

The following transcript of  
Gordon “Gord” Bisset’s interview  
on

*Memories and Music*

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: Gordon Bisset      TAPE NO: 118  
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THEME: Entertainment in Sudbury at the turn of the century,  
growing up in Sudbury, early 1900's.

G.P. Gord I wonder if you might commence, begin by just giving us some biographical information about yourself.

G.B. Well I was born on the corner property of Larch and Lisgar where the present boutique is, - Jan Browning's Boutique - and I can remember when they built the, the St. Andrews United Church and I can see from our front lawn the old Central Public School which is on the same site as the present day arena and I remember playing with the remnants of the battleship linoleum, which was something, somewhat of an innovation in those days . . . and I don't know what, what would be of interest to you folks.

G.P. All right if we can go back to the house for example, I would think that that has to be one of the earliest houses that's still standing in the city.

G.B. It, it, I think it was.

G.P. 'Cause we do have photographs, for example, dated 1903 and as you indicated that house was on the corner of Larch and Lisgar and is now Jan Browning's Boutique. Growing up in Sudbury you mentioned you were, mentioned earlier that you were born in 1905 so if you can give us an idea what it was like to be a youngster in the community around that period of time.

G.B. Well we didn't have the amenities, the rinks, the kids have today. We had, as we grew a little older, we had the, the use of the gym in the St. Andrews Church which was a great thing for a lot of us. We younger boys who liked gymnastics and track and field. And as we grew older, of course, we gravitated to sliding down Kirkwood hill which is Elm Street hill from the top of the tank, which in itself was a feat, and we made, I remember once, we made a bob sled which was composed of two, two or two and a half or three foot



sleighs with - a beautiful one we made had a two by eight, 12 foot long white pine board and these two sleighs were connected to this board and the front one was articulated to do the steering and the back one was fixed and it was quite a feat to go to where the water tank is today on Pearl Street and come right down to which would now be the entrance, almost of Canadian Tire, and some others were more adventurous or foolhardy depending upon which way you look at it, used to go down the hill from the tank and take that lane that would lead behind the present day Red Cross building and Fournier's house and almost to, behind Jackson and Barnard across Larch Street which was, used to develop quite a bit of speed to do that.

G.P. So that's where you would end up is that general area.

G.B. And we would end up in that general area. If we didn't end up on the rocks on the side.

G.P. Somewhere along the way.

G.B. Yeah.

G.P. I, I would think that at one time there must have been a number of fairly well-established homes on that hill from early photographs that I've seen.

G.B. There were.

G.P. You mentioned the Kirkwood name, for example.

G.B. Well that was on the left hand side and still stands, if I, I remember correctly. On the left that's which would be the north east corner of Pearl Street and Elm Street and on the right hand side painted white was Sam Jessop's house who had a, had a store where, the Trevi Tavern is today. Next to Wilson and Greenwood's, now which reminds me, the Greenwood name reminds me of a little anecdote of, in the area of Elm bounded by Drinkwater and Cedar and the creek which is now undercover.

G.P. Covered over.

G.B. There were, well where the YMCA and the Randolph apartments are. There was a gentlemen who lived part, part way up the hill by the name of Humphrey Hodgins who's a matter of fact drove horse for my dad in the laundry days, in the early days and he had a, kept a cow down there, there was very lush grass and lots of elm trees for shade for the cow and all of a sudden Mr. Hodgins' cow ceased to deliver its regular quota of milk and by judicious looking and searching and keeping his, you might say keeping his eyes open, he discovered that some rascals by the name of - one I



think was Charlie Bibby another one who is now up in Mantoulin Island, retired, another one could've been and I suspect Walker Greenwood and the third one was Walter Benn's brother, Don. Walter was a, an employee of Inco for many years with the Safety Department in Garson and these rascals would be riding this cow after they came home from school up and down this field and the ultimate . . . the ultimate end of that was the cow forgot to give milk because it was, it had been ridden to death.

G.P. You were an innocent bystander, were you?

G.B. Oh definitely.

G.P. Definitely an innocent bystander.

G.B. Definitely, definitely. I was a cowboy.

G.P. You're a cowboy.

G.B. What you call a rider.

G.P. Charlie Bibby, of course, was an individual who went onto be mayor in the city.

G.B. No Charlie's father.

G.P. Father, his father

G.B. Charlie's father. Charlie was the, was the head of the, of the Wildlife Management for the Department of Lands and Forests. We used to term it, the Lands and the Bush and now it's the Department of Resources, I think.

G.P. Natural Resources. In a, in Sudbury would, at that particular period of time when you were growing up was there, was there much in the line of organized sports?

G.B. Oh the, the adults or for the grown-ups that we had. Very, very excellent hockey team and then in the earlier days the Tyee were the world champion lacrosse team of which my, that team my wife's father, was a member.

G.P. His name being

G.B. Bunny Rabye, Arthur, Arthur but being Rabye they (called him) Bunny Rabbit.

G.P. I see

G.B. And that's where he got his nickname from



- G.P. Evident the, inevitable nickname. The lacrosse team, what, what communities would that lacrosse team play against at that particular period of time.
- G.B. Well
- G.P. Were they largely local, communities like Mattawa, for example?
- G.B. Mattawa, Mattawa, North Bay.
- G.P. North Bay, Pembroke.
- G.B. Could've been, I imagine so, I imagine actually I was a little bit too young to remember that myself. All I know was the tales that were told.
- G.P. Right.
- G.B. Some of them were stretched I think too.
- G.P. There were story tellers back then as well.
- G.B. Oh some marvelous ones.
- G.P. Now I've, I've read about, or saw reference to the lacrosse team and, and certainly it a, there had to have been quite an array of players on that team to have been successful as they were in the community.
- G.B. They were, they were and very powerful men.
- G.P. The churches in the community would they have been involved in, in organized sports and teams, any competition?
- G.B. Mostly, mostly Boy Scouts. The Anglican Church sponsored the Boy Scouts of which I was a member of the first troop and we had our meetings in the original fire hall where the, what would be there today on, on . . .
- G.B. On Elgin Street, I forget what's there.
- G.P. I think the city houses of some municipal records there now.
- G.B. Yeah.
- G.P. That's the building near Christ the King.
- G.B. That's right, that's right.
- G.P. The one facing Elgin along where the Grand Theatre.



G.B. Right.

G.P. Along

G.B. That's it.

G.P. The same street.

G.B. That's it.

G.P. And that's where the Boy Scouts.

G.B. That's where the, we used to meet in those days and, and Ernie Cressey's brother Fred was our Scout master.

G.P. That's interesting, in fact I believe the Boy Scouts, I noticed there's a sign pertaining to the Boy Scouts in that building along the side, so perhaps they're still meeting there today. There's a sign a, along St. Anne's Road.

G.B. Could be, I haven't.

G.P. Unless it's an old sign

G.B. I haven't seen any, any Boy Scouts for a long time to tell you the truth.

G.P. No, that was a Boy Scout group though that was organized in connection with the Church of the Epiphany.

G.B. Yes, but it was open to all denominations.

G.P. To everyone, right.

G.B. Like the Scouts still are and it's a shame to see them disappear. I remember we went to Windy Lake to the big beach that's there some years ago, I think years, god, I can't remember the years. And we had to clear off ties from the old C.P.R. road bed from Phelans pit to Windy Lake station which would be a good two miles and a half and the truck was in a very precarious position at different times ready to slide into the Onaping River and we've finally, when we got to, to Windy Lake station we had, it was through the good office of Mr. Daniel Bone whose son was one of our troop, he had an engine with a boxcar stop and we loaded our stuff in the truck from there to the and it was transported another two miles or so to landing spot on the track at the, at the old Windy Lake beach.

G.P. When you mention Windy Lake station I assume there was a train station there.



G.B. Well that, pardon me I made a mistake I should have said Levack Station.

G.P. Levack Station.

G.B. Because Windy Lake station is farther up.

G.P. Right.

G.B. In those days there was a station.

G.P. At

G.B. At, at the Levack

G.P. And the Scouts would go out to Windy Lake

G.B. (unintelligible) what they called Dogpatch.

G.P. They called Dog

G.B. Dogpatch.

G.P. Dogpatch.

G.B. And a little, in the latter years when, when Levack opened, reopened they called that little place, and I imagine they still call it Dogpatch.

G.P. The, the people in the area

G.B. Yeah

G.P. And Windy Lake is where the Scouts would go for a rally a campout

G.B. Yeah, a summer camp

G.P. How many Scouts would we be talking about at that time?

G.B. 40, 45 maybe 50.

G.P. Probably very large and cumbersome tents that you had to put up, (unintelligible) I recall that from Scouts days anyhow

G.B. Right, right, right, right, yeah.

G.P. In a, in Sudbury could you give us an idea perhaps of some of the rinks that there were in the community.

G.B. Ah, mostly homemade.



G.P. I should assume

G.B. With the exception of the Palace which was rather a spot where in the winter time we all gathered and created small disturbances much to the chagrin of Mr. James who used to bang the boards with a two-inch piece of hose if he got you, banged you with it too. I was on the firing line, the firing line used to do the job that that Jamboes, what do you call those machines that you see going around the rinks now, cleaning the ice

G.P. Cleaning the ice

G.B. And laying a new layer of water, we did that all by hand with

G.P. And I'm sure the rinks seemed much longer than

G.B. And much longer

G.P. Much wider

G.B. Much longer

G.P. The Palace rink was located on, on

G.B. I would call it Larch lane

G.P. Larch lane

G.B. Behind . . . the old site of McLeod's, McLeod's Motors and next to that was the Sudbury Curling rink, where some of us boys, the Duncans, Jimmy Martin who would be an uncle of Bob Martin of Martins' Men's Wear - get a plug in there-

G.P. Sure

G.B. And a we used to go after 4 and some of the elderly because we thought in those days, elderly men would coach us in how to throw rocks and most of us being of, of Scotch parentage. We enjoyed the game very, very much.

G.P. I understand that it was very popular in Sudbury.

G.B. It was

G.P. And we, they had some very good teams. Perhaps Gord we could pursue that a, that line of thought in a couple of minutes and also maybe get back to when you were talking about the Shenanigans going on at the Palace Rink. But first we'll break and Doug McLaughlin has some music.

(Music)

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- G.P. Welcome back to "Memories & Music" we have with us, as we indicated earlier, Gord Bisset whose talking about growing up in Sudbury and the various forms of entertainment. Gord a few moments ago, we were commenting, you were commenting on the Palace Rink. Could you get us an idea of some of the activities that took place at the Palace Rink.
- G.B. Well they had more carnivals then than they do today. Today they seem to be concentrated in one, two or three day winter carnival. In those days there were, well there be possibly Halloween and go and skate. Incidentally, the music was provided by a Wurlitzer organ
- G.P. Wurlitzer organ?
- G.B. A Wurlitzer organ which was a music box type with piano rolls and it, as time when on it became rather decrepit and out of tune. Nobody knowing how to, how to really keep it in service. But it provided the rhythm and the lilt for and music to, for people to be entertained by, and skate to.
- G.P. Sure. So when you're talking about carnivals you're talking about people coming out in costumes
- G.B. Definitely
- G.P. A number of times during the year and skating
- G.B. Definitely, definitely
- G.P. And would the costumes be on a particular theme or you would wear just what you wanted.
- G.B. Oh anything, tramps or clowns or whatever one's, one had in one's wardrobe or you could flinch from the other fellow's wardrobe.
- G.P. That would be a major social event on the weekend I assume.
- G.B. Oh definitely, definitely.
- G.P. Is there skating there in the evenings during the week?
- G.B. Oh every, every evening, every evening (unintelligible)
- G.P. During the week as well, and in addition would there be hockey games.
- G.B. Some of the finest hockey games I ever saw. Shorty Green, Red MacKinnon, Charlie L( ). Oh I can remember Toe Blake.



G.P. Yes, he came from Coniston.

G.B. Came from Coniston.

G.P. I think Victoria, was it Victoria Mines initially I believe.

G.B. It was yes, born in Victoria Mines, yeah. And he went on as you know to be the star and also coach of the Montreal Canadians.

G.P. And I believe he was also associated with the 1932 Wolves that won the.

G.B. Right

G.P. Won the championship, The Memorial Cup.

G.B. That's right, I think so, I think that's correct.

G.P. That was coached by Sam Rothschild if I recall.

G.B. Sam Rothschild.

G.P. You mentioned also that the curling club was adjacent to, just south of the Palace Rink.

G.B. Just south of the Palace Rink.

G.P. Would there have been organized curling clubs at that time?

G.B. Oh yes definitely, definitely.

G.P. And I imagine a number of excellent curlers from this area.

G.B. Very, very fine curlers. Bill Duncan was one of the best curlers that I've ever seen and I've seen quite a few.

G.P. Quite a few curling matches with good players.

G.B. Yeah they, they, they played a draw game in those days not, not the knock outs

G.P. Knock out type

G.B. No

G.P. It was, it was more of, there was more skill and occasionally we had a chance to stack brooms and "hae a wee dock and doris" if anybody doesn't know what that means, we used to stop and have a small drink down there. Wet our whistles (unintelligible)

G.B. Well the building was cold I'm sure.



G.P. Well definitely we had to ward off the chill.

G.B. Help you with the draw.

G.P. It's interesting when you look at the newspapers in Sudbury, the Sudbury Journal in the last century, in the 1890's curling was one of the major sports and there was a tremendous rivalry between Sudbury and communities like North Bay

G.B. Oh

G.P. And at the time as we mentioned earlier, the time when you were growing up as a, as a youngster one of the cups they used to play for was the Trader's Cup between Sudbury and North Bay, - a cup that was put out by the Trader's Bank that eventually became the Royal

G.B. That's right.

G.P. And it's interesting that they would have a round-robin series. They'd have a number of different matches during the season and accumulate the points I guess.

G.B. Another, another sport that we had in those days which has come back very strongly under the, the good management and goodwill of Mr. MacIsaac, Mr. Jack MacIsaac is, was harness racing. As a matter of fact, we owned a, a horse called Prince Rupert

G.P. Prince Rupert

G.B. He was as black as night and had a temper just about the same as,

G.P. Just

G.B. As the coloring, oh he was wicked.

G.P. Well named

G.B. He was wicked

G.P. And where would the races occur

G.B. Out on the, where the, about where the old people's Pioneer Manor is today.

G.P. Along Notre Dame

G.B. Yeah that was, that would be the quarter-mile track and of course Chelmsford was a, was a very, very popular sport in those days also and



G.P. Popular spot for races

G.B. For races and Copper Cliff on the 24th of May always had a gala day and I would say that the majority of, of the people in the area that weren't otherwise engaged were at a ball game or whatever the, it was mostly baseball in those days, would be in Copper Cliff enjoying and of course, the parade with the Copper Cliff Cadets I had to get that in.

G.P. Sure.

G.B. Cause we were popular in those days with the kilts, we went to Toronto to the Exhibition and had a, I had a, I was in charge of a tumbling team and that was one of the things that helped to get us out of town to different places like the Sault. Discovery Week, I think that was 19 oh 22 if not earlier.

G.P. Discovery week.

G.B. Yeah that was a big deal that the Sault had on.

G.P. Oh I see.

G.B. And it was a week, a week's, a week's do and they whooped it up and whooped it up pretty, pretty good.

G.P. What time of the year would this be?

G.B. In the summer time.

G.P. So it wasn't a question of getting out of school.

G.B. Oh no, no

G.P. You didn't have the advantage there. Been talking about May the 24th, you indicated that probably most of the activities were occurring in Copper Cliff

G.B. Right

G.P. And in fact people would go there from Sudbury

G.B. Right

G.P. And other communities.

G.B. By cars and horses and wheelbarrows and, and, and bicycles and streetcars.

G.P. All the way out to, well it wasn't that far away, of course, with a streetcar.



G.B. Three miles.

G.P. And people as you said would bicycle out and walk out.

G.B. That's right.

G.P. Back to the harness racing I suspect that probably there was quite a rivalry set up through the years between communities like Chelmsford and Sudbury.

G.B. And Mattawa, I, the name is there but I

G.P. Right. Horses would be brought over from Mattawa

G.B. We, and, and good horses, we had some of the original patch horses here. The Dan Patch, well the blood of Dan Patch who was one of the

G.P. That's, I find that very interesting because my grandfather owned Eagle Patch.

G.B. He did, eh?

G.P. Yes, I, I don't think he ever made it up to Sudbury from Leeds County with the horse

G.B. No

G.P. But loved race horses and, and that's the one horse I do remember, of course.

G.B. Well they, they were near the Hamiltonians of today

G.P. And the track was around Pioneer Manor

G.B. Right just about, just about in that area, yeah. Used to run heats, I think there was a little some were held back so they could race in the next one and they had to win, I think 2 out of 3 could that be right? Two heats out of 3. But it wasn't, wasn't just one race and that was it because they ran three races to make one race

G.P. How do you account, for the fact that the interest in harness racing has seemed to have died down and then as you mentioned it's being revived, of course, with, with Sudbury Downs

G.B. Well the advent of the automoblie quite early

G.P. Fewer horses, less interest

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



G.P. Became very expensive.

G.B. Then, then the urban, the urban sprawl which a lot of the pasture land is being taken up and, and of course I, I would, would still say that the automoblie being the culprit in that respect

G.P. The horse that you had, would you have bought it outside of this area?

G.B. No dad bought it here from Doc Young, it was a horse . . . he got stung.

G.P. He got stung with the, who got stung?

G.B. Dad got stung.

G.P. Your dad did.

G.B. Well Prince Rupert's time was 204½ but he wouldn't start, he was a terrible starter but when, when he started

G.P. When he started

G.B. He used to move

G.P. By then the race had been about what, the race, the race was long over. Gord what we were, perhaps what we should do now is a break for another musical interlude and when we come back we can talk about oh activities in terms of hunting and fishing. Certainly we're considering the environment in this area, I imagine that was a popular past time.

G.B. And Ramsey Lake and the Wharf Rats.

G.P. O.K. good, we'll be back in a moment.

(Music)

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G.P. We have with us today on "Memories & Music" Gord Bisset and Gord you mentioned a few moments ago that a, that you want to talk about Lake Ramsey and the Wharf-Rats and I'm quite curious.

G.B. Oh that was a, there were a gathering of chaps that lived around the water, liked the water the Stull boys Ted and Wing

G.P. Associated with a surveying family, the Stulls.

G.B. Yes and Ted, Ted was one of the starters of Wings, Wings Limited in the west, which is now C.P. Air and as a matter of fact his daughter lives in, lives in Lively. Buck Smith,



Stew Smith, Boyd Smith, no relation. Boyd built a, an ice boat one year and that was for a couple of years when we were lucky we didn't have too much snow was, was quite a novelty and there were a couple more ice boats built and that's the last time I've seen an ice boat, boat on the lake. And that has to be 65 years ago, 60 years anyway.

G.P. These ice boats would be operated by a sail

G.B. By a sail, yes like a sailboat

G.P. Ideal when the ice was very clear, and there was no snow as you were saying.

G.B. Yeah times we could use them, perhaps we were, we were what the Skipper Chalmers who was well-known and well loved.

G.P. Yes.

G.B. He, we were, we were rather what one might say free-loaders to a certain extent. We loaded the canoes and we loaded the boats and we had the privilege of using the, the canoes and some of as like Buck Smith and Stew and myself were also captains as one might say of either the tug boat or Keyin (unintelligible) which used to take parties on around the lake for little tours and these were one of the purposes of this non-paying job of being the lifters and hewers of wood and carriers of water.

G.P. Right. These boats were owned by

G.B. Allan Chalmers

G.P. Allan Chalmers and you would provide tours

G.B. Yeah

G.P. Or you would take people over to the islands or to specific spots.

G.B. That's right, yeah, that's right.

G.P. These would be inboards.

G.B. And, and

G.P. These were inboards.

G.B. Oh yeah and the tug boat

G.P. And the names again were.



G.B. The Ted and the Keyin. The Keyin was an Irish name for whiskey.

G.P. Keyin.

G.B. Yeah

G.P. I see

G.B. And, and the skipper never took a drink so we often wondered why he called it the Keyin. I guess because a few more of the rest of us were in

G.P. Maybe the parties they had with them.

G.B. Were dabbling in it.

G.P. Oh I see the hired help.

G.B. Yeah, with no pay

G.P. No, what, what was fishing like in Lake Ramsey?

G.B. There was 7 different kinds of fish in Lake Ramsey once upon a time. Now we can go to the Department of the Lands and the Bush or Resources as they call them today and get Charlie Goodby to cooperate or who else can I think of, the trouble is there aren't many left of

G.P. Of the early fishermen.

G.B. Of the early fishermen or the early Pickerel Bay which was next to what we call C.P.R. Bay which was Harry Street on the . . . what do you call that, I'm getting so bad I don't even know the streets any more, Bancroft Drive

G.P. All right

G.B. Used to be in the evenings, especially when the mosquitoes were at their worst

G.P. Yes

G.B. There were 10, 12 either row boats, which were popular in those days also, or canoes, with one and two fishermen in them and they always came home with a limit. Which in those days was practically unlimited

G.P. And large

G.B. And, and large fish but possibly the oil from the shad flies in the spring time were numerous and they helped to feed the minnow, heavy with protein. The shad flies have



disappeared, they used to be plastered on the walls of the boat house and the old ice house and in those days people didn't have refrigerators and Mr. Jodowin operated a, a ice business, where the ice, cut the ice right in Ramsey Lake. That was a thriving business 'til electricity took over. In, in matter of fact Wahnapiatae Lake, in our own camps, we cut our own ice and I'll tell you it wasn't any easy job especially when it was around 20 below and the wind was howling out of the north.

G.P. I would suspect not.

G.B. It's nice to have a couple of dogs to give you a hand to get the toboggan moving.

G.P. So pickerel was one of the major species

G.B. Pickerel, pickerel, bass, small and large mouth, lake trout, suckers, perch

G.P. Pike

G.B. Oh yes, a lot of pike I got a 18-pounder once down by the dam and I was all alone in the canoe and I had to, to beach the canoe and run, run ashore with the, with the pike dangling, dangling behind me after I got him out of the water.

G.P. Were you a youngster at the time you caught it?

G.B. Well I'd be 16, 17

G.P. Quite an exciting moment I'm sure

G.B. It was, it was.

G.P. What did you catch it on?

G.B. Just a, I think a William's Wobbler

G.P. A William's Wobbler

G.B. Which is still one of the

G.P. Yes still one of the popular ones

G.B. That was a popular bait.

G.P. Was Sudbury, this area in general in Sudbury in particular, known as a place to go if one, one wanted to fish or would people come up here

G.B. Oh all the, all the lakes, all the lakes were



- G.P. Killarney for example and then on up into this area Wahnapiatae.
- G.B. You get to Killarney in those days, one had to, one had to take
- G.P. Pretty
- G.B. The boat from Owen Sound, Parry Sound or come over from Little Current.
- G.P. Right.
- G.B. There was no, no, there was no road access, yes, outside of the old bush roads which were impassable.
- G.P. But it was an area noted, this area was noted for its fishing.
- G.B. Oh yes and, and the fishing industry on the Manitoulin Island was prodigious. There I've still, I think, unless they burned down, large warehouses at a, at Gore Bay that the Purvis brothers had and they, they loaded fish in, in fish boxes about four feet long with handles on both ends and iced their fish and shipped them mostly to New York City.
- G.P. This would probably be the Purvis family of, of Sudbury that had a hardware business connected at all.
- G.B. No, that's one thing I was thinking the other night while you and I were chatting.
- G.P. Right
- G.B. And I, I imagine that they must've been but I, I wouldn't have any direct proof.
- G.P. No don't know the direct
- G.B. ( ) Purvis lived right across the street from me.
- G.P. Right.
- G.B. As a matter of fact the magistrate of Meldrum in Parry Sound, his wife was a Purvis girl, Kathleen, oh so many years ago.
- G.P. I know there was a Purvis family, there was a business in North Bay at one time, when there was also Purvis family in Sudbury at the turn of the century, so there's every possibility it could be brothers, uncles, whatever.



G.B. They, they were more than likely were.

G.P. Sure. I would imagine that hunting was a very popular past time in, in this area.

G.B. Oh I was, I was night clerk at the C.P.R. Express in 1924 and every time, in the fall a hunter's special to go to Toronto, old Dick Scott who was the manager of the Express Company, he would say, "Well Gord I get you've got a job tonight to go down to Toronto on the, on this hunter's special which was a southway train that stopped any place there was a landing and the, there was - a lot of hunt clubs that came up from the south in those days. Had their little shacks, little cabins and I had taken as many as 200 and 300 deer, twice a week and some times three times a week during hunting season. So that'll give you an idea how prolific the deer were, not too many moose.

G.P. No

G.B. South of here, some north but it will also give you an idea that a lot of them were shot off and no breeding stock left. I can remember in my time that 4, 4 different, 4 different times that we had poor, poor seasons and in those

G.P. Is that right

G.B. Days, in those days they were strictly a buck law, you couldn't shoot, you couldn't shoot any does or fawns today they just, they mow them down left and right.

G.P. I, venison at that time was a staple for families I suspect, today it's, it's a luxury, of course.

G.B. It's a rarity.

G.P. But, but in those days one, one was accustomed to it

G.B. Well and, and

G.P. And needed it

G.B. That's what the Lord, that's what the Lord put those animals here for.

G.P. Very definitely needed it

G.B. Not to be, not to be chopped down and put in somebody's freezer and be thrown away the next year, when they get tasting like sawdust.

G.P. Gord when you talk about deer hunting I would assume that that the entire area would have good for deer.



G.B. Oh it was, it was.

G.P. Areas such as Lake Wahnapiatae for example.

G.B. Yes that was very good.

G.P. You mentioned that you had a camp . . . you spent time on Lake Wahnapiatae.

G.B. Well my father-in-law had a camp at this end which was the old rangers' camp originally before it burned down. And when the mill, when the Spanish River Mill burned down right in the same night and then we had ( ) and Dave Humphrey and Bunny Raby at, at the dam. I think if it hasn't fallen in it was one of the old original work shacks, I would say it would be 40, 45, 50 feet long by 24 feet wide and he would, would, it heated with old Adam Hall camp stove

G.P. Right

G.B. Of course, in those days there was lots of wood and we were

G.P. And you were accustomed to getting it and how to

G.B. We were accustomed to getting on end of the two-man bucksaw and, and let (unintelligible)

G.P. Learn how to handle one of those, O.K.

G.B. And can still handle one.

G.P. On Lake Wahnapiatae would a number of people from this area Sudbury, for example, have cottages.

G.B. Not too many

G.P. No

G.B. Not too many

G.P. We're talking about a native population there, people who lived there year round.

G.B. Yeah in the early days there was just the people who lived in the village of Skead

G.P. Right

G.B. And the environs and the odd camp from people, out from West Bay that came from Capreol and then there was a little Indian reserve which still exists on the, at the mouth of Post Creek



G.P. Right

G.B. On the, on the west, north west shore, northwest corner - Post Creek and Mountain Creek

G.P. Perhaps on that note we should break for a few moments and turn the program back over to Doug McLaughlin. When . . . during the early days.

(Music)

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G.P. Gord it would seem to me when, when we look at the community as a whole, in all likelihood Lake Ramsey would have been one of the focal points of, of entertainment for young and old alike. I'm wondering if you could comment on that and secondly we were talking around the Wharf-Rats earlier and it would seem to me because of the somewhat descriptive adjective used to described that group you must have some more interesting anecdotes to share.

G.B. Well I remember one this is, this is a joke - a little levity. After, it'll come afterwards, the, this Wink stove I mentioned, who lived, his father was a, was a land surveyor. Did most of the land surveying in this area and his uncle Mr. Watson Demorest, Dick Demorest's father and anyway Wink got this nickname by misadventure. One Halloween evening the boys were committing depredations on the outhouses which were prevalent in those days. And they shoved over an outhouse and, and Wink fell in, well naturally the nickname that he received at that time was Stink. But as he grew older we thought that it would be nicer and more charitable to call him Wink so he went for the name Wink from those, from those days on. There are few, the gang will remember Wink and Ted and Jim Cryderman and Felix and the Demorest boys, Dr. Arthur's boys who are unfortunately all gone. Ar Ramsey Lake, originally they were, they had a beautiful club house close to where the, where the Pumping station is now, where the clarification plant is actually.

G.P. Right

G.B. And everybody had their own stalls and their own . . . they had to have a row boat, of course, those long, long before the years of, of outboard motors. I had the first electric starting boat motor on, in Sudbury, a 24 Johnston with a starter motor generator. That would be in the year 1924, I think. Skipper and . . . but the summer evening Skipper Chalmers rented canoes and row boats and, and it was nothing to see 25, 30, 40 canoes out. Some of them, boys courting with their young ladies, there just a

G.P. Nothing changes



G.B. Nothing changes, no, time.

G.P. Fortunately

G.B. Time hasn't changed

G.P. Fortunately

G.B. Only now they use, now they use speed boats.

G.P. Did Skip Chalmers not also sell wooden boats ~~that~~ he made, or had made in the area.

G.B. He, he manufactured

G.P. Canoes.

G.B. Very fine canoes.

G.P. Canoes.

G.B. Yes and I'd put the putty on lots of those old canvas canoes before the airplane dope became popular. Of course, made them a lot lighter.

G.P. Right

G.B. And they were just as serviceable, I imagine, but we never went out without carrying a little tube of amroid and a couple of patches in case, especially if we were portaging or going out in the bush.

G.P. On Lake Ramsey would there have been many inboards when you were, you know, during the early 20's, for example.

G.B. Yes there were several, there were . . . Joe Eldridge had one Fred Staf, Mr. Stafford had one, my uncle John had one which was a single cylinder. It was a tub.

G.P. Can you recall the makes of any of them?

G.B. Well generally there, there, they were home, homemade crafts.

G.P. Is that right?

G.B. In the backyard crafts with the exception of the one Scotty Muirhead but Dave Humphrey had one which had a 6 cylinder motor in it and it was very fast. The Christakos family had one unfortunately one of the elderly men drown and the one, Fred Stafford bought this beautiful mahogany run about with a, with a 6 cylinder copper jacketed cylinder



motor and it was supposed to be a speed boat and Jack and Godfrey, his sons, took it out one day and opened it up and immediately nosed down and the last of my recollection it's still at the bottom of Ramsey Lake some place.

G.P. Not too popular when they got home.

G.B. No not a bit, not a bit.

G.P. Fortunate to have survived but not too popular. Gord it was interesting when you were mentioning the number of families associated with Lake Ramsey and when you were talking about the Wharf-Rats, for example. But the names that you mentioned are, are people whose families are in Sudbury you know back in the 1890's.

G.B. Yes, yes (unintelligible)

G.P. I think it's a point worthy of recognition the fact that so many people did come to Sudbury and did stay and descendants stayed. We often talk about Sudbury being a transient community but there are some established families in this community.

G.B. Well the, the, the Tom Smith family, of Smith and Travers, and there's still Mrs., Mrs. Peter Taylor whose husband was with Inco for many years. She was one of Oscar Smith's daughters. They were an old diamond drilling family, a brother of Tom Smith, of Smith and Travers and there were some of the Henry family, J.G. Henry's family.

G.P. Right

G.B. Our own family, the Homer Darling is, is getting to be one of the older families. I remember him when he was a kid, he lived at the end of Larch Street. A lot of the people have moved away and as I say a lot of them have gone to their just reward unfortunately some of them too soon like Ted Stull and Wink Stull and Felix Cryderman, Jim lived a good life, a long life, he passed away not so long ago. He was very well, extremely well-known in the, in the prospecting circles.

G.P. Yes, pioneer prospector.

G.B. Pioneer prospector and his father was before him.

G.P. Yes.

G.B. The White family, the Dr., Dr. Bill White, his grandfather had a butcher shop where the present day downtown post office is. As matter of fact he owned a quarter of that, that block. The McCools I don't know if there's any of



those left yet. They, they lived on the, in the, had the, the opposite corner which would be kitty corner to Michaud's Drug, I doubt if, I don't know if there's any of that family left. The Shields family have all gone from town, well no there's one girl still here, they lived on Cedar Street. S. E. Wright who was our first school teacher or second school teacher, it could've been that Mr. Lowe was the first, the first school, his son is still here - Ross. Kilpatrick family, there, there's none of those left here. There's not very many of the elder, of the older families that I can remember.

G.P. Pardon, that you

G.B. There aren't many of the older families left that I can remember.

G.P. No but the point is that, that descendents of many of those

G.B. Oh yes

G.P. Older families stayed in the community

G.B. Stayed yeah.

G.P. You know of the pioneer families and as I mentioned earlier I think that's a, that's an important point for us to remember in this community. Perhaps we could break at this point and when we return, Gord, to wrap the show up we could talk about oh a few brief comments about entertainment in the 1980's as opposed to when you were growing up as a youngster.

G.B. O.K. can do.

(Music)

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G.P. Gord one of the comments that's often made about society today is that we seem, we seem to be a people who require entertainment, we have to be entertained. Yet in talking with you today, I, I sense somewhat that that was not the case when you were growing up as a youngster. I'd appreciate your comments on that.

G.B. No we snowshoed - as a matter of fact I still have the pair of snowshoes at, that were made for me when I was maybe 5 years old, that are 2½ feet long and they're in wonderful conditions because I've occasionally given them a coating of varnish. We had skis out of, out of wooden barrel staves, the old apple barrels with a piece of inner-tube (unintelligible) to hold them on, on the feet. We didn't spend \$150 or \$200 or \$300 or \$400 bucks and we had a lot of fun. Maybe as much fun as . . . of course, they were only for short trips down hill and then we had wooden



skis for cross country and for down hill work and did some, did some foolish, some foolish junk. For instance coming down the end of rocks at the end of Brady Street, which where that new, that new housing project is

G.P. Right

G.B. And having to duck between the telegram pole and, and the steel wire which would have taken our heads off and people played piano and we sang we had organizations, different organizations would put on minstrel shows which we would take the Chelmsford, Azila, Coniston, playing in the church halls or I remember one time we went up to Espanola. There was Skinny Campbell and Hal Connolly and these, these minstrel shows would be all men, - some in black face and some in white. I remember opening the, the one of the shows we put on was Carolina in the Morning and but people, people went, went to these little community plays just as they do to the theatre today.

G.P. Right so in, in summing up. There was amateur in a sense it was not professionally organized entertainment

G.B. No we were

G.P. People, people were very resourceful and they made do with what they had, and they found it by and large very entertaining.

G.B. Muchly, muchly

G.P. And had a good time

G.B. Very muchly

G.P. O.K. Thank you Gord for sharing your reminiscences with us today as the program began I mentioned that Gord Bisset was very much an entertainer in his own right and I think today's conversation has not only been entertaining but also most informative and Gord I'll look forward to your next appearance on this program, because I know there are a number of other anecdotes and reminiscences that you would like to share with us.

G.B. Well I'll bone up on a few of those rather than the temporary ad libs that we'd got by with tonight, at least I hope we got by with it.

G.P. Your comments were excellent. In closing I hope that everyone has enjoyed today's presentation of "Memories & Music" next Sunday our guest will be Dr. Maurice Kelly and Dr. Kelly will be talking about a number of things including growing up in, in Creighton.