

The following transcript of  
Edison Brown's interview  
on

*Memories and Music*

(broadcast May 13, 1979)

was created by the Sudbury Public  
Library as part of a

*Summer Canada Project*

in 1982.

INTERVIEWEE: Edison Brown  
POSITION:

TRANSCRIBER: Bonnie Savage  
TAPE NUMBER: 100

DATE:  
INTERVIEWER: Bert Meredith

DATE OF TRAN: August 1982  
SUMMER CANADA PROJECT

THEME:

B.M. Thank you Doug. I'm happy to have Edison Brown or Brownie as he's probably better known to his workmates and friends as my guest today on Memories and Music. Brownie came to Sudbury in 1951 to work but he had been here earlier and earlier he had sailed the great lakes for a couple of seasons and worked at many other places. He'll be ~~share~~ sharing some of his memories of those years with us and also his early recollections of growing up down in the gas bay. We'll be back with Brownie in a moment but first, let's return to Doug McLaughlin and the musical introductions to the show.

(MUSIC)

B.M. Brownie Brown, Brownie Brown, Edison Brown, Edison Brown.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Edison, how are you. Welcome. Why did they name you Edison? After Edison the inventor do you think?

E.B. I don't know.

B.M. You're not sure about that eh?

E.B. no no no.

B.M. You are, you're ~~xxx~~ from away down east aren't you?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Where?

E.B. On the Gaspé Coast.

B.M. On the Gaspé Coast. Is that a bleak place ~~xxxxxxx~~ in the winter time?

E.B. Yeah, it's pretty bleak in the winter.

B.M. But it's a pretty place in the summer.

E.B. Yeah it is. Lovely in the summer.

E.B.. That's where all the tourists go around and take a look at that eh?



E.B. Yeah it's lovely-in the summer.

B.M. But it's a poor place.

E.B. Yeah it's a pretty poor place.

B.M. You were born down there. What year were you born?

E.B. 1913.

B.M. 1913, and you grew up there.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. So what was your father doing? I mean, was he farming fishing or what?

E.B. Oh fishing and lumberjacking.

B.M. Cutting logs, pulp. Well when we say fishing, was he like a ( ) fisherman?

E.B. No, he used to work for the Americans. They used to have work on the river fishing salmon eh?

B.M. Oh yeah.

E.B. They'd come in in the summer and....

B.M. Was that right? They had their own stretches of the river that only they could fish?

E.B. Yeah, they still have their own stretches yet.

B.M. Do they?

E.B. It's supposed to be finished this year. I don't know. Somebody told me that.

B.M. And no one else could fish in that area eh?

E.B. No.

B.M. And were they always sure of getting salmon?

E.B. Pretty well. At that time, pretty well yeah.

B.M. What about you ~~that~~ who were relatively poor. Did you have lots of salmon to eat?

E.B. Oh we used to fish yeah. Trout and salmon yeah.

B.M. So, you couldn't afford it today to buy it like down there?

E.B. Oh no no no.



B.M. ~~mmmm~~ You mean you fished or you poached there?

E.B. ~~mmmm~~ Oh no we fished. Something you never need is poaching. Some of them done but I never done that.

B.M. ~~mmmm~~ Well is there ~~on~~ fishing only when they're spawning. Is this so?

E.B. ~~mmmm~~ Well the salmon comes up ~~from~~ in the spring from the sea shore from the Gaspay River. They go up about sixty miles up.

B.M. And that's in the fresh water? The spawning eh?

E.B. Yeah, they go to the head of the lakes and they spawn in the lakes. They do and then....

B.M. They die or go back.

E.B. They come out, well, they die and they come out. When they come out they're no good to eat.

B.M. That's it.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. But now when they're going up, if they're caught then, they're full of....

E.B. Bright salmon, what they call a bright salmon.

B.M. Bright salmon?

E.B. Yeah they're real good. They're the best.

B.M. Are they?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. And alright being a down easterner there, ~~they~~ are they as good or better than the ~~some~~ co-ho salmon from out in ( ).

E.B. Oh they claim there's better.

B.M. Is ~~that~~ that so.

E.B. It's one of the best there is. The ( ) and whatever other rivers they come from. They're supposed to be one of the best.

B.M. They are?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. O.K., your father had to ( ) a living by



~~fishin~~ fish guiding and working in the bush. Did you live in a town?

E.B. No, it's just like a village you know.

B.M. Little village eh?

E.B. Yeah, yeah.

B.M. And did you go to school there?

E.B. Not very long, no.

B.. No, but I suppose everybody had to go to work. Is that it?

E.B. They had to go to work and you had a hard job to get to school. We had to walk three miles to school every day.

B.M. A one-rrom schoolhouse I suppose was it?

E.B. Yeah, yeah.

B.M. All the grades were in there, and most of the fellows wouldn't go, you wouldn't go right through school eh?

E.B. No, no no. You wouldn't probably start at six years old either you know. You'd be older than that.

B.M.M Before you'd start, and then probably you wouldn't go all year. You'd have to go to work or something. Is that it?

E.B. Yeah. You'd have to do something else.

B.M. So ~~school was sort~~ schooling was sort of secondary.

E.B. Yeah yeah.

B.M. The primary thing was to get work and get enough ~~was~~ money to live on eh?

E.B. I think the main thing was to get a loaf of bread.

B.M. And I suppose that, did you go, I've been just wondering now, ~~were~~ down there, were you self-sufficient in the day of (the dust?). I mean you had some chickens and a pig and had a big garden and that sort of thing.

E.B. We didn't do anything like that.

B.M. Did you have that?

E.B. We had chickens yeah, and a pig, we used to eat a pig.



B.M. And you could get fish I suppose?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Were you on the sea, right on the sea?

E.B. No, we were about, oh we were about a mile and a half or two miles from the seashore.

B.M. You were eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. No money I suppose eh?

E.B. No.

B.M. No money as such?

E.B. No money.

B.M. You wouldn't have known much about money until you were quite an age eh?

E.B. Yeah. You couldn't make nothing down there.

B.M. Well, alright, if you wanted to buy clothes for instance, what happened? Did you, is it a case of making due with everything? Is that about ~~that~~ the size of it in those days?

E.B. Yeah there was nothing to go in the bush in the fall to cut on your own like, with, for a contractor. Build a little log camp. Five or six guys and work all winter.

B.M. And ~~stay~~ stay in that camp?

E.B. Yeah, and you bring in your food and cook yourself eh? And then there would be nothing to come out in the spring with a pair of pants and a pair of boots on you all winter and moccasins. You didn't have anything else.

B.M. You're kidding?

E.B. That's right.

B.M. Is that right?

E.B. All winter.

B.M. And you'd live in a, by gosh it must have been pretty cold in that place eh?

E.B. No, we had log cabins we built ourself and fixed them all.



- B.M. I know, but even with that in your situation.
- E.B. And lots of wood.
- B.M. Lots of wood.
- E.B. Lots of wood. You cut lots of wood, dry wood and birch and that's the way you toughed it out.
- B.M. Is that the way. And you'd go in at a fairly tender age for that I suppose?
- E.B. I started, I worked in the bush when I was about fifteen.
- B.M. Did you? Would you be far in the bush Browney?
- E.B. Oh sometimes ~~fi~~ ten miles or so.
- B.M. You would? And how would you get in those ten miles?
- E.B. We'd walk.
- B.M. You'd walk in there?
- E.B. Yeah.
- B.M. Just with an axe and a saw with you.
- E.B. Yeah, and your food.
- B.M. And your food?
- E.B. Yeah. But some places we had the horses. We had a horse and sleight and we put, haul it in with the horse, but there was lots of places ~~that~~ we used to cut poles in the winter time away up the river about, about twenty miles.
- B.M. This is telephone poles eh?
- E.B. Yeah, ( ) them off the mountain. We'd leave them there until the spring and haul them out because you couldn't get horses up there.
- B.M. Oh yeah.
- E.B. And we used to walk, we used to walk Sunday afternoon up there seventeen miles on snowshoes.
- B.M. Seventeen miles?
- E.B. Seventeen miles.
- B.M. On snowshoes?



E.B. And we used to haul our food behind us with our ( )  
on it for a week.

B.M. Gosh.

E.B. And then on Saturday morning we'd come ~~down~~back back down  
home and get our food Saturday afternoon and go back on  
Sunday.

B.M. My gosh. Is that right?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. That's quite a hike?

E.B. Your darn right.

B.M. Are you a good, boy oh boy, seventeen miles on snowshoes.

E.B. Yeah, we used to walk that on ~~Saturday~~ Sunday afternoon.  
We'd start ~~right~~ after dinner.

B.M. Boy oh boy you'd really be making time then wouldn't you?  
To do that?

E.B. Sometimes it's late when you get up there but....

B.M. O.K. food. Now what ~~you~~ are you packing(  
)aren't you. Like for instance, beans and  
flour and bacon maybe. I don't know.

E.B. Oh yeah if you were staying up just every week, coming  
home every week, you would take your bread already made  
at home...

B.M. Yes.

E.B. ....but if you didn't, well then you'd have to bake it  
there but we used to take flour and pork, salt ~~pork~~ pork.  
We never used very much bacon because it was mostly salt  
pork.

B.M. So it would keep eh?

E.B. Yeah, and beans and stuff like that.

B.M. Nothing very fancy. Did you, no green vegetables?

E.B. Oh no you never had no green vegetables, never.

B.M. Nothing like that?

E.B. No never.



B.M. Not any fruit in the winter time or anything?

E.B. No no.

B.M. Prunes maybe?

E.B. Prunes, lots of prunes, lots of prunes yeah. But we never had no fruit or anything like that unless it was vegetables or something.

B.M. So that would, well would you have eggs? I mean I'm thinking of breakfast?

E.B. No you wouldn't have eggs.

B.M. What did you have for breakfast?

E.B. You might have eggs ~~iff~~ if you, you know, you might take a couple of dozen with you, but you wouldn't have eggs<sup>g</sup> allweek.

B.M. No. So what are you going to have for breakfast? Salt pork fried? Beans?

E.B. Beans and pork yeah.

B.M. What are you going to have for lunch?

E.B. Pork and beans.

~~W.M.~~ What ever you could get a hold of, whatever you had there. We didn't have no choice.

B.M. I heard this before you know. Because today we say you know, you have to have the balanced diet, you must have some fruit, you've got to have your greens, and all this sort of thing. And you guys, lots of you, many hundreds probably ~~thous~~ thousands of you, lived almost exclusively on this ( ).

E.B. Yeah. Potatoes and meat and stuff like that.

B.M. I just don't know, it puzzles me, and you come out as healthy as can be eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. You worked it all off.

E.B. And I could eat like a horse.

B.M. Yeah I ~~bet~~ bet you would too.

E.B. Oh yeah.

B.M. Well you were.....



E.B. Mollases, you'd eat an awful lot of mollases.

B.M. Would you?

E.B. ( ) is mollases.

B.M. For a sweetener?

E.B. All the time mollases and sugar, but I mean, you eat mollases on your bread and everything.

B.M. Do you still like mollases?

E.B. Oh yeah, I still eat it.

B.M. Do you. Is that right? On porridge or something like that?

E.B. No no, I just eat it with toast and stuff like that?

B.M. I hadn't had mollases for a long time. Creco, Creco and that type of mollases. That real black stuff, that's what you had eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. It must be good for you. That, you eat that, it's *supposed* supposed to be healthy and I suppose it was. You were ( ) you said in the bush. Like you weren't....

E.B. Well contract you know. Like, take a contract, so many cords of wood or so many thousand feet of logs and the contractor has you, has the, takes the contract for so many cords of pulp and then ~~he~~ he gives it out to different guys to cut so much.

B.M. Oh I see. Now you might be one of the lucky ones and get....

E.B. You had to be lucky to get a few months in the bush in the winter.

B.M. Is that so. I mean there were so many fellows looking for work.

E.B. Oh everybody was looking for it yeah.

B.M. Yeah. I wonder about that now, would it be the ambition of a young fellow down there, first ambition would be how can I get out of this place when I'm old enough or....

E.B. Some of them ( ) and some of them didn't know. A lot of them didn't know. I mean they never, they really thought that's how it was I guess.



- B.M. They didn't know too much about the outside world.
- E.B. No they didn't. I always had the idea to get out of there when I was young but lots of guys didn't. ( ) is still there.
- B.M. And stayed there all their life eh?
- E.B. Yeah.
- B.M. And this was a way of life that they knew no other.
- EB. Yeah.
- B.M. Well I guess it's not all bad is it?
- E.B. Oh no it's a ~~nice~~ good country down there and there's nice people you know, they're real nice people. But the idea right now you can make a living but before you couldn't make any thing.
- B.M. And you don't have a snowmobile in your backyard and an automobile, a colour television, a washing machine or everything eh?
- E.B. Well now they do, ~~they~~ now they do.
- B.M. They do? now?
- E.B. Oh yeah.
- B.M. Everybody's got them?
- E.B. Not them all. No, not them all.
- B.M. A lot more than ttheneh?
- E.B. Oh yeah.
- B.M. A little more ( ). Browney, I'm just going t pause so that Doug can serve us with some of his music. We're going to come back. I want to continue that topic in about a moment.
- (MUSIC)
- B.M. Browney, now we've worked in the bush for awhile, what ( ) sum were you being paid for your endeavors in the bush back then? ~~What~~ How much money were you getting?
- E.B. Well if you were working on a wage....
- B.M. Yes.
- E.B. ....you'd get a dollar a day.



B.M. A dollar a day?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Now when you say a dollar a day, you'd be working at a camp where you'd be getting your food as well. Is that the idea?

E.B. Yeah, you'd get your food too yeah.

B.M. But if you were contracting or job ( )?

E.B. Well you made what you could make and x if you didn't make anything then that was just too bad.

B.M. Alright, how much did you make? How much did you get paid?

E.B. Well you couldn't make ~~anything hardly~~ nothing hardly. You may work all winter and make fifty dollars or a hundred dollars or something. If you were contracting on your own, if all depended, there was no lumber much there that time. Now it's all grew up again eh?

B.M. Oh it's second growth is there?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. And you're talking about '13, you're talking about the '20s, the late '20s I guess aren't you?

E.B. No in the '30's.

B.M. In the '30s yeah. Was the depression, now it was pretty rough down there. What about the depression down there in 1929 to '35 or '6?

E.B. Oh it was bad.

B.M. Worse?

E.B. Oh yeah it was really bad.

B.M. And of course there was no unemployment insurance then around then.

E.B. There was just no way you could get anything.

B.M. No. Well I'm surprised more, well of course some did leave. Quite a few came up this way didn't they?

E.B. Yeah, as far as that's concerned →

B.M. There was ~~quite a few~~ an awful lot of the English-speaking people from Gasbay moved out.

B.M. Did they?



E.B. An awful lot, oh yeah.

B.M. Well now alright, when you say English-speaking, were there, was it predominantly english or french down there where you were?

BE. Well it was all english and french altogether.

B.M. They were?

E.B. They still around my place.

B.M. And no problem<sup>?</sup>

E.B. Nothing, no problems.

B.M. You didn't know, you ~~didn't~~ didn't know the difference.

E.B. We never had no problems. We all worked together, danced together, and sang together and we never had no trouble.

B.M. Isn't that, that's the way it should be because nobody ~~ever~~ told you were different eh?

E.B. That's the whole thing. Nobody came up and said to me well....

B.M. ( ).

E.B. ....you've got to be french to get a job or you've got to stay english to get a job. Whatever you were, they hired you and that was alright.

B.M. Now O.K., you're living down there, you spoke english.

E.B. Yes.

B.M. Did you, could you understand french?

E.B. No. A few words, a little bit.

B.M. And if the french, he spoke french, but couldn't understand english.

E.B. Oh he could understand English too.

B.M. More so than we could eh?

E.B. Not them all but a lot of them could. A lot of them you don't tell the difference if you're english or french but french, but you can't tell the difference.

B.M. What did you do for social life down there? Was dancing the big thing?



E.B. Just dancing yeah.

B.M. Square-dancing, get a partner there and away she goes?

E.B. Yeah. They had lots of dancing.

B.M. And no charge ~~for that I suppose~~ I suppose for that eh?

E.B. No.

~~MM~~ You couldn't go if....

B.M. Yeah. What, alright, I'm just thinking of a kid growing up down there, you had radio I suppose did you?

~~MM~~ E.B. Yeah radio.

B.M. Yeah. Any movies down there?

E.B. No.

B.M. No movies?

E.B. Didn't see, oh in later years I guess there was the odd one but we didn't have no movies.

B.M. Did you ~~in~~ know, did you know that other people did, did you know that you were missing this sort of thing Browney

E.B. No, you really didn't until you got out to see what's going on....

B.M. Yeah.

E.B. ....around the country.

B.M. Any sports down there when you were a kid growing up that people came to watch?

E.B. They had ball games and stuff like that.

B.M. Did they. And in the winter would they....

E.B. They had a little hockey?

B.M. Little hockey eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. But not too competitive and that sort of thing eh?

E.B. NO, NO.

B.M. B t the social thing would be parties and dancing? Is that so eh?



E.B. Yeah, and playing cards.

B.M. What did they ~~pay~~ play then?

E.B. Auction forty-five and different games. Head guy with the horse and, what they'd call a horse and cutter. They'd drive three miles, four miles at night to play cards.

B.M. They would eh?

E.B. Oh yeah. Storms and everything.

B.M. It wouldn't matter?

E.B. Oh no.

B.M. That was the way to go.

E.B. Played cards and have lunch and drive back home.

B.M. Yeah.

E.B. If it got too rough they'd stay overnight.

B.M. They would eh? Well you always got enough to eat though didn't you eh?

E.B. Oh you got enough to eat. Sometimes it was pretty scimpy but....

B.M. Yeah, but it was a matter of ready money was the thing that you didn't have much of that I know. I know that you young man, you left home. Where did you go when you first left home?

E.B. When I first came into Montreal <sup>like</sup> for the last time to stay away from home, I come up with three other guys from my home to ( ). And we got twenty-five dollars a month and our room and board.

B.M. Doing what?

E.B. Waiting on the students and the priest in the college, ( ) college.

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

E.B. We had four classrooms there, two students classrooms, and then we had another room, the other, it was not a classroom but it was a priest dining room eh?

B.M. Yeah.

E.B. And they had about forty-eight priest there.



B.M. And you served them eh?

E.B. We served the priests and the students. We each had a turn in each place and then we had dish, a big dishwasher and we'd do the washing the dishes.

B.M. Who was the big dishwasher? You?

E.B. Well each one took his turn on the dishwasher.

B.M. No dishwasher machines in those days.

E.B. There was, I don't know what it was, they had some kind of a set up there.

B.M. What ~~kind~~ sort of a waiter are you Browney? A pretty good one?

E.B. Oh well not exactly. I done everything like that. But we used to wait on the students and the next day we'd wait on the priests.

B.M. Twenty-five dollars a month and your ( ) was pretty good wasn't it?

E.B. Yeah it was alright that time.

B.M. Didn't you tell me when we were talking earlier, <sup>that</sup> you had been through Sudbury in the early '30s.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Where were you going?

E.B. Well that's when I ~~went~~ went out west. I went out west a few times.

B.M. Out to harvest?

E.B. Well looking for a job, in those years you couldn't get a job. In the, I think '37 was the best year. They had kind of a good crop that time....

B.M. Yes.

E.B. ....and you'd go to a farmer, well you see what I've got, he's says, and if I don't have bad luck, I'll be able to pay you.

B.M. You're just coming back around '35 when it was really bad.

E.B. Yeah, they're just coming back then.

B.M. So in '37 you were out for a harvest.



E.B. Yeah.

B.M. How did you get out west?

E.B. Well on the freight train.

B.M. Ride the rod?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Did you?

E.B. Right from home, right through to B.C.

B.M. Is that so? And you had to bum for what food you'd want.

E.B. Well you'd try to get a few days work here and there if you could. If you couldn't you had to bum.

B.M. Yeah, and lots were doing it the (                      ).

E.B. Oh there were all kinds of them.

B.M. Yeah, pretty rough life though?

E.B. There's one thing I remembered, and I seen a picture about three or four years ago, exactly the same thing, (                      ) the prairie and I never forgot that.

B.M. Yeah.

E.B. There was so many men standing at the railroad track waiting for the freight and we counted a hundred and ninety-seven hitting one freight, on one side.

B.M. Is that right?

E.B. Now that's....

B.M. Two hundred men there waiting to get on that train eh?

E.B. Yeah, and they all got on and the Mounties were picking them off.

B.M. Were they?

E.B. And they'd jump off of one ear and ~~once you~~ when she'd get going faster they'd mount the other one, and then they couldn't catch them.

B.M. What were you hopping? On empty boxcars?

E.B. Some boxcars, some flatcars.

B.M. Flatcars yeah, anything.



E.B. And they'd get in and on top and into the cars and on the flatcars everywhere.

B.M. This would be in September too wouldn't it? August?

E.B. Well all during the summer.

B.M. Yeah.

E.B. Yeah all during the summer.

B.M. A little bit colder a little ~~bit~~ later on. It was a ~~tough~~ go wasn't it?

E.B. Oh boy.

B.M. Things ~~back then~~ by then were better around here in '37, but out west was just coming back wasn't it eh?

E.B. Oh yeah, it was tough out there.

B.M. So you went out for a harvest in '37. ~~What~~ How much a day were you getting then?

E.B. Two dollars.

B.M. Two ~~doll~~ dollars. And working from dawn to dusk too?

E.B. Oh yeah, ~~that~~ that was from six o'clock right through til about nine o'clock.

B.M. I know. I was in there in '29 and we were getting four dollars a day. That was big money. That was about, it was coming down. I think '28 was the last big year.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. And '29 started to come down, and from there to '35 it was pretty bad and then it started to pick up and things got a little bit better. Did you like working on the farm out there?

E.B. Oh I liked the farm yeah. I liked the harvesting.

B.M. Of course you were accustomed to hard work anyway weren't you?

E.B. Yeah, I liked it. You had to drive five or six horses together on a harvest.

B.M. Yeah. And there were, yeah, no combines in those days. You had a thrashing machine and you went and stooped, ( ) under the old rack....

E.B. Yeah.



B.M. ....put them <sup>up</sup> to a machine and, was there a steam machine ~~was~~ that they had out there when you were on, or was it gas?

E.B. No he had gas at that time.

B.M. Yeah, some of the guys had the old steam machines. O.K., you finished in the fall in the harvest. ~~You'd be~~ It's usually finished in October anyway.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. What did you do? Come back east then?

E.B. Then I came back down east yeah.

B.M. Home?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Did you have any money?

E.B. No nothing.

B.M. You didn't have any money?

E.B. No the same way as you left. Well I had a few dollars, but you, on your way down, you were looking for other work eh

B.M. Oh yeah.

E.B. So you'd have to spend some to eat. When you had the money well you didn't try to ( ).

B.M. Did you come down in class or when you came back?

E.B. Oh no, I come down on the freight train.

B.M. Did you? The same way as you went up eh?

E.B. Yeah, yeah.

B.M. Well you've done, ( ). You wonder ~~why~~ why you didn't continue on out to the coast when you were at it. So you got back home and things wouldn't be much better down in the Gasbay would it?

E.B. No.

B.M. You had a, you had another trip up to Montreal didn't you? Didn't you work in Montreal for awhile?

E.B. Well I worked in Montreal ~~for~~ quite awhile too yeah.



B.M. Did you?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Was that the place, I was just thinking, for the ~~guys~~ fellows down in the Gasbay, that would be the big center to Q ).

E?B Yeah, yeah.

B.M. You'd go to Montreal because you'd probably get work there.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Where else did you work in Montreal?

E.B. Northern Electric.

B.M. Northern Electric.

E.B. Yeah, I started at Northern Electric, it was, that's when I joined the army from there.

B.M. Oh did you?

E.B. Started with thirty-seven cents an hour.

B.M. Thirty-seven cents an hour?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. What were you, what was Northern Electric doing? What were they making then?

E.B. Well they make cable.

B.M. Oh yes.

E.B. All kinds of cables.

B.M. I see, and that's what you were on there eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Then you joined the army from there?

E.B. mmhh, then I went to B.C.

B.M. Out to B.C?

E.B. I went to Petawawa for, oh I guess six or eight months and then we went out to B.C. then.



B.M. So you've seen Canada coast to coast haven't you?

E.B. Oh yeah, I've been out to B.C. a couple of times.

B.M. Have you? You know this country pretty well? This land of ours?

E.B. Oh yeah.

B.M. And does Gasbay still look pretty nice to you as far as appearance is concerned?

E.B. Oh it doesn't look as nice as the rest of the country?

B.M. It doesn't eh?

E.B. No no. Beautiful land, it's nice down there and everything but it's not as nice as up around here.

B.M. What, O.K., what are winters like down in the Gasbay when you're that close to the sea out to where you're getting out everywhere?

E.B. Well it's pretty well the same as it is around here.

B.M. Same as Sudbury?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. About the same amount of snow and ~~temp~~ temperature-wise?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Well do you get more gales, more winds off <sup>the</sup> ~~the ocean~~ ocean by virtue by where you are?

E.B. No I wouldn't say it was anymore unless you're out close to the ocean. If you're away about three miles well then you don't get the ( ).

B.M. You don't get it eh?

E.B. No.

B.M. Now up here in Sudbury lots of people complain about there's no spring as such. You go from winter to summer almost. What about down in the Gasbay?

E.B. Yeah it's no different.

B.M.W It is?

E.B. The same thing yeah.

B.M. Pretty well the same down there eh?



E.B. Oh yeah, yeah it's the same thing.

B.M. Well you come back here in Montreal working for Northern Electric. Why, why did you leave there?

E.B. Well I just joined the army.

B.M. I see, and after the army?

E.B. I went down one day and I says I'm going to join the army. Then when I left B.C., I was discharged from B.C. I was sick ~~there~~ for awhile there, in the hospital and then when I came out of the hospital, well after I was discharged, I came right to Montreal.

B.M. You get around don't you?

E.B. My major in the army was MajorMolson, Harry Molson.

B.M. From Molson's Brewery.

E.B. And he was a pretty good friend of mine. Yeah. In them days in the army, when you got thirty dollars a month.

B.M. Yeah.

E.B. But if they called a long weekend during the week, and they called a long weekend that week and it wasn't pay day, you didn't have any money. So a lot of the guys would say, well we'll have to borrow money, how are we going to borrow it. To go home ~~he~~ eh, they'd want to go home because it wasn't very much eh to go home.

B.M. Yeah.

E.B. I used to come to Montreal. Well we'd go to Molson's.

V.M. He'd advance you money.

E.B. Some guys, not all guys. The odd guy he'd advance money to and then when you got paid, you'd walk over, and he'd say don't get ( ) over here, just come over and pay me.

B.M. I see.

E.B. ( ) goodd guy that way.

B.M. Well that sounds interesting.

E.B. But he asked me before I was dis, after I was discharged if I wanted to work in the brewery, but I was kind of anxious to get out of the army the way things was going. I said, no, I don't know what I'm going to do. I didn't tell him



So finally I went down and worked in the brewery anyway.

B.M. Well we'll talk about that and a few other things too Brownie but again let's pause while Doug gets in a little music and then we'll continue.

(MUSIC)

B.M. Brownie, you do get around. Did you work in the brewery then for Molson finally eh?

E.B. No, I worked, I worked for awhile for a Blackhorse. It was Blackhorse Brewery.

B.M. Oh I remember....

E.B. I worked in there for awhile. Dog....

B.M. Doughs Blackhorse.

E.B. ....Dough's Blackhorse yeah.

B.M. That used to be the favorite brewery. You bought it in quart bottles.

E.B. It was good too.

B.M. I know.

E.B. It was real beer.

B.M. You know that don't you?

E.B. Oh yeah.

B.M. I know that I was down in Montreal in those early days, and I remember everybody asked for Blackhorse.

E.. At that time they were shipping beer overseas. Those big wooden crates with forty-eight quarts in each one.

B.M. Were they.

E.B. For the army eh?

B.M. Blackhorse. And they had the beautiful black horse that they used to put around the streets sometimes.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Say you've been around a lot because you've, you steamboated for awhile then too didn't you?

E.B. Yeah.



B.M. When was this? When did this fit in?

E.B. Well in the '40s.

B.M. On the '40s.

E.B. Yeah I really left Montreal in ~~the~~ '46 and then I went, later on I went up to head the lakes.

B.M. You were steamboating, you started steamboating in 1946?

E.B. No I started in, after I came out of the army, in '43.

B.M. '43, yeah.

E.B. But there was a ( ) before that we were sailing too.

B.M. Were you?

E.B. Before I WENT in, before I went to the Northern Electric to work eh?

B.M. That was about the only job you could get I guess in those days ~~in~~ wasn't it eh?

E.B. Well we took whatever we could get.

B.M. What line were you with?

E.B. Canada Steamship.

B.M. Canada Steamship line?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. And on the ( ).

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. That's the old canal boat that used to go through before the Welland Canal was open.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. The small one. That was before the St. Lawrence too. You went through the old canal and down through Cardinal and all those places.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. That was a long ~~trip~~ trip wasn't it down to the seas. Hard to get through all that.

E.B. Yeah.



B? But that was before the days when the big boats couldn't go, couldn't go beyond what, Kingston.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Well no, couldn't go up, no they couldn't go beyond Montreal. That's right because the first lock wasn't there was it?

E.B. No, you couldn't go by Montreal.

B.M. That's true. Two hundred, what was it, two hundred and fifty feet or something like that?

E.B. About that I guess.

B.M. Yeah. Well how long did you steamboat?

E.B. Well two summers. One summer I wasn't all year there, but the next one was pretty well all year.

B.M. You were eh? And what were you doing? Deckhand?

E.B. Deckhand and then watchman.

B.M. You were eh? Did you like steamboating?

E.B. Oh yeah to a certain extent.

B.M. You saw a little more of the country too.

E.B. Oh yeah.

B.M. And that would be, if you were on a package ferry, you'd be taking package freight up from Montreal to the head of the lakes.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. And bringing grain down. Sometimes flour maybe?

E.B. Everything. Coming down, we bring always grain.

B.M. Always grain eh?

E.B. Yeah always grain.

B.M. And then you had to clean out all the hose before putting the ( ).

E.B. Oh that was quite a job too.

B.M. Sure a big job eh?

E.B. Oh the dust, yeah that was a big job.



B.M. And you know people don't realize that I presume because I steamboated too I know. And in my day we worked, you worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week. You worked six on and six off. Is that right?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. And they did in your time too eh?

~~BM~~ Eighty-four dollars a week.

~~EB~~ Oh yeah.

~~BM~~ And nobody thought anymore of it? Did you?

~~EB~~ No it was just the same as we have now.

~~BM~~ You never had any long sleep-ins because b, the time, when you got off watch and you would eat, and get ready and go to bed, you might have three or four hours sleep because you had to get up in time to go on your watch wouldn't you? If you were on six to twelve.

~~EB~~ Oh yeah, you'd have to go on your watch for ~~whatever it was~~.

B.M. You got used to that though?

E.B. Oh yeah.

B.M. A young fellow, didn't do him any harm. Did you tell me that you worked at Falconbridge at one time?

E.B. Yeah I was with Falconbridge, I came there in the summer and the next spring, I worked for them the next spring and then we got called back on the boat. That was the spring of '45, and we got called back on the boat, my friend and I and we ~~were quick~~ both quit and went on the boat.

B.M. You thought there was better steamboating than working out there did you?

E.B. Well we didn't like it underground.

B.M. You didn't eh?

E.B. No, it was too wet and everything.

B.M. Well I was wondering about coal mining down around....

E.B. I never done none of that.

B.M. You didn't eh?

E.B. No.



B.M. Did many of the fellows from down home go to there.

E.B. Not around my place there wasn't very many.

B.M. No eh?

E.B. They're mostly from Nova Scotia and that place.

B.M. Yes, and the Cape Breton area.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Now you, you came here to Sudbury, like you worked at Falconbridge and went back steamboating, when did you come here to Inco to hire on?

E.B. '51 in January.

B.M. In 1951. What about all the time in between that sir?

E.B. Well I worked different places. It's pretty hard to stay.

B.M. Gee, you....

E.B. When I left here on the boats in the fall, we tied up the boat in Fort William....

B.M. Fort William yes.

E.B. ....and I went to the bush camp for the pitch and timber.

B.M. Oh did you?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Way up north there?

E.B. And I stayed '46, I stayed, I was up there a couple of years ~~there~~ in the bush.

B.M. Was that better than cutting timber down in the your part of the country?

E.B. Oh yeah, yeah. It was good up there. That was good that time in the (                      ).

B.M. You mean good ~~for~~ pay, good food, good everything.

E.B. Good everything eh?

B.M. You had a little, you didn't just have bean and salt pork there eh?

E.B. No, you had everything there.

B.M. Is that so?



E.B. Oh <sup>e</sup>yah it was good.

B.M. And good accomodation?

E.B. Yeah. And then I left there in the fall and I came down to Toronto and I stayed there over winter.

B.M. Did you work in Toronto?

E.B. Yeah I worked there in Toronto on differant jobs. That's when I went to O'Keefe's there.

B.M. O'Keefe's?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. The brewery?

E.B. Yeah. Then I left O'Keefe in '49 and I came up and went to the bush camps again and then came back to Inco.

B.M. The bush camp where, north of Fort William at the head of lakes?

E.B. I was up at Regan for awhile<sup>6</sup>

B.M. Regan? Regan? Regan?

E.B. This is the side of maritown.

V.M. Oh it is. On the north side of Lake Superior.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. That's a cold spot up there isn't it?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. But you're used to that.

E.B. But I worked on construction that fall 'til, 'til December, the last of December and then I came down to Sudbury and I stayed with a friend therefrom my home and he was working here. So I stayed there for a couple of weeks and I got on with Inco.

B.M. Now when you got <sup>oh</sup> ~~so~~ <sup>in</sup> there in 1951, where did you start?

E.B. Well I started at Copper Cliff. I was there for about maybe four weeks.

B.M. Whereabouts in Copper Cliff? ( )?

E.B. We was just ~~cleaning~~ labourers cleaning up around different jobs.



B.M. Yeah. And then where did you get sent to?

E.B. I went to Creighton Mill when it opened up.

B.M. When the new mill opened up?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. That was in '51 eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. mmhh.

E.B. It opened up in February of '51.

B.M. Issee, and what were you doing in the mill?

E.B. Well I walked the tailing line for....

B.M. Oh you patrolled did you?

E.B. Yeah, and then I went in the pump station as pumpman.

B.M. Yeah. That patrolling, did you find that rather lonely.

E.B. It was cold.

B.M. Cold eh, it wasn't bad eh?

E.B. Oh no, you got used to it. It wasn't so bad. Lots of bad days but....

B.M. Oh and lots of good days too eh?

E..B I guess if it was somebody that wasn't used to that kind of stuff, he wouldn't be able to do it.

B.M. Well you had been outdoors a lot and you had more jobs than any ten people that I've ever talked to.

E.B. Well you had to take those jobs. You had to take them wherever you could get them. ~~Were never able to accumulate any money for~~

B.M. You were never able to accumulate any money or anything were you?

E.B. No no no.

B.M. You were jumping from, how....

E.B. Because you only could work so long in one place, a few on construction the job would be done...

B.M. Yes.



E.B. ....you'd have to go and look for something else. You couldn't go to the employment office to get anything. You had to go and look for something.

B.M. Yourself.

E.B. True.

B.M. You had to get off your butt and hustla for yourself then

E.B. I never got, I never got, drew any unemployment insurance in my life.

B.M. And I'm proud of you.

E.B. And anything, relief of any kind.

B.M. You had to travel and look for a job. That was all.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. And that was, that's the way it was shall we say eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. ( ).

E.B. mmhh.

B.M. You worked, they closed, when they closed the Creighton Mill where did you go?

E.B. Well they shipped me out to Levack for about four weeks, then I digged out of there to Claribelle.

B.M. Oh yeah, that's a beautiful place eh Claribelle?

E.B. Yeah, and then I digged from Claribelle over on the crane at Stobey.

B.M. Oh that's the first Stobey Mill.

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Both were new mills and that's where you wound up eh?

E.B. Oh yeah, pretty good bunch of guys to work with too

B.M. Oh yeah, you couldn't get a better place than that eh? So you didn't go, you didn't, finally after you got set here in '51, you didn't decided you'd go back to Gasbay then eh?

E.B. No, no I didn't. I went down for a few trips but I didnt decided, I never....



B.M. You figured working on this side of the money eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. So you're married Browney aren't you?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. When were you married?

E.B. '62.

B.M. 1962. Where did you, is your wife from down east?

E.B. No she's from Manitoulin Island.

B.M. Manitoulin Island, and did you meet her there?

E.B. No I met her here in Sudbury. She was married before.

B.M. I see, and how did you manage to meet her?

E.B. Well through some friends that I used to stay with and they knew her.

B.M. mmhh. I mean, do you have any family?

E.B. Well there's three but they're my wife's family.

B.M. Oh I see. Are they around in the area here?

E.B. Well one guy is on ( ) at Inco here.

B.M. I see.

E.B. And the other guy works for the engineers in Toronto. He lives down there, and my step-daughter there, she's in Arizona.

B.M. Oh well they're really spread around a little aren't they and Arizona, well you've got somebody to visit down there if you want to go eh?

E.B. Yeah we were down there in '73.

B.M. Were you? Did you like that part of the country?

E.B. Oh yeah it's nice down there.

B.M. Now is the air as dry as they say it is?

E.B. Oh yeah it's dry.

B.M. You really thought it was good because you'd come from a place with ( ).



E.B. The only difference down there, there's no water eh?  
I mean.....

B.M. Well you'd come from where there's lots of water.

E.B. Yeah it makes a difference.

B.M. Y<sup>u</sup> know, people don't realize, this is northern Ontario, there's so much water it's ~~xx~~ hard to get used to a place where there's so little isn't it?

E.B. Yeah, yeah it is.

B.M. We are blessed.

E.B. Yeah we are, we've got everything here.

B.M. Oh yeah, there's just no question.

E.B. Like I told the guys, you can step outside and fall in th lake.

B.M. Yeah isn't that beautiful and down they're just searching for it. You, did you, I was just ~~thinking~~, you had had so many jobs before, I was just wondering when you came to Inco in 1951, why you suddenly decided, let's say at that time, you were, you were getting on in years too weren't you?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. ~~At that time~~ You weren't a kid anymore

E.B. No.

B.M. Did you figure it was about time you settled down?

E.B. Oh yeah, I figured, well I figured it was, ~~well~~ the place that I'd like to stay.

B.M. You liked the community and so forth.

E.B. Yeah, and I liked the place I was working and I never had no kicks about it.

B.M. Who was in charge of the mill at.....

E.B. Maan McMullan.

B.M. Oh yeah. Who was at Clarigelle? Was Marty Ferlow over there when you were over at, no, I mean at Frood?

E.B. Frood, Peru was there for awhile.

B.M. Yeah that's right.



E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Well you had some good people there you worked for anyway.

E.B. Oh ~~yes~~ sure.

B.M. But yourself eh?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. I want to just tie up a few ends Brownie with you, but again we're going back to our friend Doug and a little music and then we'll come back and conclude!

(MUSIC)

B.M. Now that your wandering have ceased, I think that's what we say isn't it?

E.B. Yeah.'

B.M. You I don't think you ~~ex~~ regret all the travelling that you did do eh?

E.B. Oh no.

B.M. You have probably seen and experienced a greater variety of places and jobs than most people in life haven't you?

E.B. Yeah, yeah.

BM So you can get a little better appreciation of....

E.B. Oh yes.

B.M....Of a job? You have a home in Sudbury?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M? A camp?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Where?

E.B. Pinage.

B.M. Pinage?

E.B. Camp is on Pinage yeah.

B.M. Yes. Do you spend most of the summer there?

E.B. Not all the summer, but we go there quite a lot.



B.M. Do you?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. You like that eh?

E.B. Oh yeah it's nice.

B.M. ~~You're~~ Your wife's from Manitoulin. Do you ever go over to the island?

E.B. Oh yeah we go there often.

B.M. Nice place.

E.B. Yes it's nice up there.

B.M. Does it remind of you of home? Is, tell me, is the Gasbay anything similar to what we see around here country-wise?

E.B. Oh yeah. There's not the rocks there is here, but it's something the same.

B.M. Do you go back there occasionally?

E.B. Yeah I was down last summer.

B.M. And O.K., that's rather interesting. How are things down there now?

E.B. Well it's better now, it's a lot better ~~know~~ now.

B.M. Have they changed much from when you were a kid growing up there?

E.B. Oh yeah it's changed a lot.

B.M. It has eh?

E.B. It's changed like every other place. Not as much, but I mean....

B.M. What would there be to cause it to change? Because what is there down there now to give work to anybody?

E.B. Well they have a paper mill at home.

B.M. Oh have they?

E.B. They built, the ~~2000~~ summer, they built a big paper mill there about ten years ago I guess.

B.M. So that gives some employment eh?

E.B. Yeah, and different other things started up.



B.M. And unemployment insurance.

E.B. Yeah there's a mine there not far from my place.

B.M. Oh is there?

E.B. A copper mine ~~there~~ you know around there.

B.M. Well that helps.

E.B. They employ a lot of people there.

B.M. So that people do have a little bit of money there.

E.B. Oh they all have money when you're down there. I don't know where they get it all.

B.M. Would you like to live back down there rather than up here?

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

B.M. You don't think so.

E.B. No.

B.M. It's nice to go through but that's about the size of it eh? You do become attached to a place and you've seen both coasts and the center of the country....

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. ....and you think this is just about as good a place as any.

E.B. Oh yeah.

B.M. As most of us do.

E.B. Especially if you want to go fishing or something, there's lakes all around and you can, bush and lakes and it's nice to get out.

B.M. Beautifully, actually it is. You, you like to fish a little. You're active in the church?

E.B. Yeah.

B.M. Which one?

E.B. United Church on ( ) Street.

B.M. Oh All Peoples. That's ( ) old church isn't it?



E.B. Oh yeah. He's a real, yeah,....

B.M. Do you remember ( )  
years ago. I don't know if you remember that?

E.B. No I don't know.

B.M. But he said, ( ) he is the closest  
thing to a saint that I know of. Ed ~~is now~~ now is  
teaching what, Indian study at the university.

E.B. Yeah. .

B.M. Who looked after your church?

E.B. Dr. Scott, from the ~~university~~ university.

B.M. Oh yeah sure. You've got a nice young fellow up there now  
eh?

E.B. Very nice guy. ( <sup>BM's</sup> ) step-son.

E.B. Everybody likes him.

B.M. So you managed to keep yourself pretty busy then eh?

E.B. Oh yes, we're busy working around the home and putting  
ina garden. 7

dmn. You never have any complaints from my wife of my work.

B.M. You'd be a son of a gun. You'd go crazy if you didn't  
work.

E.B. When I took my pension last February, for three months  
I didn't know what to do with myself. I had less to do  
but I was waiting to, I wanted to go to work in the  
morning when I got up.

B.M. You're like the old fire horse, as soon as the bell rings  
eh?

E.B. Yeah, right away.

B.M. Well it's certainly been interesting and very pleasant  
visiting with you Brownie and I want to thank you very  
much for coming in and sharing some of your memories of  
the cool down east shall we say, and ~~there~~ the rest of the  
country that ~~you~~ you travelled over with us today, but  
thank you Brownie Brown for being our guest today on  
Memories and Music,;

E.B. Thank you.