The following transcript of

William “Bill” Ellis’ interview

on

Memories and Music

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INTERVIEWEE: Bill Ellis TAPE NO: 101
INTERVIEWER: Bert Meredith

B.M. Well Doug my special guest today is a man well-known to all who have some recollection of local politics. Well this man was mayor of our fair city ~~form~~ from 1961 until 1962, in matter of fact through ~~k~~ both those years. Yes I'm very happy to have this happy, garigous import from Southeastern Ontario, Bill Ellis with me today and Bill has many other recollections in addition to his political activities. We'll return with Bill in ~~am~~ moment but first back to~~m~~ our friend and music master Doug McLaughlin.

(Music)

B.M. Bill Ellis welcome to "Memories & Music" I've had you in mind for some time and I'm very happy that I have you here today.

B.E. Thank you very much Bert it's nice to be here.

B.M. It's nice to be ~~x~~ here~~x~~ and look Bill before we start I mentioned that you're an ex-politican, I don't know about ex. But no political speeches on this, if you ~~k~~ don't mind~~x~~ O.K.

B.E. Well you've (unintell.) in trying that.

B.M. Bill it really is, it's nice to see you again, you're looking terrific and I'm happy for that. We've got a number ~~k~~ of things that I want to talk about ~~kk~~ with you because you've had rather an interesting career for a little boy from that southeastern part of Ontario. Incidentally where are you from? Let's pin point it, where were you born?

B.E. Well I was born in Marmur, Ontario. It's a,~~x~~ north of Belleville~~x~~

B.M. Is Marmur the a, the a, what's it a mining a . . .

B.E. It, it developed into a mining

B.M. Yeah

B.E. The Buckingham Steel

B.M. Steel that's right, sir.

B.E. Open pit mining but that was ~~xlx~~ after I ~~kxfk~~ had left.

B.M. What was it? Was it a farming community before then, eh?

B.E. Primarily farming yes.

B.M. What year were you ~~krom~~ born Bill?

B.E. In 1914.

B.M. So you and the First World War started together.

B.E. That's right, that's right.

B.M. Son of a gun. ~~X~~ You, I hoped that you didn't have any part in that, did you or (unintell.) eh?

B.E. Well of course, I don't even remember any of that.

B.M. ~~R~~ Well did you not stay in, in Marmur very long then?

B.E. No my dad a, later on moved to a, ~~a~~ place called Pointe Anne which was east of Belleville~~x~~ by about roughly 6 miles.

B.M. Pointe Anne now that, that rings a bell somewhere, where do I remember Pointe Anne?

B.E. Well Pointe Anne is where Bobby Hull comes from

B.M. Oh yeah, that's funny.

B.E. That's a matter of ~~x~~ fact a, I did know and played with Bobby Hull's father.

B.M. You did?

B.E. I did, yes.

B.M. Did you?

B.E. ~~Ixdid~~ Yeah.

B.M. When, when you were going to school ~~&~~ or (unintell.).

B.E. Well we just, we lived not too far from a, where he lived a

B.M. Well he, ~~did~~ well, well did Bobby Hull's people have a farm down there or were (unintell) Bobby eh?

B.E. No the father worked at Pointe Anne, that was the Canadian Cement Company.

B.M. Oh yeah, outside on the lake, ~~is~~ isn't it Pointe Anne?

B.E. ~~It~~ It's right on ~~the~~ the Bay of Grundy ~~which is part of~~

B.M. Oh yes.

B.E. Which is part of Lake Ontario

B.M. What did . . . go back to your folks Bill. You were born in Marmura but their father moved to Pointe Anne. A, what was your father doing ?

B.E. Well in ~~R~~ Pointe Anne he was running a steam shovel . . . you know in preparation of them~~x~~ clay and whatnot that a, cement is ~~md~~ made of a

B.M. Oh is it up from down that area where they get the original, the the product is it?

B.E. That's right and a,

B.M. Oh

B.E. And then ~~x~~ he went on the railroad and I guess the railroad was pretty hard in those days and a, he quit and come back to Pointe Anne again and then later on in 1923~~x~~ he a, he went on the railroad again and a, stayed on 'til his retirement.

B.M. Is this the N.C.P. down there, ~~xhex~~ which one?

B.E. The C.N.

B.M. The C.N., ~~dx~~ divisional point isn't it somewhere?

B.E. It's a divisional point between Toronto and a, Montreal.

B.M. Belleville is.

B.E. Belleville is yes.

B.M. Yeah, O.K. Incidentally I, I like to, can you go back what, where did your parents come~~f~~ from? How did ~~y~~ they come to Marmura? I, I like to know.

B.E. Well ~~xx~~ my a, father he was a, he was born in that area in Maydock as a matter of fact

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. And a, my mother was born in Marmura. ~~xAlxth~~ Although my grand-father on~~y~~ my father's side, ~~thy~~ they went to the states and they farmed in North ~~Dxxxxxx~~ Dakoata for ~~xxrx~~ several years

B.M. ~~DI~~ Did they?

B.E. And then of course they come back to a, to

B.M. To Canada

B.E. Yes right.

B.M. Well where would they be from originally Bill from Ireland, England?

B.E. They're from Ireland.

B.M. Ireland.

B.E. Ireland, yes.

B.M. Ireland, eh, yes. So, so Bill Ellis (unintell.) has some of ~~x~~ the green in his blood, has he?

B.E. Right.

B.M. You're blood isn't all red, is it~~x~~, eh? Bill you grew up then in a, in, in Pointe Anne or Belleville?in Pointe Anne?

B.E. Well actually I grew up in Belleville, we moved to Bel~~,~~ to Belleville

in 1923 when I was nine years of age.

B.M. Oh yeah.

B.E. And a, so my a, actually that's, that time I can remember.

B.M. Your recollections are of Belleville.

B.E. Yeah right.

B.M. Now Belleville at that time 1923 that's a, 55 and more years ago wasn't a very, was a, rail, it was a railroad divisional point and what was it a center for the farmers around there?

B.E. Well and the farmers yes, it is a

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. Hastings County is a, is a real farmers' country

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. And primarily dairy cattle.

B.M. O.K. Bill that part of the country as opposed to southwestern Ontario, which is the best farming country?

B.E. Well a

B.M. Put you on the spot.

B.E. Well I would say Western Ontario or southwestern

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. Ontario is a, mostly fruit. Where a, in a eastern Ontario it's primarily a, mixed farming and a

B.M. Cattle and so forth

B.E. Cattle and some apples

B.M. Yeah well apples, yeah Bay of Quindy we we're talking about that up that way, that's apple country, isn't it?

B.E. That's right, that's right and Prince Edward county over in Picton area is a, all apple

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. And a

B.M. Drive up old no. 2 Highway there and you go through some of that don't you?

B.E. That's right, yes.

B.M. There's a nice, it's a treat once in a while instead of that

B.M. That (unintell.)

darn 401 which is so monotonous. The couple of times I've been to Kingston I come back and (unintell.) no. 2

B.E. Well a

B.M. You come through the old towns and so forth.

B.E. Well I a, I would say 9 trips out of 10 when I got home that a, I go down no. 2

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. Because it's more leisurely

B.M. Oh much more fit to rest, isn't it?

B.E. Yes it wis Bert than 401.

B.M. Bill then, then you a, let's say that, you that you were not, you didn't come from an affluence family by any stretch of the imagination I suppose, eh?

B.E. No I didn't Bert and a

B.M. And you've seen two depressions because after the First World War which was 19, around 1921 or 2 there was a depression, wasn't there?

B.E. Yes a, although I don't remember that

B.M. No

B.E. Too much it was primarily after 1929.

B.M. '29 when you would remember, wouldn't you?

B.E. Yes.

B.M. Very distinctly. O.K. you went to school in a, in a Belleville. Now of course at that time that wouldn't be any country school, you'd go to a school similar to what we have, a school system would be similar to what we have there wouldn't it, eh?

B.E. Yes it would be a Bert.

B.M. Except that you had, you didn't have grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 you had senior first, senior second, senior third.

B.E. That is right, that is right.

B.M. Yeah do you have any of the old readers, the old school books any of those Bill?

B.E. I think maybe that I could find some

B.M. Yeah

B.E. if I look by I, right off hand I wouldn't know.

B.M. I ran across one of the other day at home, I think it was senior, I don't know if it was senior third or whatever what. But there was still some interesting, some poems that you sort of remember when you used to have the memory work with poems, eh?

B.E. Right, right.

B.M. And you could remember some of those "Old Tubeil Cane was a man of might in the days when earth was young"and that sort of stuff.

B.E. That was our, what we used to call literature.

B.M. Lit, yes that's right and they did learn you a little bit about that then, didn't they?

B.E. Oh yes, oh yes. You had to get your homework done in those days as well as

B.M. Now you lived in town Bill, so it's not as if you were living on a farm and had chores to do at a, at a, after school. You had time to fool around and a, steal apples and do all the bad things that kids do or play sport or whatever. Is this right or did you have chores to do?

B.E. Well I had a certain amount of chores I, a, of course in those days there was no oil or gas.

B.M. That's right, yes.

B.E. We had wood to bring in and coal and whatnot but a

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. I also had a paper route

B.M. (unintell.)

B.E. For a number, for a number of years.

B.M. Did they have a daily paper in the, in the, in Belleville or did, was it the (unintell.) standard? (unintell.)

B.E. Well no, I used to deliver the Toronto Stars

B.M. Oh yes.

B.E. And of course they were a heavier paper.

B.M. I see

B.E. And a, a, and I was fortunate in those days, I had roughly 100 customers and I made 70 cents a night, in other words we made 7/10 of a cent.

B.M. 7/10 of a cent a paper.

B.E. 7/10 of a cent.

B.M. You had a 100.

B.E. I had 1100 so I roughly made a

B.M. Yeah but how long did it take you to do 100 Bill?

B.E. Well I had a very good route . . . I would say oh, maybe an hour and a half.

B.M. O.K. now that's the obvious question. How would you carry 100 papers?

B.E. Well I had a bicycle and a, as a matter and, in winter time I had a dog and I used to a, in a sleigh

B.M. Sleigh, is it?

B.E. And I, I, I'd delivered with the paper, delivered the papers that way.

B.M. Great, aren't you glad you're not doing it now when they have a Sunday paper as well.

B.E. Well of course they, they were the old good, old days Bert and a

B.M. I know

B.E. I used to think it was a chore then, but when I look back I think it was more fun than anything.

B.M. Oh yeah. And did, is that the time when they had, when there was the Star weekly as well they had the

B.E. They had the Star weekly as well in those days, yes.

B.M. And there was, there was in opposition to that that didn't the Tele or somebody else put out a, a weekly paper. I'd

B.E. Well the Telegram put out a daily paper.

B.M. Yes they had but I think they had a weekly one. No, I'm I wrong.

B.E. No not the telegram

B.M. I guess

B.E. Well they had a, they had a week, a weekend paper as well, same as the Toronto Star.

B.M. Yeah that's what I was thinking something.

B.E. But they, but they also have the daily paper.

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. As a matter of fact the front pages were colored pink and the paper

boys would get out on the street there y hollering "Pink Tele, Pink Tele."

B.M. Oh that's right the Pink Tele, yes.

B.E. Yeah. So that's a

B.M. The Tele should have been orange because it was the orangemen's paper, wasn't it?

B.E. Well that's truey

B.M. Eh?

B.E. That's true.

B.M. Well my gosh that was the big thing in Toronto, but a, today I guess they're having a little difficulty sometimes getting delivery boys who make a good deal more than your 7/10 of a cent.

B.E. Well I wouldn't know what they make today, B.H. No, no. I'm sure that it is more but a

B.M. Well you know, do you know today Bill it's actually computerized. They get the bundles of paper come in plastic containeurs, containers with a computerized list of who the customers are and what they owe and everything on there.

B.E. Is that right? No

B.M. I'm telling.

B.E. No I didn't Bert.

B.M. You're still an innocent, little farm boy Bill in that regard.

B.E. Well that's true a, Bert.

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. A little thing in regards to papers it a, an election coming up now and I don't want to get into politics but a

B.M. No I, I won't allow you.

B.E. But a, but I a, a, I took the Toronto Stars as I said and a, prior to an election people in the Belleville area, they just didn't read the paper and my a, route drop, my customers would drop down to less than half.

B.M. Really. Was, was the Star in those days a liberal paper as it as been?

B.E. The Star was a liberal paper.

B.M. And the Tele, was the, was the, a conservative's paper.

B.E. Conservative and the Belleville area has been conservative in

there.

B.M. Since day one, eh?

B.E. Since day one, you're right.

B.M. And you'd lose your x customers (unintell.)

B.E. Oh I'd, I'd lose them roughly for ~~about~~ three weeks.

B.M. Is that right? Isn't that, I suppose that happens even now. Bill a, you're starting to get into politics so I guess I'm going to have to cool you down. So I'm going to just take a little break, we're going to enjoy a little music that Doug has and you can a, have a sip of that a, water.

B.E. Right, right.

B.M. (unintell.) Bill, then we'll come back.

(Music)

B.M. Bill a, paper route was one chore you had now that if you'd, if it took you an hour and half each, each day to do a, papers it didn't x leave a great deal of time to do what kids play piggy or baseball, hockey, whatever or did it?

B.E. Of course we had the Saturdays and after going to Sunday school and church on Sundays well.

B.M. Pretty religious down there too aren't they?

B.E. Well they are, yes

B.M. Yes

B.E. And a, we a, oh yeah we got into our ball games in the summer time and a

B.M. (unintell.) O.K. that's what I was going to ask you, what, now you I know you get a little further down to the Smith Falls way. You're right into the baseball country, aren't you Bill, pretty well. What about around Belleville way?

B.E. Well

B.M. Much the same.

B.E. Yes Belleville was quite a sports town or city. They had their a, then they played baseball with Peterborough, Kingston, and Oshawa.

B.M. Good baseball too, eh?

B.E. Good baseball yes.

B.M. Yeah, it's good Bill, you now you were here in the days and I often remind people when we had good senior baseball here.

Remember back in the 50's a, at Queen's Park we had good baseball here, didn't we?

B.E. That's right

B.M. And would this be of a calibre that you're talking about (unintell.

B.E. I would that it was really even better a

B.M. Even better thanx that.

B.E. Even better yes.

B.M. You're be getting up pretty close to a, it's a double or triple A baseball then, wouldn't you?

B.E. Yeah I would think so yes.

B.M. ~~xxdx~~ Anybody from there~~x~~ go on through a, was there Rochester and Toronto and Montreal and those teams and the International League in those ~~dx~~ days, wasn't it a?

B.E. Although there were a~~x~~ ~~xx~~ couple of players that went on. A, a

B.M. Did they, they go to Toronto?

B.E. Ah, no they went to a, either ( ) or ~~whex~~ went into the a, majors in any event.

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. However they weren't a

B.M. They just couldn't make it.

B.E. I, I, no.

B.M. Bill talking ~~h~~ about sport now a, just backing up a little you said you're coming from a, you come from down Bobby Hull's country. Did you say that you had played some sport with Bobby Hull's dad?

B.E. No I didn't a, when I, when we lived in Pointe Anne, of course, I lived a, we moved from there~~wh~~ ~~whex~~ in, when I was 9 years of age. But I did know a, Bobby Hull's a, dad and a, but you know as, as more or less neighbours.

B.M. Yes but now Bobby and his brother are the two that we know of, were there more in the family down there, were they a, ~~would~~ were they hock, hockey fans down that way. Were

B.E. Well Of course in those days Bert a, we used to play with a spring skates and a

B.M. Yeah

B.E. And what not so we didn't develop into any great a, ~~anyxg~~ hockey players.

B.M. Except that you know it's remarkable of a person of his calibre come out of there. The same as, as Gordey Howe from out west where he comes from. Well what he did was, was throw pucks or a, or . . . buffulo pans against the barn door you know and he'd get his (unintell.) But look at the talent that it did finally develop, eh?

B.E. Yeah that's true a

B.M. But hockey was the big sport in the winter and I wonder about in those days and I'm taking my own recollection, was there much skiing then?

B.E. No there was no skiing.

B.M. NO skiing (unintell.)

B.E. Yeah when I say none a, we got some (unintell.) and a

B.M. Yes but no, no skiing as such we know today.

B.E. No, no, no

B.M. What about around there? Hilly country at all around Belleville area?

B.E. A, north of Belleville there's a few hills but a

B.M. Yeah

B.E. Well not too many.

B.M. Bill in, in your early, in your, born ahead down there then, it would be more horses than cars, I am I right?

B.E. Oh there's all horses

B.M. All horses

B.E. All horses

B.M. The car was sort of a novelty, was it?

B.E. Well yes and a, when you mentioned cars Bert a, I remember the fellow that used to pick, or the man that picked up the mail. He started off with a horse and then later on he got an old Model T Ford.

B.M. Oh yes.

B.E. And he used to have chains on all wheel

B.M. All wheels

B.E. All, all wheels in order and of course the front wheels a, in order or we had chains on the front wheels in order to climb out of the, the rutts on the roads so a

BM. All mud roads I suppose, eh?

B.E. Well Mud and of course in the winter time a

B.M. Snow.

B.E. Snow and ice and, and never ploughed.

B.M. No ~~thexex ty~~ they, I was going to say they didn't clear it the way they do today.

B.E. So they

B.M. Did you have to go from to go to school? (unintell.)

B.E. Roughly about a mile and half.

B.M. And you hoofed it, of course.

B.E. Oh yes there was no such thing as buses.

B.M. You didn't ~~take~~ see those yellow things running down the road, eh?

B.E. Oh no, no there was no buses in those days.

B.M. Bicycles though were pretty popular.

B.E. Yes a

B.M. Were they.

B.E. If one could afford one.

B.M. Oh yes, yes that's true.

B.E. There was a lot of people who didn't have them though

B.M. Oh yeah you'd be like they were, are in China now everybody was riding a bicycle out there.

B.E. Well yes.

B.M. Eh?

B.E. That's right.

B.M. Well it was a good mode of transportation a

B.E. Well ~~af~~

B.M. Of course the thing you don't, the difference then, I don't know if you've ridden a ~~bicycle~~ bicycle lately. I just start to do it again last year. Remember the old days as a kid on a bike you could hit hill, you get off the seat, you'd pump it up. You only had one gear now, you've got a 10-speed bike.

B.E. That's, that's true.

B.M. You get a guy trying to go up in the, in the a, what in the first ~~spee~~ speed and that, he'll, he'll never make it he'll got to put

that, gear that thing way, way down because a, it wouldn't do it to you. So I was wondering as kids, did the bikes go easy or would be tougher or what?

B.E. Well a, maybe we had a little more muscles in our legs a

B.M. Thought nothing of it.

B.E. But a, no

B.M. Couldn't do it today.

B.E. We didn't know any different.

B.M. I suppose that's true, eh, that's the fact. Bill a, when you were growing up down there did you have, were summer jobs common or, or did you have work after school or anything, that sort of thing.

B.E. Well a, yes a, during the summer there was work in a canning factories and a

B.M. No Canning what, what a, no that, canning what were they canning down there, what's

B.E. Well they'd be canning peas, a, tometoes ah

B.M. Was that part of, I thought the Lexington way was more committed (unintell.)

B.E. ~~No at that time~~ They No they're, they're, at that time they were canning a, the vegetables in

B.M. Right one of the big canning companies, would it

B.E. Yes it was

B.M. Was it, eh? And would you, what would you do get a job in there I suppose a, for the summer or when the harvest was on, eh?

B.E. Just when the harvest was on yes.

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. And we worked long hours, maybe 12, 14 hours a day during the peak season and

B.M. Would Oh yeah to get, you'd have to get the vegetables in there I suppose.

B.E. Well yes . . . there's

B.M. What did you, did you not say something about, what were you thinking about the women that worked in there?

B.E. Well at that time a, I think I was getting well 15 cents an hour and the a, the women that were peeling tomatoes they got 2 cents for peeling a basin, a basin of them.

B.M. Was it, ~~wx~~ was it, is that done by hand then?

B.E. Oh it's all done by hand yes.

B.M. The tomatoes were peeled.

B.E. Peeled by hand/

B.M. What were they on steam first or something?

B.E. It'd be steamed ~~fx~~ first and a

B.M. Then they'd have to peel them by hand

~~B.E.~~ This is for the canned whole tomatoes I suppose or something

B.E. The canned tomatoes, ~~xxyx~~ yes, yeap.

B.M. Holy smoke that would be a chore, wouldn't it?

B.E. Well it a, of course at that time when you didn't know any different

B.M. (unintell.) they didn't have machinery to do it, eh?

B.E. That's right.

B.M. It's hard to believe that that would be the situation

B.E. And I'm sure ~~x~~ that a lot of those women, married women would come home and a, do there housework afterwards.

B.M. After, after that yeah.

B.E. That's right.

B.M. They were accustomed to ~~wxk~~ working then. And this, this would be about the only work, what about the railroad? Was there any work on the railroad for a young fellow~~sxx~~ in the summer time down there?

B.E. No, no.

B.M. No

B.E. No just the ones that a, had a job on ther railroad, they were fortunate and a, there was no extra

B.M. No, no extra work in that regard~~x~~, eh?

B.E. No, no.

B.M. ~~Wx~~ When did . . . a, when did a fellow start looking outward I'm just wondering, you know the community like that was it the young fellows ambition that when he got older enough he'd get out of this town and go somewhere else, like was the thought of going to Toronto or Montreal or even Kingston or something like this a

B.E. Well of course in those days Bert a, there wasn't too much work anyplace and a

B.M. Yes we're talking, that's right, let's see you were ~~about~~ born in, 14, in ~~12~~ '30, in '29, you were 15 years of age when the, when the depression started.

B.E. That's right.

B.M. You'd just be coming on to the, the market pretty soon and the labour market and right in the worst possible time.

B.E. That's, that's

B.M. So that's, yeah/

B.E. I was one of those unfortunate ones.

B.M. Yes you were. Well what, now when did you leave the, the Belleville area? Would, did you leave there during the depression time?

B.E. (unintell.) I lived there all during the depression and a, a, after high school I was fortunate in getting a job in the ~~Quest~~ creamery . . . and I worked up to be a butter maker.

B.M. Oh did you.

B.E. And then a

B.M. Tell me Bill is the butter that, that you made then better than the butter you get today? I'm putting you on the spot again.

B.E. I, I a, I would think it was yes.

B.M. It tasted better to you.

B.E. Well the, yes and a, it was all made with a fresh cream and what not a

B.M. Yeah

B.E. Bert and a, I think it was more natural.

B.M. Yeah my recollection of the taste of butter then as now is somethin like that, in matter of fact I'm become a margarine man by (unintell.) But I suppose the ingredients were a little, a little better in those days then, then a, well I shouldn't say they were better. But today most things have so many additives, don't they? (unintell.)

B.E. (unintell.) I think everything was more natural

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. In those days.

B.M. Bill when did you first case your glance northward to the Sudbury area?

B.E. Well in 1939 I got a, laid off at this creamery and as a matter of fact the fellow that I was working for, a, he got rid of every employee that had worked for the previous company. So there was

B.M. Why? The, did, was there a change of ownership (unintell.)

B.E. There was a change of ownership and

B.M. Just like we used to do in politics you cleared out everybody.

B.E. He cleared out everyone including the office staff.

B.M. Is that right? Son of a gun

B.E. And

B.M. And, and, started, got all new people then.

B.E. Well he didn't do it all, he didn't get rid of every employee immediately.

B.M. No.

B.E. But over a period of oh roughly a year why he had a whole new staff.

B.M. (unintell.) well so that started you on your way then.

B.E. So one of the, one of the fellows that had worked there at the creamery, he knew a man that worked in Levack.

B.M. And did you know where Levack was?

B.E. Well I had no idea where Levack was.

B.M. No.

B.E. Nox it was just some place

B.M. And what it was about.

B.E. No just some place in northern Ontario.

B.M. And there was no, of course there was no Mar, mining in Marmur then so

B.E. No

B.M. You weren't too familiar with mining. There was no mining (unintell.)

B.E. No I didn't know anything about mining,

B.M. No.

B.E. As a matter of fact, when I come to Sudbury my mother was scarred skinny that a

B.M. Sure poor boy going up into that

B.E. Right

B.M. This is really amusing now, isn't it? eh?

B.E. Oh yes it's a

B.M. When you think of the attitude of those people down there toward it with it's a, it's really silly.

B.E. Well it seems so far away and of course when I started underground and told my mother

B.M. Yes.

B.E. How far

B.M. She thought my goodness

B.E. Or how deep (unintell.)

B.M. My boy

B.E. Oh

B.M. My boy down there and my boy was in the best ~~xxx~~ place he ~~xx~~ could be you didn't have to worry ~~xhxx~~ if snowed

B.E. Right.

B.M. Rained or whatever, eh?

B.E. Right.

B.M. Best place ever. Bill I want to talk a ~~x~~ little bit more about the, those areas too. But again let's pause briefly so that our friend Doug can favour us with some music and then we'll continue.

(Music)

B.M. Bill when you did decide to, to come up there. Did you come up alone to Sudbury?

B.E. No there was three of us that come up a, a fellow ~~xhxx~~ by the name of Macs Ireland whose now retired.

B.M. Oh yeah. That's right.

B.E. Ah, and another man or boy I should say by the name of Art Timmins, he didn't stay very ~~xxx~~ long he got ~~xx~~ sick and went back down south and ~~xxxxxxx~~ unfortunately he was in an accident and a, he was ~~xxx~~ killed a, in 1940.

B.M. Bill a, in 1939, from Belleville, how did you come to Sudbury by what means?

B.E. Well I, I had a, a foreign car at the time, a one seater . . . and of course ~~a~~ no money but between the three of us we scrapped up enough to ~~back~~ buy gas and a, we got to Sudbury and of course it took us ~~three~~ two days to get here.

B.M. Two days from Belleville, eh?

B.E. Yeah we stayed overnight in Orillia and a

B.M. It would be quite a trip because it mostly, lot of it, quite a bit would be dirt road I suppose or just a, a little bit of (unintell.)

B.E. Of courde from North Bay over it was the old 17, it was all gravel and dirt road.

B.M. Was that, that stretch wasn't, but that Sturgeon ~~R~~ Falls stretch wasn't in then I don't suppose was it, eh?

B.E. I don't recall.

B.M. No.

B.E. No I don't think so.

B.M. No that, that I think ~~xxt~~ that came a little bit later that little (unintell.) Two, ~~days~~ two days quite a, quite a chore.

B.E. It was quite a trip and a, not knowing whether we were going to make it or not and coming into a strange place a,

B.M. Coming into Sudbury

B.E. (unintell.) we were all excited

B.M. Did you have a ~~little~~ money ~~xx~~ when you came here?

B.E. Ah, I suppose maybe between the three of us, we may have had a, $10 left.

B.M. Little did you think ~~a~~ coming from a, a job where you were just let out at the creamery, a little boy from the little town of Belleville coming to Sudbury that wouldn't be too long until you'd be running they joint, eh Bill?

B.E. Well that's true

B.M. (unintell.)

B.E. A lot of things had happened and the

B.M. (unintell.) in a way

B.E. Right, right and I proved one thing that you can come in and a,

B.M. Any, anybody can.

B.E. Right.

B.M. That's, that's very, very true, isn't it?

B.E. Bill where did you, when you came here did you get a job immediately?

B.E. Ah, well it was rather ironical the way things happened, the three of us all got jobs

B.M. At Levack

B.E. No one got a job in Creighton, one at Frood and of course I got on

B.M. You got Frood

B.E. I got Frood as well

B.M. Sure you're an old Frood man, of course. You started .. . you started underground at Frood.

B.E. I started underground at Frood and then a

B.M. Whereabouts, who were you working for first? Do you remember?

B.E. A, a, George Moretto

B.M. George Moretto down on 291 2950

B.E. On 2950, on the school street.

B.M. Oh yeah. Great guy wasn't he?, eh? (unintell.) don't you think.

B.E. Yeah he was quite a

B.M. He had his 50th wedding anniversary last year.

B.E. Did he?

B.M. Yes, he and the chief, and old George Duchane both

B.E. Yes, yes.

B.M. Had them, yeah. They live out in, you know George lives out there behind the a, drive-in.

B.E. Yes but I

B.M. (unintell.)

B.M. Did you?

B.E. I didn't work underground very long Bert, in matter of fact I only worked there 10 shifts or 10 days.

B.M. And then

B.E. And then I come to surface and I had my stationary engineer's

papers and I went

B.M. Where did you get those from~~?~~ Bill I was going to ask you that.

B.E. Well when I was working in the creamery, of course

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. I'd look after the broilers and what not and the refrigeration and so on.

B.M. I see, so you had, what'd you have fourth class papers there?

B.E. ~~Yeah~~ I'm fourth class in ~~it~~ that line, yes.

B.M. And so what did you do, go to get in the compressor room at Frood then?

B.E. I got in the water room.

B.M. Water room BE at Frood and a, and later ~~i~~ on I went into the open pit.

B.M. Yes I know you went over the pit, when did you go over to the pit? Do you remember?

B.E. I think that was in '41.

B.M. '41 so she was right at her peak when you went over there, eh, wasn't she?

B.E. ~~Shh~~ Yes that's right

B.M. That's when they were really pumping her. (~~unintell.~~ Cliff) Stewart was over there then.

B.E. Cliff Stewart was there.

B.M. Jim Myles was the master mechanic, was he?

B.E. Ah, Jim Myles was the ~~a~~ man that I worked for, yes.

B.M. Yeah, great guy, eh?

B.E. Yeah Allan Bronc was (unintell.)

B.M. Oh that's right Allan Bronc was there.

B.E. Was ~~required~~ 2. to work with Stewart.

B.M. M Jim Myles I, ~~think~~ I think he was the, he was a great guy.

B.E. Yeah and a fellow by the name of Joe Butler.

B.M. Joe Butler, oh sure, oh Joe was one of the

B.E. Remember Joe with the, with the big ~~mous~~ moustache.

B.M. I sure do. Tom is, is his son I guess he's still living around

here.

B.E. That's right, that's right.

B.M. And, and Jimmy Myles' son Norm is still out in the Maintenanc Department

B.E. Yes.

B.M. In Copper Cliff. Some, something like the old man you know.

B.E. As a matter of fact Norm was my boss when I a, retired.

B.M. I guess he was, wasn't he?

B.E. That's right.

B.M. That's right. Well he was at Stobie and Frood wasn't he Norm?

B.E. Stobie and Frood a, Frood complex.

B.M. Which was all the one thing.

B.E. Well did you stay there in the boiler room there Bill until . . . your retired? Did you

B.E. Ah, no I went from the boiler room a, I went to the open pit and then from the open pit I went back to the boiler room.

B.M. I see.

B.E. And a

B.M. You stayed around there most of the time

B.E. Of course I stayed there until my retirement.

B.M. Yeah I'm trying to think . . . yeah you know most of the, the hoistmen and most of the compression men out there. I'm trying to think of who was I going to ask you about? The name eludes me at the moment so I'll, I'll pass over it. Bill a, let's get to something else now. You were as I said mayor of this fair town and you were in politics for for some time before that naturally. What, a when did you first interest in politics emerge? I mean was it before you left, were you interested in politics down in Belleville way at all.

B.E. No I was, a matter of fact Bert I didn't know anything about politics

B.M. No

B.E. Whatsoever.

B.M. As you said, you didn't know why people quit buying the paper, did you?

B.E. Right, right.

B.M. (unintell.) Well ~~was~~ what got you into politics? Now you lived in, in Minnow Lake?

B.E. I lived in the Minnow Lake area, yes.

B.M. Yes, yes.

B.E. Well that got me interested . . . Carl Nesbitt, a lot of people would remember Carl.

B.M. Sure would.

B.E. He was the a, reeve at the time and a, as a matter of fact I helped Carl get elected as a (unintell.)

B.M. ~~Cousellor~~ Councillor

B.E. ~~Counsellor~~ Councillor.

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. ~~The~~ And then a, he was leaving . . . to go to ~~To~~ Thompson and a, so I got a, thinking of running for reeve and of course I, I was fortunate in being elected.

B.M. Without being a councillor first?

B.E. Well I~~y~~ had, no, I had, when Carl was reeve, I was a councillor under him.

B.M. You were under him, I see

B.E. And a, he got me interested I might say~~ay~~ a, in 1953 ~~ad~~ and so a

B.M. Did you like politics though? I guess you did.

B.E. ~~M~~ At the beginning I was a little bit liery of it but as time went on, yes I ~~am~~ enjoyed ~~every~~, very much.

B.M. But I~~'m~~, I'm just thinking don't you, don't you find that sort of a demanding and rather a frustrating thing that people are at you. It's rare that, that ~~the~~ person comes up and says, "Bill I think you did great." "Bill why don't you do this, I've got this problem." Isn't that what happens most of the time?

B.E. Well that's, that's true Bert, but a, there's a lot of satisfaction on getting things . . .

B.M. Done

B.E. Done and a, one of the things that I enjoyed most I suppose is having the opportunity of meeting all the people that I did.

B.M. Well that's, that's, you are a gregarious person as I, ~~said~~ I'd said earlier and that would just suit you fine, wouldn't it eh?

B.E. Yes I enjoyed it very much.

B.M. Yeah. O.k. Bill we go, we're reeve of, of ~~Mickie~~ McKim township which

B.E. ~~Micken~~ McKim, that's right.

B.M. And ~~Micken~~ McKim took in a big area then didn't it?

B.E. It a, well ~~it~~ there was ~~a~~ New Sudbury, the Gatchell

B.M. The Gatchell, yeah the whole

B.E. Lockerby and (unintell.)

B.M. Like I mean you go out to Copper Cliff, out on the Copper Cliff Road, you go around the Robin, the Robinson subdivision

B.E. The Robinson area yes.

B.M. Subdivision and you, you take in all of Minnow Lake and go New, which is New Sudbury which ~~was it~~ wasn't as big as it is now. A huge area, it all

B.E. Right.

B.M. It circles Sudbury, didn't it?

B.E. That's right, yeah completely circles Sudbury.

B.M. Yeah, you didn't have all that many people in comparison to the size but still it was (unintell.)

B.E. Well it was a fair size in those days, days.

B.M. 20,000 people

B.E. It was between 18-20,000

B.M. 20,000 people ~~yeah~~

B.E. Yes

B.M. Yeah. O.K. Bill you're reeve of the McKim township and what year was that?

B.E. That was in a, '57, 8, and 9.

B.M. '57, 8 and 9. O.K. then we have the big jump. Who was mayor of Sudbury when you ~~dixxxx~~ decided that you're going to run for the mayor of Sudbury? Was this after amalgamation?

B.E. Well amalgamation was 1960 and Bill Edgar

B.M. Yes

B.E. Wonderful man, . . . he was mayor of '60 and '61 and then I run in '6 for the term of '61, '62 and was fortunate in being elected.

B.M. Now O.K. let me back up a little bit. You didn't serve on, on, as a, as an alderman in the city of Sudbury. You went right from reeve of McKim township and you ran for mayor of Sudbury, is this right?

B.E. No, No I, a, I was on Board of Control under Bill Edgar.

B.M. Oh that's, oh that's when we had the . . . was that not the first Board of Control. That was, well no they had Board of Controls in the latter part of the 50's. Ah, however I was on the first Board of Control, of after the amalgamation.

B.M. Oh yes.

B?E. So a

B.M. Who was on there with you, there was, was that when a, a, Leo Landryville and a, . . . oh who, who, who else were controllors or wasn't it . . . one of the Silverman's?

B.E. Ah, no there was a,

B.M. No I mean the Saul or Jake

B.E. That the, Saul was a, on Board of Control but that was in, oh the early

B.M. Earlier, oh it was.

B.E. Yes.

B.M. No when the amalgamation of, of the McKim and Sudbury came that put it all into the, called the City of Sudbury not, this is before the regional thing.

B.E. That oh yes

B.M. Yes was

B.E. That was in 1960.

B.M. So you ran and who did you run against that year Bill?

B.E. OK I can't recall all who run I know the one

B.M. For mayor I mean.

B.E. Oh a, there was a, Peter Gemo and a, Abby Gougeon

B.M. Abby Gougeon, eh, yeah. And you, boy you got those two fellows of, with that a, a francophone name and you split the vote and you made it, eh?

B.E. That's right, yes.

B.M. No; No I'm not, that's not right that. You were pretty popular guy and I know that a, most of your political decisions were decided in a place that no longer exists and it's sad because they've taken down one of the city landmarks recently when they moved the old iron bridge.

B.E. That's right a

B.M. And right adjoining the iron bridge was a confectionary store referred to fondly as Tammy's.

B.E. That's right.

B.M. Run by Pete McLaughlin.

B.E. Pete McLaughlin.

D.M. And Bill Ellis and others sat there and and decided the fate of the city morning after morning over their coffee, didn't they?

B.E. Yeah a many a cup of coffee that we've had there a

B.M. You'd come off graveyard and you'd go in there and sit and drink coffee and find out what's going on in the world?

B.E. I would and of course going and stopping before a, going to work that afternoon shift and a

B.M. Yeah, yeah.

B.E. Stop in at after 4 after day shift.

B.M. It was a a little like like in a sense like the old country store, wasn't it?

B.E. That's right it's a

B.M. Eh (unintell.)

B.E. (unintell.)

B.M. It's really, I know myself going to the work, I knew Pete McLaughlin, I don't know if I knew him as well as you. But I often think of a, fellow sitting over there and a lot of information was passed around and a, it was a great place to go if you wanted to find out what the score was, eh?

B.E. Well it, it was a, many, many people dropped in for a cup of coffee and maybe dropped in for the same reason I did.

B.M. That's right Peter

B.E. (unintell.)

B.M. To get some information or to pass on some on

B.E. That's right

B.M. As the case maybe

B.E. Yes I learned a lot of things in there.

B.M. Yeah well pol, all politics don't a, aren't decided at the, at the Board table.

B.E. Oh heavens, no. Oh no. Not anymore during meetings like that and what they are right at the a

B.M. That's right.

B.E. Council meeting.

B.M. Bill again let's a, let's take a brief pause and a, because there are, there are still areas that we have to explore and a, our time is a, (unintell.) we've got to give Doug a chance to get a little music in, but we'll return.

(Music)

B.M. Bill a, one question I asked you about, whether, about enjoying politics. Did you enjoy being mayor of the town? There were two year terms, wasn't it? You were on a two year term.

B.E. Ah yes I did enjoy it, a Bert. There was a lot of a, hard work when I say hard work

B.M. Oh sure.

B.E. A lot of hours put in and a, there was one of the things that I do regret is not having had the time that I should have.

B.M. Did you take leave from work to a

B.E. I did.

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. Yes I had two years leave of absence.

B.M. What a, anything . . . that we would recall transpired during those two years Bill? The king and queen didn't arrive here we didn't go broke, we didn't fire anybody of importance, did we? You weren't that rough on anybody, were you?

B.E. No, no I a, no things when

B.M. Along well.

B.E. Very well, yes, yeah.

B.M. That was a pretty, that was a pretty good era '61, '62, pretty good period.

B.E. Of course there was a lot of people that a, that was right after the amalgamation or at least two years after (unintell.)

B.M. I didn't like it, I didn't like to carry your burden from out and wave to say, "We're paying for sewers out in Minnow Lake" and all that sort of stuff, eh?

B.E. That's right.

B.M. (unintell.)

B.E. Yes there was a lot of a, a friction you might say between a, the representatives of the a, old McKim and the City of Sudbury.

B.M. Sudbury, yeah.

B.E. ~~Ad~~ And a

B.M. It was a sort of a shot gun wedding in a sense, wasn't it eh?

B.E. Well yes.

B.M. Almost like the time when Copper Cliff had to come in here too the, the recently.

B.E. Yeah that's right, that's right.

B.M. (unintell.)

B.E. However I'm sure that everything worked out for the better for all concerned.

B.M. Oh yeah, Bill . . . how, now, how long did you continue in, in politics?

B.E. Well altogether I had a, a total of 18 years.

B.M. All right, after you were mayor for two years what then? political (unintelly)

B.E. Well then of course I was defeated and then

B.M. Who, who was that Bill, Bill Beaton then, then no?

B.E. No Joe Fabbro

B.M. Joe Fabbro, oh, oh that's the Fabbro era.

B.E. Yeah, right and then I came back a, the following term and a

B.M. As an alderman or councilman?

B.E. No on Board of Control.

B.M. Board of Controls, yeah.

B.E. And a, so I remained with a, up until a, well the regional government a, I didn't run

B.M. (unintell.) it was '71, wasn't it?

B.E. '72 yes.

B.M. '71, '72, is that right. So you've been active a long time, so you know what the score is pretty well around the city of Sudbury.

B.E. Well I've

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. Learned a lot, as a matter, but, mind you there's a, still a lot, an awful lot of to learn.

B.M. Yeah. Bill when you look at where you held your council meetings

in the old council chambers and you look at that formal place over at Civic centre where they hold the regional meetings, there's quite a little difference, isn't it eh?

B.E. Oh all the difference in the world, ~~y~~ we're, we used to have to move around tables and chairs and what not in order to have a, room for a council meeting and a

B.M. Pretty good community here Bill, don't you think? there's a (unintell.)

B.E. Oh I love it.

B.M. One of the best.

B.E. Well one of the best ~~of~~ and of course the, the general public are the best.

B.M. Yeah . . . I have to agree with you. Bill, I, I, a couple of things. You are married of course.

B.E. Yes.

B.M. Your wife ~~if~~ is from a, down east is ~~h~~she?

B.E. My ~~i~~ wife is a, she was raised in a Marmur as well.

B.M Oh yeah.

B.E. Of course I didn't know her~~x~~ in those days, I didn't know her until a, the Belleville era.

B.M. Oh yeah.

B.E. So a,

B.M. And you were married, what year were you married?

B.E. In 1940.

B.M. '40 was the year after you came up here.

B.E. It was after I come up here.

B.M. What'd you do go back down and get married then with another couple of dollars?

B.E. No, no, no is a, no, as a matter of fact I ~~didn~~ didn't have the money to go back.

B.M. So you had to bring ~~y~~ her up here.

B.E. So she come up here.

B.M. (unintell.) and spent her own money ~~too~~ I'll bet you too.

B.E. Oh ~~e~~yes.

B.M. Mr~~s~~ Ellis I, I sympathize with you

B.M. Bill how many family do you have?

B.E. Ah, we have two boys.

B.M. Two boys and where are they?

B.E. Ah they're both in the Sudbury here. ~~Ma~~ One lives in Chelmsford he works for Falconbridge

B.M. ~~Ywx~~ Yes.

B.E. And a, my younger son or our younger son lives in the city and he works for the City of Sudbury.

B.M. Does he? Bill there's one other subject I want to touch on, we're not ~~k~~ going to dwell on it, but I certainly do. You, and I think this will help other people who may be so afflicted. You're a pretty tough customer, you've had a rough go in the last few years and I'm going to be blunt, you had cancer of the larnex was it Bill?

B.E. That's right, that's right.

B.M. When was this discovered?

B.E. Ah, roughly two years ago now.

B.M. Two years. Did you have an operation or ~~i~~ did you

B.E. No I went to Princess Margaret in Toronto

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. And I had cobalt treatments.

B.M. By gosh Bill it's, it's terrific and isn't it eh?

B.E. Yes there ~~wa~~ were a . . . I was very, very fortunate Bert. I had the 25 treatments and the doctors say that everything is quite well.

B.M. So the, the thing we were talking about this earlier you and I and, and the fact is you have to, it's a mental approach you have to take to this, this affliction, isn't it (unintell.)

B.E. Oh yes, yes. It a, . . . unfortunate that I have it and

B.M. Yeah.

B.E. However a good many other people have~~a~~ cancer and a, my a, suggestion to those people is keep up a, the, keep your chin and there's cure for it and a

B.M. ~~Y~~ Fight

B.E. And fight it.

B.M. Because in your case it's just, just proven that, that it, it works eh?

B.E. That's right.

B.M. Yes.

B.E. That's right.

B.M. And otherwise, it's just you, if you give up hope well that's about it (unintell.)

B.E. Well that's it, you got to keep going.

B.M. In all the time, yeah. Bill are you still, do you, are you involved in politics at all? Now I mean, does it, does your affliction, I don't like to use the word, use that maybe. But does it bother you physically now.

B.E. Once in a while if I talk too long.

B.M. Like I've being making you do today, eh yes.

B.E. My mouth'll get dry and a

B.M. (unintell.)

B.E. Kind of hard to talk

B.M. Yeah

B.E. But other than that . . . no nothing is wrong. I'm, I a, am still involved in the minor sense. I'm with the committee of Adjustment

B.M. Oh are you.

B.E. With the region and a

B.M. So that you still keep your hand in there.

B.E. So I'll keep my hand in yes.

B.M. And Bill your, your attitude toward the problem you have is something that it is a bright note and on that note, unfortunately time running out I'd like to terminate this because I think that what you say that if you keep your chin up and, and fight it, you can slick.

B.E. That's right

B.M. In both cases.

B.E. That's right

B M That's a very positive note on which to end and I want to say thank you very much Bill Ellis, ex-mayor of Sudbury, ex-reeve of McKim, ex-resident of Belleville, Ontario for being my guest today on "Memories & Music."

B.E. Thank you very, very much Bert, nice to be here.

B.M. Pleasure to have you again.