dad came by his prospecting honestly in a sense that....

A.D. Well his father....

G.P.his father was a prospector....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.John Cryderman.

A.D. Yes. He was ready to follow in his father's footsteps you know, but he wasn't as successful....

G.P. No.

A.D.as....

G.P. Could you tell us a little bit about John Cryderman and his wife. His wife's name was Abigail?

A.D. Abigail, yes.

G.P. And her maiden name was....?

A.D. Travers.

G.P. Travers?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. And where did they live?

A.D. They lived on a farm between about half way between Wahnapiatae and Coniston.

G.P. Half way between. You'd never find that place today. It's....

A.D. No, because of the erosion there and the smelter. The trees have all been....

G.P. Did you ever visit the farm?

A.D. No, I was too young when....

G.P. Too young.

A.D.when that farm was abandoned sort of.

G.P. Right. How many children did they have....

A.D. Well there was....

G.P.or who were their children? Maybe that would be the easiest way.

A.D.well there was, they had, there was Russell and Annabel, Rebecca and Aunt Lily, ha ha ha.

G.P. Now I'm sure you'd remember them as aunts and uncles.

A.D. Well, yes, that's right.

G.P. Right.

A.D. And of course Uncle Ross and my father and Samantha and Stella. So I think that that was what I can remember.

G.P. And there were a couple who died when they were young I believe.

A.D. Yes, they died as babies....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.so we didn't know very much about those but....

G.P. No.

A.D.they were mentioned that's all to us....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and he was...spent a lot of time with his prospecting, his mining, the people who he talked to about work and prospecting, and he was away from home a lot of the time
....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.leaving the families to carry on with the farm....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and they had horses, and they also had a race horse that my young aunt won the race in Sudbury, and it was the, was it what they call a fair day?

G.P. mmhh.

- A.D. It was a fair. They had races and Aunt Stella won the race....
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.and it was the day my parents were married, the second of October.
- G.P. What was the year?
- A.D. Ah, 1901.
- G.P. 1901?
- A.D. Yes.
- G.P. And....
- A.D. Second of October, 1901.
- G.P.how do you...you didn't meet your grandparents I don't believe.
- A.D. No. My grandmother died I imagine when, I believe, when I was a baby, before I was a year old....
- G.P. Right.
- A.D.and grandpa had gone north-western Ontario by this time and was busy with his prospecting and mining business
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.and he eventually married again....
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.and raised a....
- G.P. Raised a family....
- A.D.another family.
- G.P.Thunder Bay area?
- A.D. Yes.
- G.P. Yes. How do you...what are the recollections that your family have about your grandmother?
- A.D. Well my older sister was pretty young too....
- G.P. Right.

A.D.at the time.

G.P. Your mother, for example, would have talked about her.

A.D. Oh my mother, she thought a great deal of my grandmother.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. She said she was a very hard-working woman....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and very kind. Everyone loved her. They'd come to her for, if they had troubles and talk to her, which she was very good at consulting folks who were....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.you know, having hard times....

G.P. Right.

A.D.and whether, something rather, and....

G.P. Did John Cryderman have any brothers and sisters?

A.D. Yes he did. There was a Joe I believe, and a...there was a Joseph, I think, and I don't remember all of them.

G.P. No. The reason why I'm asking, there's a Cryderman living in Wahnapiatae now, so I assume....

A.D. Well this is his grandson.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. This was Andy Cryderman's son, and there was one of Andy's son, Lewellyn, is living in New Zealand....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and one....

G.P. So they're scattered here and there?

A.D. Yes. Chester is living out in Chillowack, British Columbia....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and some of them have died. Some of the family have gone.

G.P. Alright I think we'll break at that point and when we

come back I'd like to talk a little bit about Bolands Bay.

(MUSIC)

G.P. Mrs. Alvina Dafoe is our guest today on Memories and Music and Mrs. Dafoe, you came to Bolands Bay sometimes spelled B - O - L - A - N - D - S, and....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.sometimes B - O - W - L - A - N - D - S.

A.D. That's right.

G.P. Bolands Bay named after John Boland.... *a Bowland?*

A.D. Yes.

G.P.about 1914 I think it was when you came here.

A.D. That's right, that's when we came.

G.P. What are your earliest recollections of this area? There must have been very few buildings here to begin with?

A.D. No, there were only three buildings other than ours. There was four counting my, our home....

G.P. Alright....

A.D.and then, what it was, there had been a fire through here just a few years before, and all there was here was large blackened stumps and trees, pine trees that had fallen....

G.P. Right.

A.D.when they were burned and it was very hard to get around because you were forever going over these here big logs....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.that were lying on the ground, and the bit stumps, as you can see there are still out along the point....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.going towards Garson.

G.P. You initially remember four buildings?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Your dad's home.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Newton Cryderman's log house.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. John Boland's log house.

A.D. Yes, and the lodge.

G.P. The lodge associated with the Victoria....

A.D. Harbour....

G.P.Harbour Lumber Company.

A.D.was that when they left this part of the country.

G.P. Was that their headquarters?

A.D. It was I believe, office and headquarters.

G.P. Office....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.and that was located...in recent years, what building was there?

A.D. Well there was, it was, on the, where the hotel was built on the same site....

G.P. Same site.

A.D.when the lodge burned down.

G.P. Right, and what was the fourth building that you remember in here?

A.D. The fourth building was Mr. Rioux's building up, he had a house up on the side hill which burned just about, I'd say, twenty years ago.

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

A.D. Yes.

G.P. What did he do for a living?

A.D. Well, he had a tourist camp, and a boat, and he catered to a lot of hunters and fishermen....

G.P. mmhh.

- A.D.that came to fish in Wanapitei Lake and....
- G.P. And where was his camp?
- A.D. His camp is on Lake, on an island in the mouth of Portage Bay.
- G.P. On Lake Wanapitei.
- A.D. Yes, on Lake Wanapitei and his, the camp is called Lake Land Lodge.
- G.P. Alright, is it the same building, the camp or....
- A.D. Yes, it's, there's a large building....
- G.P. They've added to it, but....
- A.D.the main building, and then there's cabins. Smaller log cabins.
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D. These are not modern cabins.
- G.P. No.
- A.D. They had pails of water brought in....
- G.P. Right.
- A.D.by guides for the tourists.
- G.P. O.K., do you remember his first name?
- A.D. Alphonse Rioux.
- G.P. Alphonse Rioux?
- A.D. Yes....
- G.P. O.K.
- A.D.from Wahnapiatae, raised in Wahnapiatae.
- G.P. From Wahnapiatae?
- A.D. Yes.
- G.P. And Victoria Harbour Lumber Company had a, a camp....
- A.D. Yes.
- G.P.headquarters down here as well.

A.D. Yes they had.

G.P. They of course were doing logging in the area at a very early time.

A.D. They had had a seaboat on this lake too which they abandoned.

G.P. Do you know the name of it?

A.D. Maryanne.

G.P. Mary.....?

A.D. The steamboat was named The Maryanne....

G.P. Maryanne?

A.D.and I believe it was tied to the shore over near that lodge until the rope rotted and it sunk and the water's been raised a lot and although others have looked for that boat, tried to find some part of it, they have never found it since we have been here, you know....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.they've looked for it but never did find it.

G.P. Never located it.

A.D. I imagine there's silt and....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and that stuff and probably the planking has rotted down.

G.P. And John Boland was the other early....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.settler here?

A.D. Yes, and he was the one who used to make some money by keeping people overnight that were crossing, come in from Sudbury to cross the lake either in the winter with horses where he would put their horses up in his barn and they would stay over the night there, and other that, I don't know what he did because he never worked by the day for anyone that we know of, no.

G.P. No. He was independant?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Now the main people you would encounter in this area would be loggers and prospectors.

A.D. Mostly lumbermen and prospectors. There were a few trappers....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.also, but mostly lumbermen. These people would... went back and forth travelling to the lumber camps north of Wanapitei Lake.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. The....

G.P. There was an Indian reservation....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.north on the northern shore of the lake....

A.D. On the north shore, yes.

G.P.at Post Creek, I believe it's called.

A.D. Ah yes, Mountain Creek, I guess.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. Between Mountain Creek and Post Creek.

G.P. Do you ever remember as a youngster, seeing any Indians in that area? You must have travelled up there.

A.D. Well we went over to the North River to visit the Bonhomme family....

G.P. Yes, yes.

A.D.and we were overthere quite often but most of the natives had moved to Naughton.

G.P. mmhh. The Bonhomme family was not on the reservation....

A.D. Oh no.

G.P.but they were west of, of the creek.

A.D. They were east, east....

G.P. East?

A.D.of the reservation, east of the river....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.going from this direction....

G.P. Right.

A.D.and so, but they had a farm over there and I believe that the people on the reservation trapped and probably had their own gardens, tried to grow their own vegetables
....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.but there were too many of them, I believe, for the size of the reservation.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. There wasn't...they couldn't make a living trapping. There was too many of them for....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.the amount of fur they would get....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and that, so they moved out.

G.P. As a youngster how would you put your time in? In this area.

A.D. Well we did many things. We picked blueberries. We always had to pick berries which my mother preserved.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. Different berries, such as blueberries and wild raspberries, gooseberries, and all these things, and we also, I also helped with the wood. We used to, we had a large dog, and in the winter we would go in the bush, cut wood, and the dog would haul them....

G.P. Would haul them back?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Now that's an ideal pet.

A.D. Uh huh.

G.P. To get out on the lake in your dad's boat, would that be an excursion that the family would take on occasion? Would you go out....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.on picnics?

A.D. We would go to fish, where we would go, where we could get...the bass were plentiful....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.on the east shore, on the rocky shore, and we would go there and pick. There were gooseberries....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.wild gooseberries and other berries over that way, and we would go and my father and brothers would cut some wood and put it in the boat to bring home too. Dry wood for the winter for our stoves.

G.P. mmhh. When you remember four buildings in this area, that would be about 1920? Or a little earlier?

A.D. No, oh no, that was 1914, '15, after that there were other people came in.

G.P. Alright. When did the people start coming in?

A.D. Well, they came and they went. Different people came. I had an uncle. Uncle Andy Cryderman had lived out here for about two years, then he moved back to Wahnapiatae.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. He couldn't make a living, you know, our here, but he and my dad, my father had built a house for their widowed sister here so that she might take in boarders.

G.P. Yes.

A.D. The lumbermen going back and forth here would have to stay overnight. They couldn't go from the lumber camps into Sudbury....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.in one day with horses.

G.P. Who were some of the other early families that you recall?

A.D. Ah, there's....

G.P. Bill Labatte, Paul Labatte's been here for quite awhile.

A.D. Well there was Paul Labatte, there was Pete Nelson, he had built a small house here. He had worked for my father

and he was overseas, and he came back. He brought back an English girl with him for....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.a wife, and they lived here for a few years, built a log house, and then he moved away where he could find more work, and....

G.P. Right.

A.D.that was them, and there was different, oh there was a lot of people but they were coming and going all the time.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. They weren't staying very long. There was the, the Stevens people. The Stevens family, they were Indian people too....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and they were here. Trappers, they also had a home here, and there was three young men, boys, and....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.some girls.

G.P. So the population fluctuated?

A.D. Yes, it was. There aren't too many of the permanent, the people that came, that stayed.

G.P. No.

A.D. They went on to greener pastures I think, yeah.

G.P. Would you not be, would the Crydermans not be the family that have been here the longest?

A.D. Yes, now.

G.P. Yes, when you....

A.D. The Bonhommes* and the....

G.P. Yes, the Bonhommes and the Crydermans....

A.D. Yes.

*Bonhomme, Louis

G.P.in this area.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. When you look at a map, I noticed Massey Bay for example, and Bolands Bay being a slight extension of that from the southern end, who was Massey Bay named after?

A.D. Well, I'm not really sure. There was...I heard my father and others talking about some man by the name Massey. Whether he had something to do with the lumbering business or whether he was a captain on a boat....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.I am not really sure about that, but it was named for some man who had lived out here.

G.P. Someone who'd been in this area....

A.D. Earlier....

G.P.early, yes....

A.D.before we....

G.P.and also you'll notice there's a Massey, is it stream or creek that's Massey?

A.D. Massey Creek....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.yes, and that is on the map still I believe as Massey Creek.

G.P. Although people now call it....?

A.D. Speckled Trout.

G.P. Speckled Trout.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Who knows, with the passage of time, that way, it may well change. They may change the name of it.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Any other memories of Bolands Bay?

A.D. Well, only about the lumbermen that had...they used to bring their...had the carloads of food, meat and other supplies to be taken in that was toted in on the boats,

taken across on a large scow.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. Towed over by the boats and this used to take about maybe anywhere from twelve to fourteen hours depending on which way the wind was blowing....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.to tow these heavy loads over, and wait until they were unloaded, and bring the empty boat back and pick up and there was not too many other things done here.

G.P. No.

A.D. The railway also filled the...they had...first we used to have just trestles here....

G.P. Right.

A.D.and then they came and they spent a whole summer filling in, the ones that are here, within a few miles....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.either way on the track.

G.P. When would this have been?

A.D. Oh that was...that would be about...I'd be about eleven then and....

G.P. You think you were eleven years old at the time.

A.D. About that time yeah.

G.P. mmhh. O.K., I think we'll break and turn the program back to our music host, and when we return, perhaps we could talk a bit about Skead.

(MUSIC)

G.P. Today on Memories and Music we've been talking with Alvina Dafoe, resident of Bolands Bay, and a granddaughter of John and Abigail Cryderman, and Mrs. Dafoe, certainly living in Bolands Bay from about 1914 on, you've been able to witness the history of Skead so to speak. What was Skead...how would you describe Skead when you came to this area for example?

A.D. Well there was nothing there. No buildings or whatever, but later on there was just before the mill was built there, the sawmill was built there, there was a man by

the name of John Higgins from Sudbury, had a camp there that he'd come to in the summer. He'd come out there, but....

G.P. When was this, when was this, when he was coming?

A.D. Well that was before the sawmill was built out there.

G.P. When was the sawmill built, in the twenties?

A.D. Ah, yeah, 1923.

G.P. 1923?

A.D. Yeah.

G.P. That was the Spanish River Lumber Company that built that....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.and prior to that Victoria Lumber Company would have had....

A.D. But that had been....

G.P.roads....

A.D.years.

G.P.years ago....

A.D. Yeah.

G.P.back in the last century.

A.D. Yes, mmhh.

G.P. John Higgins, I notice there's a Higgins Street out here. I assume that's named after John Higgins?

A.D. Yes, because it goes down to the lake where Mr. Higgins had his house.

G.P. And his camp was down there.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. So he was really the only settler out there in a sense?

A.D. Yes, at that time as far as I know, there was no other buildings there. Later on there was Mr. Raby, and Dave Humphrey from Sudbury.

G.P. Yes.

A.D. They built a log cabin out there.

G.P. Near Higgins?

A.D. Not too far away from them.

G.P. And would they have been in the present day boundary of Skead then?

A.D. Oh yes.

G.P. Yes.

A.D. Oh yes, they were close right near the lakeshore.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. On the bank of it, and they had a place there, so, and then when the sawmill came, well of course things were booming. They brought a lot of people there and in 1925, I believe, the one end of the bunkhouse was converted into a school and they brought a teacher from Toronto, a lady teacher, and that's when the children started to go to school.

G.P. That would be the first school out there....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.in 1925.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Never was a school here.

A.D. Never before.

G.P. No.

A.D. We didn't go to school.

G.P. So any, but any children from here might have gone there. Is that possible? Any children from Bolands Bay, might they have gone out to that school?

A.D. After the school was built?

G.P. Yes.

A.D. I attended it myself. My brother and I went....

G.P. I see.

A.D.and any other children that happened to be around here which I think....

G.P. Were able to go out to it.

A.D. We all went out.

G.P. So that was the first school in this area then....

A.D. Yes it was.

G.P.in 1925.

A.D. Yes, when they opened the school.

G.P. That was Spanish River Lumber Company that....

A.D. Yes, but it was in one end of the bunkhouse.

G.P. Right.

A.D. They did not build a....

G.P. No.

A.D.building.

G.P. Did it last very long?

A.D. Oh yes, it went right on continually 'til there was a school, a separate school built.

G.P. That was the school until the separate school was built?

A.D. And then the public school was built right after that.

G.P. Right. The separate school building, of course, is still standing on the left-hand side when you drive in and....

A.D. Yes. So is the public school.

G.P.the public has now been converted into a house....

A.D. Yes....

G.P.has it not?

A.D.it is, yes.

G.P. Up on the hill.

A.D. Yes, but I went to the Spanish River Lumber Company school, was a public school, well everyone attended it.

G.P. Yes.

A.D. It was the only school.

G.P. Right.

A.D. So, and....

G.P. Were there any churches out there at that time?

A.D. There was no church until the Poupore Lumber Company came....

G.P. Came.

A.D.and they built the Catholic church.

G.P. There was never a church here either?

A.D. No.

G.P. No.

A.D. No, we did not attend church.

G.P. How many people would have been in Skead when the Spanish River Lumber Company was there I wonder?

A.D. You know, I don't think I'd have very much of an idea....

G.P. No.

A.D.of how many they'd have there.

G.P. But that was the....

A.D. They built a pool room and....

G.P. They had a pool room?

A.D. There was a store....

G.P. A company store.

A.D.and the post office was moved from here, which was Massey Bay at the time, was moved from here over to Skead and the postmaster was the storekeeper also.

G.P. Do you know his name, his or her name?

A.D. Mr. Bell....

G.P. Mr. Bell?

A.D.but not....

G.P. Not W. J. Bell.

A.D. No, no.

G.P. Nor necessarily his family.

A.D. No, later on it was John Gordon....

G.P. John Gordon.

A.D.who took over.

G.P. Who was the postmaster here?

A.D. Pardon?

G.P. Who was the postmaster here?

A.D. In Bolands Bay?

G.P. Yes.

A.D. Massey Bay, was Newt Cryderman and his daughter. The oldest daughter looked after the post office....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and it was on the very friendly basis because anyone could come anytime before eleven o'clock at night, and they'd open the post office and give them their mail.

G.P. Right. So that was in Newton Cryderman's house?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. One room of the house was converted into a....

G.P. Bouncing back to Skead for a moment, there was a pool room, a company store, what else would there be there?

A.D. Ah....

G.P. Bunk houses?

A.D. Yes, bunk houses, and also a hall.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. Sort of a building for recreation, dances. Yes, they also sort of made a...they had a ball field where they used to play ball.

G.P. Right.

A.D. There was that and, I guess....

G.P. So their mill was located...where would it be located?

A.D. Up on the bank off, with the high jack ladders that pulled the logs up....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.into the mill out of the bay there....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.you see, Skead Bay.

G.P. And following that company, the Poupore Lumber Company came.

A.D. Yes, that sawmill burned down.

G.P. It burned down did it?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. And that was the end of the....

A.D. Later on it was closed though for several years. Before it was....

G.P. Oh I see.

A.D.they had finished their lumbering there, but then Poupore bought this, took over....

G.P. In the 1940s.

A.D.another timber.

G.P. Came down from Gogama....

A.D. Yes....

G.P.and started up?

A.D.and they built the new mill, and brought many, many people, families down....

G.P. From....

A.D.where others had moved out....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.during the time the mill was closed. Some of the ones, they come with the Spanish....

G.P. I believe the Poupore Lumber Company had experienced major damages with a fire up in Gogama, so they were looking for a new area....

A.D. Yes, yes.

G.P.for one thing. How did they change the community of Skead?

A.D. Well the....

G.P. Besides bringing people. Did they build residences for them in some cases?

A.D. Yes they did. They built a small town site right....

G.P. Right.

A.D.with...built frame buildings there. They were not... they didn't have basements under them....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.they were on just foundations, the buildings, and they did that and they were very, very, very, good employers.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. The people were all just like a big family.

G.P. One big family.

A.D. The Poupores were very good people.

G.P. W. J. Bell of course was associated with Spanish River Lumber Company....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.and did you ever meet....

A.D. Well it was Arnold and Bell, you see.

G.P. Yes, did you ever meet Mr. Bell? Did he ever come out here to your knowledge?

A.D. Well he probably did come out....

G.P. But you never met him.

A.D.but we wouldn't, I would not have met him.

G.P. No. In Sudbury though, you do recall....

A.D. Well we moved next....

G.P.seeing Mrs. Bell because you lived close.

A.D.to the Bell property, yes.

G.P. And what memories do you have of Mrs. Bell?

A.D. Well Mrs. Bell, she had her driving horse....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.a nice high-stepping horse, for....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.her own use, there and she used to go shopping, and go up town from, that's down near the lake on John Street
....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.and she used to go up town to where the stores were, and post office, and the things, and of course she was quite a lady with her beautiful....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.carriage and horse.

G.P. Very noticeable?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Very noticeable.

A.D. mmhh.

G.P. Going back to Skead, Mrs. Poupore, you would have met her?

A.D. Oh I met her many times yes. Well she was interested in politics.

G.P. Yes, Liberal politics I'm told.

A.D. Yes, and of course, they were very busy people. She was overseeing everything that went on around the boarding house, and....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.they built a, they had a nice home there.

- G.P. It's still standing I believe by the library is it not their home?
- A.D. Yes it is, yes. It's the largest home....
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.in Skead....
- G.P. Yes.
- A.D.that was left over from the mill see....
- G.P. Yes.
- A.D.and there was, oh yes, they had entertainment of one kind or another, like in the hall or....
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.something there, and they were very nice people. She was a person that the employees' wives that, she was friendly with them all....
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.she was very good.
- G.P. Did the Poupore Company build the church?
- A.D. Yes they did.
- G.P. Paid for it.
- A.D. They paid for it, whether they were, got their, were recompensed for that later I don't know, but....
- G.P. Was there ever a Protestant church there?
- A.D. No.
- G.P. No.
- A.D. No.
- G.P. Ever a cemetery out here?
- A.D. No, no cemetery. Everyone was buried in Sudbury, or where ever.
- G.P. Sudbury? So back in the days if someone died out here, John Boland for example, where would he....
- A.D. In Sudbury.

G.P. Buried in Sudbury?

A.D. Yes, because everyone had to go, because that's where the funeral homes were.

G.P. I see.

A.D. Jackson and Barnard they were the first one....

G.P. So there was never a....

A.D.Ducharme, Ducharme had a funeral home, and people were taken out there always.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. Anyone of course who was ill, had to go to Sudbury to the hospital anyway....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.and if they died there well that's it, but we didn't the only person that was buried here that I know of, was a little cousin of mine who was a twin born dead, and he was buried right up on this hill.

G.P. mmhh, mmhh.

A.D. But that's the only....

G.P. I noticed on the way out here for example, there are four crosses at the side of the road.

A.D. Well that's where the accident, bad accident happened on that curve.

G.P. And people actually died there?

A.D. Four people killed there.

G.P. They weren't buried there but they had died....

A.D. Oh no, no, that's just....

G.P.died there at that corner.

A.D.a warning, it's a warning....

G.P. It's a reminder.

A.D.actually yes, because when they built the new highway in here, that's not very many years ago....

G.P. No.

A.D.that curve was long and smooth....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and a lot of young people....

G.P. mmhh. What was, was, there was a hotel out here at one time was there not?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Was there ever one in Skead? I suspect....

A.D. There was one on the point....

G.P. There was one?

A.D.at Skead, yes.

G.P. There was?

A.D. Yes, there was. There was one out on the point right near the water.

G.P. What was the name of it? Did it have a name? Or do you know who ran it?

A.D. Yes, Arsenault was the name of the people.

G.P. Arsenault ran it?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. Some French people by the name of Arsenault ran....

G.P. Yeah.

A.D.that hotel there, and they had dances and....

G.P. What period of time are we talking about? The '30s and '40s?

A.D. Oh the '30s.

G.P. Did it burn down?

A.D. Well, it was no longer a hotel. There was people lived in it as a home.

G.P. I see. Later on in the '40s?

A.D. Yes, they gave it up, gave up the idea of the hotel.

G.P. Right. There was a hotel in Bolands Bay as well?

A.D. Yes. There was a hotel here, but not at that time.

G.P. No?

A.D. No.

G.P. The hotel, when did it begin, in the '50s or '60s, the one here?

A.D. Oh '40s.

G.P. The '40s?

A.D. Well I mean....

G.P. Yeah, well it started up as a hotel though....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.in what the '50s?

A.D. Ah, yes.

G.P. And no longer operating now? No longer operating now?

A.D. It burned down.

G.P. Burned down.

A.D. That's, be what, three years ago.

G.P. Yeah.

A.D. Yeah.

G.P. So those are the only two hotels that were out here then, that....

A.D. Yeah, yes.

G.P.you recall?

A.D. Yes, well for the size of the....

G.P. No.

A.D.the village.

G.P. No, that's a...alright, in Bolands Bay itself there was only the one church? There were no other churches that you recall?

A.D. Well not in....

G.P. Not in Bolands Bay, but Skead rather.

A.D. Yes, that's the only church....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.that there was.

G.P. Alright, I think we'll break, and when we come back, I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about the, the famous, or infamous Skead fire of the '50s.

A.D. Oh yes.

(MUSIC)

G.P. Alvina Dafoe is our guest today on Memories and Music, and Mrs. Dafoe, you've just mentioned May the second, 1957.

A.D. Seventh.

G.P. May the seventh....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.1957.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Is the date of the Skead fire.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. How did you first hear about the fire?

A.D. The....

G.P. What were you doing when it first....

A.D.forestry was called to fight this fire that was started out near the radar base. Somewhere in the bush there....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.it started up, but the wind was very high and it was just in the right direction to bring it this way. A south-west wind....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and it came over, and it came so fast that the rangers could not control it because they couldn't put their

pumps up ahead of it, it travelled so fast....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.they had to move them....

G.P. Right.

A.D.and they had no chance whatever of saving the...or putting that fire out....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.not with the high wind there was, so it travelled very quickly, did not burn deep....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.just you know, scorched....

G.P. Skimmed along the surface but....

A.D. Yeah.

G.P.wrecked havoc along the way.

A.D. It certainly did, and then of course when it got to here, to Bolands Bay, it burned, not all the buildings but there was....

G.P. Three-quarters of the buildings would it have been?

A.D. Oh yes.

G.P. How many families left homeless?

A.D. Ah, there was eighty people, that's all....

G.P. Eighty people?

A.D. Yes, I'd have to count that.

G.P. Eighty people left homeless....

A.D. Yes.

G.P.in this area right here?

A.D. Right, well it was only in the settled part here....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.is where the fire did any damage. It didn't do any damage to Skead whatever.

G.P. No.

A.D. It was all Bolands Bay and....

G.P. And you lost your home?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Everything?

A.D. Everything.

G.P. Couldn't take any possessions?

A.D. I got out with the dress. I was washing clothes. I was washing that day.

G.P. mmhh. You got out with your family?

A.D. We had a car, and we got in the car and my mother and my sister-in-law, and her daughter and granddaughter, my daughter and her two children, and I mentioned my mother
....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and we got in the car. My, the school was let out early to let the children get home, is when the fire....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.became really dangerous....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.and I picked up my nephew and my son and we took them out to the lake, out the shore, to where, where Kritz* is now.

G.P. Out to Lake Wanapitei.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. I see.

A.D. Where it would be close, where you could get in the water if necessary....

G.P. Right.

A.D.and there were other people that ran out, friends of mine....

*Tony's Marina; Tony Kritz, proprietor

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.that I had no room in the car....

G.P. No.

A.D.for, and they ran out over on that side of the bay, and they asked me to take them, and I told them I'd be right back....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.I'd come back, but when I let the others off, and turned around to come back, they wouldn't let me come through. They said the fire was burning on both sides of the road....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.so I couldn't come back and pick them up....

G.P. No.

A.D.but they managed. The hotel didn't burn and most of the ones that were here went there and there were some that held onto Mr. Rioux boat, was tied up to the dock over there....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.and it was loaded with people, and they had, they were, they unfastened the rope because they were afraid that if the dock burned, the rope would burn off....

G.P. And it would come right onto the....

A.D. So they had just a long pole, pipe pole, and they held onto it, took turns holding that boat in and the wind was so strong....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.it was very hard for them to hold the boat there, and then finally they had to let go and it drifted across the bay with them in it.

G.P. With them in it, but it didn't sink?

A.D. Well no, there was no, it didn't leak or anything.

G.P. No.

A.D. The boat was, and the waves were not high enough for, you know, to drown, to upset the boat.

- G.P. How long were you away before you came back? Were you away a day or a couple of days?
- A.D. No, no, oh no, I just took them out and came back, but we had to wait until it was about seven o'clock in the evening before someone came over and told us that it had all passed away....
- G.P. Right.
- A.D.and that there wasn't much left to Bolands Bay.
- G.P. When you came back to Bolands Bay, what was your first sight?
- A.D. First sight was a whole bunch of smoke coming up, and blackened houses, nothing left, no refrigerators. It was terrible.
- G.P. Absolute mess.
- A.D. We came back, but you see the forces base there sent in buses to pick people up and take them out to get accommodations for them, and a meal for them....
- G.P. Right.
- A.D.and also the Red Cross sent out a bus....
- G.P. Right.
- A.D.to pick people up.
- G.P. So they tried to help the people as much as possible?
- A.D. Oh they helped as much as they possible could, oh yes.
- G.P. What was left of your house?
- A.D. Our house? I have one cast-iron frying pan that I salvaged.
- G.P. And that was, that was all?
- A.D. That was what there was. We had a large chest freezer with a, these, refrigerator on one end and the....
- G.P. Yes.
- A.D.freezer. We finished paying for it in April, and it burned in May.
- G.P. And it burned in May?

- A.D. Yes, and numerous other people around here, had bought them at the same time.
- G.P. Yes.
- A.D. Freezers, and of course everybody lost everything.
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D. There was nothing. There was nothing left at all.
- G.P. People would have to start over again?
- A.D. Well I guess. We didn't even have clothes to put on.
- G.P. No, but quite often when tragedies like that occur, it brings a community closer together, and of course this....
- A.D. Well it certainly did....
- G.P.would have been a close community.
- A.D.everyone did everything they could to help. It was wonderful the way the people....
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.the CKSO, the television, they put on a telethon....
- G.P. Yes.
- A.D.and then the Ontario Government matched what they took in there and everyone got enough money, enough....
- G.P. mmhh.
- A.D.to rebuild. We have very little insurance. We did have some insurance....
- G.P. Yes.
- A.D.on our house, very little. A thousand dollars.
- G.P. But you were thankful for the assistance that people did provide?
- A.D. Well, I guess we just didn't know how to thank them. They....
- G.P. No.
- A.D.were so....
- G.P. No.

A.D.you know, we were overwhelmed....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.with the help that was given to us.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. We didn't, we couldn't do anything....

G.P. It helps one to keep their confidence and human nature doesn't it?

A.D. Oh yes....

G.P. When that occurs.

A.D.it was wonderful.

G.P. Often with major tragedies like that, there are heroic stories, examples of heroism, people saving other people's....

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Were there examples of that as well that you recall?

(end of side one)

A.D. Well there was, I don't know of anybody like that was, everybody was trying to pick other people up....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.and take them out. Anyone who had a car....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.but the men were all on day-shift. Strange, the men were all on day-shift at the mines, Garson Mine, Falcon-bridge Mine, and the Nickel Rim Mine up here where my husband worked....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.and everybody was on day-shift, and so the women were left pretty well....

G.P. The women were the ones who....

A.D.where the children you see were....

G.P.had to cope with that situation.

A.D. Well they couldn't even come down from the mines because the road was burning....

G.P. No.

A.D.they couldn't get back from this close mine here. This mine is only about what four miles....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.four or five miles away and they couldn't come back because it was burning on both sides of the road....

G.P. mmhh, mmhh.

A.D.but they came as soon as they could get through....

G.P. Yes.

A.D.came down, and my husband ran a pump to help to put out....

G.P. Right.

A.D.protect some of the buildings here.

G.P. Well we've run out of time and I would like to end on a more optimistic note, rather than talking about a tragedy

A.D. Yes.

G.P.but you've lived in this area all your life, most of your life?

A.D. Yes.

G.P. And I expect you really enjoy this area, always have enjoyed it?

A.D. I will never live anywhere else.

G.P. You'd never want to live anywhere else?

A.D. Never.

G.P. And....

A.D. Been married twice and I never moved away.

G.P. And you've, you've, same with Skead, I've talked to people who live out in Skead....

A.D. The people are happy.

G.P.and they enjoy it out there as well.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. It's, it is a lovely area.

A.D. It's a very friendly place to be....

G.P. mmhh.

A.D.in Skead. It's a wonderful place.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. The people get along very well, they're, I don't know why, but it seems that there's a difference in here and a lot of other villages where people are picking at each other.

G.P. mmhh.

A.D. We don't do that.

G.P. Well you can't ask for more can you then?

A.D. People are....

G.P. If people are getting along, and it's a beautiful area as well.

A.D. Yes.

G.P. Well on behalf of Memories and Music, thank you very much. I'm sure our listening audience today, have gained a greater insight into what's it like to live out in Bolands Bay and to live in Skead and I think we've, we've increased our awareness about the early history of the area. So thank you very much.

A.D. O.K.