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**Company Affiliations:** Canadian Ports Clearance Association (CPCA)

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**Summary:** In this two-part interview, executive director Harv Friesen and shipping coordinator Bev Bennett of the Canadian Ports Clearance Association describe the organization’s critical role in coordinating lake shipping of grain in the port of Thunder Bay for over 100 years. They both discuss their own movement up through the company from entry-level positions to senior management, and they detail what the CPCA does to make vessel loading in the port as efficient as possible. They describe some of the major changes over the years, including upgrades to telecommunications, computerization, lessening cooperation between grain industry players, increasing sizes of vessels, decreasing numbers of grain elevators, and the inclusion of the port of Vancouver in their operations. Other topics discussed include potential problems each day in the port, the CPCA’s close work with the Canadian Grain Commission and Canadian Wheat Board, the imminent closure of the CPCA with the de-monopolizing of the CWB, their own visits to Thunder Bay terminals, and their pride and contentment with the work CPCA did in its time. In the brief follow-up audio, Bennett and Friesen show an old comptometer machine and other photographic artifacts in the CPCA office.

**Keywords:** Canadian Ports Clearance Association (Lake Shippers Clearance Association); Grain transportation—ships; Grain transportation logistics; Lake shipping logistics; Lake shipping coordination; Grain accounting; Grain inventories; Thunder Bay terminal grain elevators; Grain exports; Computerization; Downsizing; Telecommunications; Canadian Grain Commission (CGC); Grain inspection; Grain weighing; Bills of lading; Warehouse receipts; Ship’s agents; Ship-to-shore communication; Canadian Wheat Board (CWB); Grain pooling; Lakers; Salties; British Columbia Grain Shippers Association; Vancouver, British Columbia

### Audio Part One

Time, Speaker, Narrative

NP: Yeah. We're on. Okay. We're interviewing. Interview is taking place in Winnipeg, Manitoba, at 167 Lombard, Room 886, which is the office of the Canadian Ports Clearance Association [CPCA]. And we have two people that we're interviewing today who work with the organization, and I'm just going to ask them to introduce themselves and just tell us a little bit about what they do with Ports Clearance and maybe just a quick--. If you had several positions with it, just a quick run through of those positions. So who would like to start?

HF: Hi, I'm Harv Friesen. I'm the executive director of Canadian Ports Clearance Association, and I've been with the organization since 1974. I started basically in an entry-level position and worked through most departments in the Winnipeg office during my years here, and my position before executive director was I was the office manager. So that's just sort of a brief history of my time here.

NP: Brief run through. Okay.

BB: I'm Bev Bennett. I've been with the association since 1966, and I started at an entry-level position as a comptometer operator, and I've worked my way up, and I am presently the shipping and administrative coordinator.

NP: What was your first position?

BB: A comptometer operator.

NP: So let's hear a little bit about what that is so that people listening will know what a comptometer operator was.

BB: That was before adding machines. [Laughs] We used to use it to figure out storage. We would add, subtract, multiply, divide on it just by moving over columns.

NP: Was it a specialized adding machine for the industry?

BB: Yes, it was. Well, not for the industry, but basically it was used in accounting and in the grain trade an awful lot.

NP: And was that where you started, like, the first--?

BB: First job out of school, yes.

NP: First job out of school. I'm going to ask each of you to just talk about the question we ask is, "Well, how did you get started in the grain industry?" So was there anything special, Harv, that attracted you to this organization? Or was it the fact that it was a job that you were qualified for and you didn't really know much about grain?

HF: Well, it wasn't that I was attracted to it. This was my first job out of business college also. It was interesting to me. It was just a coincidence that I came to apply for a job here, but it was coincidence because I grew up on a farm, so that made it all kind of interesting because I never had any aspirations of being a farmer. But it was something that was related to farming and the agriculture industry, so I always found it kind of interesting and a good fit for me to work for his company.

NP: Where was your family's farm?

HF: It was and still is about a half hour south of Winnipeg in, say, the Niverville area.

NP: Mmhhh. Okay. So you got to see an extension then of the harvesting of the crop because maybe you can tell us for the benefit of whoever listens to this over the years to come just exactly what does Lake--. Sorry.

BB: Canadian Port--.

NP: Canadian Ports Clearance Association do. What's their function in the world of--?

HF: Well, I guess, first of all, you mentioned Canadian Ports Clearance Association, but we've been around since 1909, and originally, we were called Lake Shippers Clearance Association, and we worked strictly with grain transportation out of the port of Thunder Bay. But then in 1999, we merged, amalgamated, with the British Columbia Grain Shippers Clearance Association, and then the name Lake Shippers wasn't really appropriate because we weren't working just on the lakes anymore. So then we changed the name to Canadian Ports Clearance Association. So that was sort of the name change. So there's still a lot of people that will refer to us as Lake Shippers because that's what they've dealt with us as for so many years.

**[0:05:12]**

NP: And what does the organization do?

HF: Well, I guess what we've done, probably mostly since day one—our function really hasn't changed that much—but we would track the inventory of the grain in the port, sort of how much grain is at each elevator, all the different grains, and who owns that

grain. That's one process. Another process is the actual logistics of loading grain in the port. We get shipping orders from the grain companies saying, "Here's the vessel that's coming in, and here's what's going to load on it." And then we're like the air traffic controllers in a port directing the ships around to the different elevators. It was all about being efficient, keeping the port loading grain efficiently, and of course, loading the ships efficiently, getting them in and out as quickly as possible. So that was, again, a couple of the main functions.

Another one, we do accounting work, a bit of invoicing for the cost of loading the ships. So we'll invoice the company that is loading the grain on the ship, collect the money, and pay it to the elevator, their costs. So it's kind of a flow through—collect with one hand, pay it out with the other hand. Then beyond that, we also do some different documentation and reporting, that kind of stuff. Like we do bills of lading for the laker vessels that load out of Thunder Bay. So that would be, you know, a high-level view of some of our main functions in the industry.

NP: And Bev, how does your current position fit into the kinds of things that Harv has been talking about?

BB: Well, I receive the orders for grain that's being loaded onto the vessels in Thunder Bay, especially, then coordinate that with our Thunder Bay office, and then the ships are directed to the elevators. I make sure that the grain is there, that the, well, used to be warehouse receipts that were basically cancelled against the grain. We'd just make sure that everything is all coordinated up and the grain is owned by the actual shipper that has placed the orders.

NP: So I didn't get a chance to ask you at the beginning, did you have any family background in the grain industry? So--.

BB: None whatsoever.

NP: So you were applying for a clerical position or an accounting position, and this was the one?

BB: That's right, yes.

NP: What do you think that you learned the--. What was news to you about the kind of work that was done here? Or even just the grain industry, because you came at it as a complete novice. Anything surprising?

BB: Oh.

NP: Going way back. [Laughing]

BB: Well, it was surprising to learn basically how the grain moved, you know, off the farms into the transfer elevators in Thunder Bay, and then from the transfer elevators to the export ports. It was very interesting to learn that. And when I first started, basically, our main function was a clearing house for grain documents, and then everything fell into place after that, which things have evolved from that.

NP: Tell me a little bit about the structure of the Ports Clearance Association. Who owns it? Who are they, essentially?

HF: Well, we're sort of a non-profit entity, and our association members are also our owners, and our members are all grain companies. To be a member--. Or to ship grain through a port of Thunder Bay or Vancouver, you have to be a member of our association. So like Cargill, Viterra, all these companies that are exporters and loading grain, they need to be members of our association. So we, in effect, we have somewhat of a captive audience, right? The grain companies, if they want to do business, they have to be members of our association and sort of abide by our rules.

**[0:10:05]**

NP: Are they--.

BB: Just to further that, we also have vessel companies that are members and terminal elevators that are members.

NP: So would they be—your owners and members then—would they be just the names that we would recognize? Or are there others that are more behind the scenes? What I'm thinking here is we have Richardson's, Cargill, Parrish & Heimbecker [P&H], Viterra now, the Pools previously, Paterson's. Any others that are less--. You don't see the elevator with their name on it, but they are members of the group?

HF: Yeah, well, there's some of them that don't actually own grain elevators, but they're exporters like, say, Bunge, Louis-Dreyfus, ADM [Archer Daniels Midland], Benson-Quinn, Topfer. Those kinds of companies are maybe a little less visible, I suppose, but they're still very prominent players in the grain industry.

NP: Do either of you know how or why this organization came about? Getting a whole group of people like that to cooperate in a venture says to me that there was a need for it. What was the need that the organization was serving?

BB: Well, I guess, in the beginning, anybody who owned grain and wanted to ship it out of Thunder Bay, they had parcels of grain in each elevator maybe. And when it came time to load a ship to pick up their grain, they had to go to various elevators. So to make it more efficient, they got together as a group. And basically, the grain lost its identity, and they owned X-number of tonnes of grain in the port of Thunder Bay, which meant if it was all in one house, we could pick it up at one house rather than going to five or six. So it was just a need to expedite the loading of ships in Thunder Bay and to avoid congestion.

NP: And I would think in the early days, in fact, Mary—I didn't introduce, Mary, that you were here--.

MM: That's okay.

NP: [Laughs] Mary Mitchell is also working the technical side of the interview today. I was talking about way back in the olden days when there were thousands of ships in the lakes at that time. That would have been quite a chore.

**[Audio pauses]**

NP: Hold it a sec. Okay. Press it over again.

HF: This is sort of like old folklore, but we heard stories from the early days where there was a lot of ships. I guess, Thunder Bay at the time, there were a lot more elevators in the early days than there are now, and the ships were smaller, of course. So you know, we heard about stories where ships would sort of be racing each other trying to get to an elevator first, that kind of stuff, which kind of sounds a bit like chaos, right? For those kinds of reasons, they came up with this concept of sort of pooling the grain in the port. So regardless of whether your grain went to five elevators, your ship could maybe come and get it in one or two. And then as Canadian Ports, we were sort of overseeing and directing the ships to the different elevators. So we were sort of looking at the big picture, right, as to load the ships in an orderly fashion, get them out, and create some rules as far as the first ship in really should be the first ship out. All that kind of stuff. So it was a means of sort of creating some order to what maybe was a bit of chaos before and getting things done in a fair, organized manner.

NP: Does everything always work nice and smoothly, or are there still things that complicate the process?

HF: Yeah, that's what's fun about our jobs because two days are never the same, and there's always unique circumstances coming up any given time that change things. So, you know, even like I said, there's grain ships. In theory, they're supposed to be first in, first out—all that kind of stuff—but there's all these complications that come up on a daily basis. Sometimes the inventory isn't quite ready, or the inventory hasn't arrived in the port, so that means you have to switch things around and all kinds of stuff. So it's

something we've always had to do is be very adaptable and flexible because things change every day and there's always different circumstances or unusual circumstances that can come up.

**[0:15:23]**

NP: Take us through what a day would bring. So you come into the office, and what needs to be done to make sure that things get done the way they're supposed to during the day?

HF: Well, some of the things that happen everyday in each of the two port offices—Thunder Bay, Vancouver—one of the first things they do is talk to each of the elevators and get their stocks that are available for shipping that day, because although we the official record of inventory is in our computer system here, but we still don't load ships on that basis necessarily. We still check that the elevators have the grain that's ready to load because if we were to load grain based on what our computer says, sometimes we could be sending a ship to the elevator to load and find out that the grain has got bugs in and is going to take three weeks to fumigate, or the grain might be dirty. It hasn't been run through the cleaners yet, and stuff like that. So that was just one of the things we do, first thing each office does is get the stocks for the port, and that's what they use for loading the ships then.

So they'll look at, "Here are the ships we have today, here's what they're loading," and then you match it up to the stock sheet and, "Here's the stocks and where they are." That's why every day is unique. It's like you're doing this puzzle every morning, right? Because you've got X-number of ships, grain in X-number of elevators, and you try to work it out so that you can load each of the ships efficiently, and you don't keep one waiting needlessly. So it's sort of a daily puzzle you're trying to piece together everyday.

NP: So if you had a situation where there was something wrong with the shipment, do you just know that on the day of the shipment, or do you have some kind of lead time? Let's say it's an infestation. Is that just discovered as they load it onto the ship, and you have to stop and make other arrangements?

HF: Well, preferably you find out well in advance that grain is infested, and that grain isn't available today, right? But there are cases where they are loading a vessel, and they run into grain that is dirtier than it's supposed to be, so it's not meeting specs. Then you have to—worst case scenario—they have to stop loading and figure out what are they going to do now. Do they have to clean this grain first? Or that sort of thing. So that's why there's all these unique circumstances that come up everyday and make life interesting, I guess. [Laughing]

NP: That's one way of stating it! I'm sure other people think of it as make life complicated. So who in circumstances like that—where what was supposed to be loaded isn't going to be loaded and there's a delay in the shipping—what kind of documentation

does that set in motion? Who gets charged for the delay, because I understand ships sitting around not doing what they're supposed to be doing, somebody's paying the price. So what happens then if plans have to be changed? Things were going smoothly, then all of a sudden they aren't.

HF: Well, then it means there's all these phones are ringing off the hook because you're talking to all the different parties, right? You're talking to the vessel's owner or agent or whatever the course may be to find out do they want to pay overtime even though the vessel may not load because there's a problem with the grain or something like that. Or at times, a vessel may just come off berth and wait while the whole thing is sorted out, and the elevator may load another vessel in the meantime. So there's all these different variations. Like for ocean vessels, there's always a cost. Every time you ship an ocean vessel, there's a cost. So shifting it off berth is a cost, but leaving it there may be a cost too because you may be forced to pay overtime on a ship when it can't load at all. So there's all these different scenarios that take place, and you know, it's an everyday kind of occurrence where decisions have to be made, and there's always financial implications, right?

NP: So in that case if it's an infestation, what would be the financial implications and who would bear the cost? Does it go right back to when the carload came in, or is it something that the elevator has to absorb?

**[0:20:13]**

HF: As far as I know, it's the elevator that absorbs the cost of fumigating the grain. Who would absorb the vessel's cost of their time, I'm not exactly sure.

NP: Probably in the contract.

HF: It could be contracts, yeah. Sometimes there's court cases, right Bev? [Laughing]

BB: That's right. Sometimes we're not privy to all of that information.

NP: So what kinds of things result in court cases? Any that come to mind, Bev?

BB: Not--.

NP: I'm sure it doesn't happen regularly.



BB: No, it doesn't happen regularly, and a lot of that happens that is hearsay to us. You know, we're not really involved in them, and we hear about it third- or fourth-hand. So it's not something I could--.

NP: It's not something you need to be involved in at all?

BB: Not at all. Not at all. All we have is the documentation on how long it took to load the vessel. If there was a problem, how long the problem took to resolve, what the problem was.

NP: So--.

MM: I'm finding it interesting to think about how you might have communicated 40 years ago or before computers.

BB: Teletype, telephone. [Laughs]

MM: Okay.

HF: I guess when I started out as a—well, it was my first job—one of the things I did, I did operate the teletype for a period, and basically it was sending messages from the Winnipeg offices to the Thunder Bay office. And even at that point, I heard—this would be in earlier days than when I was around—that didn't they--. You probably heard that story too. You used to do it on morse code or whatever?

BB: Yes. I've heard those stories.

HF: Tapping out messages with--.

NP: Or telegraph?

BB: Telegraphs.

HF: Telegraphs, right. Yeah.

MM: Telex as well, even that was probably later.

HF: Yeah. And we used to send stock sheets back and forth on early fax machines. And an early fax machine, you had to buy this special paper and put it in there, and it would smell because it was actually burning it right into the paper. [Laughs]

NP: So you've got--.

MM: And so this organization fulfilled that efficiency kind of situation? Because otherwise the individual sellers would have had to have been doing this negotiation back and forth, and now you're doing it on their behalf.

BB: That's right.

MM: Your members' behalf.

BB: Yes.

MM: Okay. Go ahead, Nancy.

NP: Any other major changes that occurred besides the communication? Bev let's start with you. If you think back since the '60s when you started, what would be the major changes that took place? Either in the overall organization or in your functions within it.

BB: Oh, I guess, basically the computers coming in really because they did away with all our warehouse receipts that we had. We used to have warehouse receipts that had to be cancelled with the Grain Commission over each shipment. Now those are by the wayside, and everything is done electronically. That was basically one of the major things. Then, you know, just absorption of various companies, and there were fewer players.

NP: That make life easier for you?

BB: I couldn't say it made life easier. It made life a little different. But there's a problem every day, and there's a new problem every day, and that's what makes it so interesting.

NP: It would be boring otherwise.

BB: That's right! Done this job for 45 years, and each day is different. You do the same job, but it's different.

NP: People change much over the time? I mean, obviously, people were in and out, but I would assume in the early days you were dealing with a lot of people who came up through the grain system.

**[0:25:08]**

BB: That's right.

NP: So has that changed at all?

BB: Yes.

HF: Okay, let's hear your favourite saying, Bev! [Laughing]

BB: Once the accountants took over the world, things changed. [Laughing]

NP: In what way?

BB: Everything is bottom line, bottom line. People who knew the grain trade, who knew that something fine might not be right today but will be right tomorrow were gone. So everything is just bottom line.

NP: So what impact did that have on your work on the ground so to speak?

BB: It just makes things a little bit more difficult in loading a vessel or, you know, trying to make somebody understand what's happening.

NP: Correct me if I'm interpreting you incorrectly.

BB: Okay.

NP: But what I'm hearing you say is that when people understood the grain industry and that this was just not, "Everything's going to go smoothly and yeah, this looks like a blip, but the blip is going to be worked out over time."

BB: There seemed to be a lot more cooperation with everybody.

NP: It's interesting you should say that because I've heard people say that as the industry became more condensed, you'd almost think it would be easier for people to communicate and there would be more cooperation. But actually, some people have said that that has not been the case. As it became more concentrated, there was less--.

BB: Cooperation.

NP: Less cooperation. Is that what you found in your--?

BB: That's exactly--. Yes. Exactly.

NP: Why do you think that might happen? Because it just seems to be--. Goes against what you would think would be.

BB: Yes, it does. It does.

NP: So any speculation on why that happened? What changed in the industry besides just the condensing of it?

BB: It's just basically, I feel, driven by the bottom line.

NP: Competition, or cutthroat competition more so than cooperative competition?

BB: Probably. Probably. Everybody is interested in their own bottom line.

NP: Yeah. I find it interesting because the interviews we do, we do with Thunder Bay people who were working at the frontlines there. So here, we're interviewing a lot of head office people, and I've heard the same thing about how businesses operated on the waterfront, and that's one of the changes that they said they have seen over time. Hm! Interesting. Any changes beyond that, Harv, that you've seen over your time?

HF: Well, really the most significant change in my time here is also the computerization aspect, and it was something—when it was going on—that was something I was always very closely involved with. So that was always interesting to me, and I think we've made--. We did not a bad job with staying up with technology. We might have got into a late start, I think.

BB: Late start, yes, I think we did.

HF: We were a little late getting into the computer age and that sort of thing, but when Bev said she worked on comptometers when she started, and in fact, when we computerized, we still had ladies in the office working on comptometers. So we went from comptometers to computers, which was kind of a big step. [Laughing]

NP: Mind you, you also missed out a lot of the false starts that occurred with computers as well. So I mean, people were through three different versions before they settled on the one they wanted.

HF: It could be. We were reasonably successful in most of our projects, I think. They weren't all perfect.

BB: No. But they were pretty good. What didn't work, we made work.

**[0:30:04]**

NP: Were there changes in numbers of employees then? Did that change too with the advent of--?

BB: Yes. Drastically.

NP: When you started, how many people were working in the office, would you say?

BB: When I started, there were 22 in the Winnipeg office, and I think there were 18 in Thunder Bay. Now we have one person in Thunder Bay, we have four of us in this office, and three in Vancouver.

NP: One thing that really changed over the time too was where the grain shipments were--. The percentage of grain shipments that were going out of the west coast versus out of Thunder Bay. Did that have any impact on head office, or it didn't really make much difference whether the orders were coming from one place or the other?

HF: Well, see, that was the thing. We weren't involved in Vancouver until 1999, so we were exclusively working with Thunder Bay until then. So it certainly was a big--. We saw the transition, right? We both were here during the '70s, the heyday of shipping all that grain to the Russians and everything, and then seeing it slowly over time, the shift from east coast to west coast. So certainly, we remember all those times where volumes were really high and then they started shrinking in Thunder Bay.

NP: And that would be happening at the same time as computers were coming in, so the need for staff was sort of a double whammy there.

BB: That's right.

NP: Hm. When you started, were there—well, there must have been—people who had been around for a long time? Maybe not quite from the beginning, because it was 1909.

BB: Yes.

NP: So any of the old timers tell stories of what it was like back in their day?

BB: Well, you always heard stories. You didn't know what to believe and what not to believe. [Laughing] Because, I mean, you were green coming in. You just weren't too sure.

NP: Yeah. Any that stick in your mind?

BB: Oh. Not--.

NP: Not that you feel you can tell on tape?

BB: No. [Laughing] Not that I really want to discuss or relate. [Laughs]

NP: Oh, well, we'll talk about those once we turn the tape off. I figure I need to do my own interview where I talk about things that were said—no names mentioned—off-tape. [Laughing]

HF: But it's sort of when you started back in that day, you were sort of intimidated by the manager types. I don't know. You remember Win Anders, right?

BB: That's right.

HF: He was somebody that worked close to 50 years with Lake Shippers back then. But sure, I knew him a little bit when I started, but at that time, I was the kid he would send downstairs to get him a pack of cigarettes or something. It's not like we had these meaningful chats and he told me about the history, right? [Laughing]

NP: So how would you describe his personality? Other than him sending you down for the cigarettes. [Laughs]

HF: I'll tell you, you didn't dare say no. [Laughing]

BB: It was a different era.

HF: It was a different era. I remember, at that time, everything was manual, right? We had these doc sheets that we wrote out by hand. So there was my handwriting on there one day. He'd come up there and look at these doc sheets. "Who's chicken scratch is that?" You know? [Laughs] Couldn't read it very well, I guess. So that was my cue to learn to write better numbers, right?

BB: He could add up a stock sheet without ever using an adding machine or anything else, and that was a skill he had.

NP: When you talk about that, I think of some of the managers of the grain companies that we've interviewed of not quite that era, because they were sort of in between you and, what was the fellow's name, Wood?

BB: Win Anders.

HF: Win Anders.

NP: Win Anders. A very special type of character, I thought.

BB: They were.

NP: Coming up through the system, knew everything.

BB: They did. They learned, and they--.

NP: Knew everybody.

BB: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

HF: So now we had some of those earlier employees who started with Lake Shippers when they were, what, 14, 15 years old?

BB: And he was one of them.

HF: Yeah. And in those days, Lake Shippers—I know in Winnipeg, anyway—we had a job, we called him the runner. The guy that would run around delivering warehouse receipts or that kind of stuff. And so, these young guys—14, 15—I guess they would get hired to be the runner for the company. When you think about it, it's quite an accomplishment for them. They probably didn't, obviously, if they started at 14, 15, they didn't have a university education or maybe not even a high school education, but eventually they were the managers of these companies, right?

**[0:35:46]**

NP: And that would be the regular story. That would be the usual.

BB: Yes.

NP: Unless you happened to be the son of the owner of a company. But many of them started out straight out of elementary school.

BB: That's right.

HF: And that was their education.

BB: It was education on the job.

NP: So who were some of the people in the industry, the ones who would be, I imagine, on your board? Is your board made up of the senior managers or owners of companies? Or is it someone designated from the company at maybe the administrative level, lower administrative level, that takes part in the board?

HF: Well, our board members all come from our member companies, and I don't know that they would all be senior. They'd be sort of senior, senior managers, that kind of stuff.



NP: So who were some of the old timers who would have been involved on your board from the various companies?

HF: Well, I think I saw you interviewed Bill Parrish Sr., right? He was on our board for many years. Another person you interviewed, Dave Champion, was on our board for quite a long time. Who were some of the other--? Eddie Gould.

BB: Eddie Gould.

HF: Way back from Cargill was on our board of directors.

BB: Kerry Hawkins.

HF: Kerry Hawkins. Went on to do pretty well, didn't he? (Laughing)

NP: [Laughing] Squeaked by! Anybody from McCabe's? That's going way back.

BB: You know, that was a time when I was just starting, so unless we go back in our minutes book, it's not something that--.

NP: Yeah. That's fresh in your memory. What do you mean you can't remember what happened back in '66? [Laughing] I remember I was married in '69, and that's about all I can remember. You mentioned the challenges of just every day, you can expect that not everything is going to go according to plan.

BB: No.

NP: Any other challenges beyond the day-to-day ones that strike you as having occurred over your careers? The computers, you also mentioned.

BB: No, nothing that really strikes out in my mind. You just came in in the morning, and whatever happened, you handled it and went onto the next day.

NP: Did you have any connection, then, with the shipments once they were loaded? That was sort of the end of your responsibilities?

BB: Once they were loaded, that was the end of our responsibility. I mean we heard about what happened to some things, but it was never our responsibility. Once it was aboard that ship, that was it. Ship cleared, and that was it.

HF: Other than producing bills of lading.

BB: That's right.

HF: Or some of the documentation at the end.

BB: Once it was loaded, yeah.

HF: Of course, the invoicing that came after, but no further involvement with the ship at that point, no.

NP: Before I forget to ask, I noticed the desk as I came in. What's its history? The desk or--.

BB: The ledger desk?

NP: I guess. I don't know. What's a--?

BB: Those were basically where all the stock sheets and everything else were done. Everybody stood at those and that's where the work was done all day.

**[0:40:04]**

NP: So they stood up all day?

BB: Mostly. They had tall stools or they stood at those desks.

NP: And what locations was Lake Shippers at?

BB: It started out in the Grain Exchange Building here, then we moved over to the Trizec Building for 25 years.

HF: It was right about 25 years, yeah.

BB: Then we moved back here.

NP: Hm. Back where you started from.

BB: Yes.

NP: I'm going to ask some sort of general questions that we ask everybody about--. Harv, you talked about how you worked with a jigsaw puzzle every day to get the ships and all of the pieces together, and I've referred to the grain industry as a big jigsaw puzzle. Every organization plays its part. So I'll ask a general question, and that is, "What do you think that the Lake Shippers, the Port Clearance Association, contributed to Canada's success as a grain trader?"

HF: Well, I think we were just, I would say, we were just one small link in the whole transportation chain. But I like to think that we contributed to helping the vessels load efficiently, which, in the end, port efficiency reduces costs, right, and makes a country more reliable as a grain source. So hopefully, I would say that we contributed to that in a small way.

NP: Do other countries have similar systems as far as you know? Or is that something you never checked out?

BB: We have never heard.

NP: Hm! Do you see any connection with what you do and the producers, the farmers? Or is it a--.

BB: I can't say we do, really, because we only handle the grain, basically, from the time it hits the port of Thunder Bay or Vancouver until it leaves the port. Basically, we're not involved in any of the rest of it.

NP: So other than the fact that the efficiency with the shipping also adds to money in the farmers' pocket--.

BB: Well, we certainly hope so.

NP: Connection with the railways, nothing there much either because of where your system kicks in?

HF: Right, yeah. Not really a whole lot of connection, although they get our daily ship vessel lists.

BB: Line-ups, yes.

HF: So they like to see what amount of vessels are coming in in the next two or three weeks, which helps them to direct their traffic, I suppose. I don't know how valuable our information is to them because there's so much information out there. But it gives them some small idea of the demand for the next short while. Direct contact, we don't really have direct contact with the railway. Very little.

NP: Although I suspect if they found it useless, you would have learned that a long time ago. So that's a question we have to ask them is what use they put it to. Canadian Grain Commission [CGC], any connection there?

HF: Well, our computer system that we have now that tracks the inventory of the grain, basically all the source data comes from the Grain Commission. So it's certainly a connection, and we work with the Grain Commission every day. When vessels finish loading, we send them our report of, "Here's the grain that went aboard the vessel," and then they confirm that because they're doing--. They have their own testing. They test the grades, and they have their own weights. So we're comparing, sort of, our information with their information when the vessel is completed loading just to confirm that everybody's got the same information.

NP: And I would assume, too, that they need to know what's loading where because they have to inspect.

HF: Right. I know they often, I think, they call our offices. They sort of want to know where the vessels are going to be the next day or next shift so they can know they have people to look after the loading there.

**[0:45:09]**

BB: Basically, it's the grain elevators that have the inspectors there, and they're the ones that are responsible for making sure there's a CGC personnel there to inspect the grain when it's being loaded.

NP: Yeah. It's this web of information passing back and forth that's developed over 100 years.

BB: Mmhmm.

HF: Yeah. I often use the analogy that we're like a wheel with all these spokes, and we're a hub for information because there's a lot of information coming into our association every day and going back out. So it has become a bit of a hub for information.

NP: You mentioned earlier on that you would be in touch, especially when there were issues, with the ship's agents or the ships. When do you know whether you contact a ship's agent or make direct contact with ships? Is there one situation versus another?

BB: Well, I guess, if we haven't heard from a ship's agent that a vessel's coming in or we haven't been able to get a hold of anybody, our Thunder Bay office will sometimes contact the ship. Or if it's after office hours, it's directly to the ship.

NP: So what kind of list do you keep? You have lists of agents, obviously. You have a list of every captain on the high seas? [Laughing]

BB: No, not necessarily, but our Thunder Bay office probably has a better handle on the captains on the vessels. Basically, every grain ship coming into Thunder Bay is supposed to notify our office in Thunder Bay that they're coming in. And they'll ask for orders and what elevator they should proceed to. They'll get their information there.

NP: And what's your preference for when they should tell you this. Like, "Oh, we'll be there in an hour."

BB: Well, no. We'd like to know when they hit the Welcomes [*islands*]. [Laughing] No, basically, a couple of days' notice would be great. Sometimes it's more, sometimes it's less. It just depends on the--. It's not something we can pinpoint.

NP: Yeah. But the sooner you can get that information, obviously, the better.

BB: Absolutely.

NP: But a certain amount of--. Sometimes it's too soon because things change as they make their way through the system.

BB: Things change every hour. We sometimes don't know.

HF: That's another one of the changes in the technology because it used to be difficult to contact a ship. Now, the ships all have cell phones.

BB: Satellite phones.

HF: Satellite phones, all kinds of stuff.

BB: E-mails.

HF: E-mails probably, yeah, that's right. Where they used to never be able to contact the ship directly, the ships were often conveying--. Yeah, I guess there was information going to their offices, and then we'd get it from them, but now it's coming directly from the ship quite often. So that's kind of interesting. Roy in our Thunder Bay office still has a, I don't know, it's like a ship-to-shore radio, like a CB-Radio sort of, but where he can actually talk to the ships when they're in the port. But it's something that's become somewhat less valuable because captains and all these people, they all have cell phones now and have those. But often, that was the only time you could actually contact the ship, but once they got close enough that he could talk on his ship-to-shore radio--

BB: So communication is a big change.

MM: Do you use GPS to track ships? Is that--.

HF: I think there are some websites where you can track ships using GPS. I think Roy has some places he can go to find out where the ship locations are and stuff like that.

NP: And the Roy you refer to is? For historical purposes.

HF: Roy Ward, our Thunder Bay office. Yeah.

NP: Has he been there as long as you've been here? Have you worked your way through any other people? [Laughs]

HF: Yeah, Roy's been--.

BB: He's been here two months less than I have.

**[0:50:04]**

NP: Ah.

HF: Yeah.

NP: Okay. You mentioned early on about a connection with the Wheat Board.

BB: Yes.

NP: So tell us a little bit about that.

HF: Well, I guess, the Wheat Board has always been one of the largest shippers in the port, right? I mean, they had all the wheat and durum was under their control, so that was always a large part of the shipping in the port. So we've always worked very close with them, and of course, their grain has mostly been pooled also. So they would tell us, "Here's what we want loaded on the ship." And we would go load it at whatever elevator was convenient for the day or appropriate. So the Wheat Board has always been a very close part of our association.

NP: And the paperwork that flowed back and forth?

BB: Was basically the same as flowed with any other shipper. They just happened to be the biggest shipper.

NP: Any connection with the actual purchasers, the owners of the grain once it left the elevator? On it went, and you were happy?

HF: Yeah. That was about it. Yeah.

BB: Yeah. It was basically not our responsibility. Our responsibility was to get the grain ordered onto the ship.

NP: It seems to me that one of the changes would have been, over time, there was quite a big Canadian fleet.

BB: Yes, there was.

NP: Right. And there were lakers and canallers.

BB: That's right.

NP: And then came the ocean-going ones. Did that make any difference in your system? When the players were no longer mostly Canadian players, but you had far more worldwide ownership of ships and so on?

BB: Well, basically, dealing out of Thunder Bay, it was a transfer. They were transfer houses. So yes, we do have foreign vessels coming up, but a lot of the foreign vessels load the export ports in the river. So all we're doing is transferring them. Now, there's fewer ships. They're larger ships.

NP: Would that make life easier for you?

BB: Some days. Some days not. A canaller, you can put specific grades on or whatever, or a smaller ship you can put specialty crops on, where it's harder to put them on a large vessel.

NP: Why is that?

BB: They're just, you know, the quantities.

NP: So a canaller you might be able to load it at one elevator--.

BB: Well, a smaller vessel.

NP: Whereas with the--.

BB: Yes. Yeah.

NP: Large ships you might have to send them around to various elevators.

BB: It's about the size of it, yeah.

NP: It is about the size of it.

BB: Absolutely.

HF: It's something we even see today with being involved in Vancouver and Thunder Bay. Thunder Bay, because of the size of the locks, the ships will load maximum about 27,000 tonnes, right? And in Vancouver, they're loading ships quite often in the 70,000 tonnes. So even from the whole port logistics and having the grain in place to load a 70,000-tonne vessel is a big difference from having grain in place to load a 25,000-tonne vessel. So it's three times as big a vessel, so you think, "Oh, more efficient," but it still



means it takes a lot more coordination then to have the grain in place to load that large ship. And it takes up a lot higher percentage of the elevator's storage space then to get ready to load that ship. So it's certainly the size of the ship that's changed things a lot.

NP: What brought about the combining of the two organizations, the Lake Shippers and the--. What was the name of the--?

HF: British Columbia Grain Shippers Clearance Association.

NP: Were they managed by pretty much the same people at the time? I mean, not on the--.

**[0:55:03]**

BB: Not managed, but basically--.

NP: The board, on the boards, were they the same actors?

HF: The same companies, by and large, were in both places. I think it seemed as a way of creating more efficiency, basically. Because their organization started in 1964, but they had help from Lake Shippers people of that era helping them to get started, and so they were supposed to be somewhat of a clone of Lake Shippers. So there was a board of directors' initiative to amalgamate the two associations. I think a large contributor to it was the fact of—something we talked about earlier—was our computerization, and it had been relatively successful. I think their organization had some problems with automation and really hadn't come up with good processes. So for computer systems, if you have a system that's working well, to double it by doing another port, it was virtually no issue at all. I think that was one thing that really led to it quite a bit was the fact that we had computerized quite successfully and had those processes in place.

NP: Did it require any changes in what your two jobs were, the amalgamation?

[Woman]: Bev?

HF: Well--.

BB: Excuse me.

HF: I guess Bev's less than mine. I mean, she was still working with the Thunder Bay end of it. And it was quite a challenge for me at the time because it was happening virtually when I took over as executive director also. It was also a tough time at the time because our Winnipeg boss at that time died of cancer and created, you know, a hole in our management basically. So I was fortunate enough to fill that role and then at the same time work on amalgamating the two associations.

NP: Who was your predecessor?

HF: Richie MacDonald. He was the general manager at that time. So when he passed away, that was 1998, and it was exactly when we were starting to—there were talks going on—to combine the two organizations. So it was a difficult time, basically, in a lot of respects.

NP: We talk about difficult times. I don't know how much you want to say about what's happening now. In August of this year, is that still the plan, that the office will be closing?

HF: Yeah, that is the plan, that as of August 31, our association will basically be wound up and cease to exist.

NP: What led to that do you think? Or do you know? What circumstances changed that--.

HF: I guess the reason, to a large extent, given anyway was that because—as I said earlier—we're so closely tied to the Canadian Wheat Board [CWB], and with them losing their monopoly, that sort of changed the whole industry. Even with the Wheat Board going forward, the Wheat Board grain, anything they do will be very closely tied with contracts they have with individual terminals. So that whole pooling of grain and us just picking it out as we need it is probably a thing of the past. So I think, to a large extent, it was the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly change that was the thing that somewhat led to our demise, so to speak.

NP: Hm. As an outsider, I think, well, that work of coordination still needs to be done. So how will that continue to be done without the Clearance Association doing it?

**[1:00:13]**

HF: Yeah. I can't comment on that. We have no idea what's going to happen--.

BB: No idea.

HF: Beyond our existence.

NP: So--. Hm. Interesting. Have you noticed that that's a word that people use a lot related to the grain industry these days?  
[Laughs] That the future will be--.

HF: Interesting and unknown, yeah.

BB: Interesting. I use it an awful lot.

NP: So as of August 31<sup>st</sup>, then, as far as you know--.

BB: There is nobody coordinating.

NP: There's nobody coordinating. How many months is that from now?

HF: About five months or less.

NP: Five months. Hm.

HF: And I know we get, almost daily, we get somebody calling saying, "Well, what's going to happen after you're gone?" We don't know. Some of these are people that are involved in the ports, and so sometimes you would think, "Well, you'd think you would know." But they don't seem to know either. So it could be--.

NP: Who knows? Like who does know?

BB: It will be very interesting. [Laughing]

NP: Oh, can we quote you on that?

BB: That one you can quote me on. [Laughing] That's something that we just--.

NP: Yeah. And I know it's not really fair to say to you. Don't you think somebody would think—somebody somewhere would think—chaos is not a good idea?

BB: Well, you know, we have absolutely no idea what is in anybody's mind, in shippers' minds, in terminal elevators' minds. Does everybody think that they can handle it on their own? We don't know. We don't know.

HF: But it will be a changing environment.

BB: That's right.

HF: And often now, a vessel would come into the port, and we would decide where it was going to load. But the new environment will dictate that every vessel that's coming in the port, it will already be pre-determined where it's loading. So then you could probably make the argument that you don't need coordinators like ourselves there because of all the, you know, each elevator will have commercial agreements with everybody that's loading grain at their elevators. So every vessel coming into the port, if it's pre-determined where it's going to load, maybe they don't need us at all or as much as they used to. Obviously, we won't be there to find out. [Laughing]

NP: Well, and you think over the last ten years, I guess, there has been such a consolidation of the industry—certainly in Thunder Bay—where now--. How many elevators were loading when you started, Bev?

BB: Oh, God. I don't even have a number in my mind because--.

NP: Over 20, probably.

BB: Yeah.

NP: And so now we're down to--?

BB: Huh! [Laughs]

HF: About half a dozen?

BB: Half a dozen, yeah.

NP: About half a dozen, and then if the deal with Viterra and whatever entity is purchasing them, then you're down to four maybe.

HF: Well, that will bring one elevator back to life, won't it?

BB: Yes.

HF: Apparently. [Laughing] This is hearsay, right? This is hearsay. [Laughs]

NP: This is hearsay. I've heard the hearsay, yeah. Theoretically. Maybe. But it will be interesting, as you said.

BB: Absolutely. Absolutely, it's an interesting time.

NP: Let me just check my questions here. I think there's questions here about challenges and changes, and throughout our conversation, we've dealt with those. Any—even though we've talked about challenges and changes—are there any incidents that remain vivid in your mind? One, Harv, you mentioned, was when you were told to go buy the cigarettes and you just didn't say no. But are there certain things that say, "Yeah, that was a really vivid memory for me"? Are there any that come to your mind? Stories or incidents that--.

**[1:05:15]**

HF: Probably one that Bev would agree with—and she probably would have experience a few more than I did—when I first started, we had the annual Christmas party at the Fort Gary Hotel with staff, spouses, board of directors would attend, maybe managers from Thunder Bay would attend with their wives. It was kind of an annual event. It was kind of, well, again, I was just a young kid off the farm. It was intimidating too, of course. The Fort Gary Hotel, the grand ambiance and everything, it was kind of cool when I think back about that.

BB: It was.

HF: You agree with that?

BB: Yeah, it was. It was.

NP: Did you ever go to Thunder Bay? Did you ever visit elevators?

BB: Yes.

NP: Any thoughts about your first visit to a terminal elevator?

BB: I found working here and hearing about the elevators was interesting, but actually seeing them working was very, very interesting. Seeing all the dust and how the grain was being poured onto the ships, that was interesting. And learning how it was binned and unloaded was also interesting. The difference between hopper cars being unloaded and boxcars. That was interesting.

NP: They were quite different, weren't they?

BB: Very much so.

NP: You sort of wonder, "Why did it take them so long to invent hopper cars?"

BB: That's exactly right. [Laughing] So that was interesting to see.

NP: Were you surprised at the size at all?

BB: Of the--?

NP: Elevators.

BB: Yes, I was, actually. Excuse me.

HF: I know myself, too, coming off the farm and getting out to the port and seeing an actual grain elevator was very interesting. And getting a tour, walking through it, and that kind of stuff. Like Bev said, the dust and everything, it always reminded me, yeah, that's why I didn't want to be a farmer in the first place. [Laughs] All that dirty dust and everything, that was something that never agreed with me, right? So it was nice to be able to tour an elevator and say, "Okay, now I've seen this. I've done that, but I like my nice clean office." [Laughs]

NP: Yes, yes.

HF: But it is nice to make the connection between--. Everything here's just office--papers, numbers, and everything--and make the connection between what really happens at the port. So it certainly is valuable to go see that kind of thing.

NP: I often tell the story that my father was a grain inspector, and my connection with the actual grain was I used to iron his pants in the time they had cuffs, and there'd be grain in the cuffs. So then we moved to Winnipeg for university, and then a lot of my friends were people who either were on farms or, like you, came off the farms. I learned so much about where those little bits of grain came from. A lot of people don't know the system the way people like you, who are in the system, see both sides. Because you talk to a lot of farmers, certainly, from back, Mary, when you were on the farm, and they wouldn't know much about what happened once they delivered the grain to the Prairie elevators.

HF: I know we used to have, for the non-grain people that would start working with the company, we would have a little sheet or the sample page. There'd be a little bubble of canola or wheat or oats because, you know, a city kid starting off at an office job here wouldn't even have a clue what grain looked like or the difference between flax and canola or wheat and barley, right? So I don't know if we have any in the office anymore, but we used to have these little charts, and I think the Wheat Board might have given them out.

NP: Did they really have to know?

HF: No, not really.

NP: It just was enriching to them to--.

HF: Well, exactly. And even if you, say, Bev's position now where you talk about problems with loading a vessel, well, sometimes problems arise with, say, canola because it's so easy to shift. So you can't have a hold that's--. You have to fill the hold with canola because otherwise it would be a danger to ship. Because if it shifts a little bit, the canola's going to move, right. Whereas wheat wouldn't do that as quickly. So even just some of this basic knowledge, it helps you somewhere down the road when you're working with everyday problems in the industry.

**[1:10:31]**

NP: Did that mean, then, that you had to do some thinking about the actual ship that took the load, or just the actual fact that it had to be filled to a certain level?

HF: Yeah. I mean, it was just sort of general information that made our jobs easier if you had some of this understanding and knowledge. I mean, you would gain that by working here, but sometimes that was the visual thing to look at these little canolas, these little balls, versus wheat which has a totally different shape, right?

NP: Mmhhh. And a bit of knowledge that grain trimmers actually had a function.

HF: Right, right. Yeah.

NP: Yeah. When you look back on your career, what brings you the most pride? Or satisfaction, if pride doesn't strike you as a good term.

HF: Well, I can look back my 37 years, and because it's my career in the industry, I guess, I don't know where I'm going to be in eight months or a year from now. So this could be the end of my career in the industry. I look back with pride also because I was someone who started at an entry-level position and worked my way through the company and became the executive director. So in some respects, like old school where they started at 14 or 15—I didn't quite start that young—but still, I take pride in the fact that this is still my first job I ever had after school, and I think I've thoroughly enjoyed my time at Lake Shippers and Canadian Ports. It's been a great place to work, and it's been a great career.

NP: Didn't--. Actually, we skipped over that. So you started at the entry-level, so what positions did you hold up to your present one?

HF: Sort of my first entry-level was doing the stocks, the inventory, the stock sheets, and all that kind of stuff, entering unloads or deposits. So you had to manually enter them into the stock books, and shipments were withdrawals, basically, from the inventory. So that was my first entry job. Even then at that time, we had—as we talked about earlier—we had someone who was the runner in the office out delivering, but when you're sort of one of the juniors, even though that wasn't your job, if that person phoned in sick, well, then I was the runner that day. I did various jobs. I think next I may have been the accounting or bookkeeping person.

After that I moved a little closer to vessels. I don't know if I was actually the teletype operator, but I did that quite a bit. From there I moved to what was called the boat desk, where it was actually working with getting the orders for the vessels that were coming in, that kind of stuff, and coordinating that with Thunder Bay. After that, I think, it was office manager, and then executive director after that. So I think I covered most parts of the office. I think at that time, Bev, you were in the department there doing invoicing and stuff like that, storage and all that kind of stuff. I don't think I ever spent a whole lot of time there other than some training time



so that I would understand what was going on back there. [Laughing] I was never too good on those comptometers. I think I got moved out of there pretty quickly. [Laughing]

NP: The question I was asking Harv was looking back on his career, what was he most proud of. So I'm asking you the same question, Bev.

BB: And you know, basically, my answer is about the same as Harv's.

NP: Which is?

BB: I basically started out of school and worked my way up and have spent 45 good years here. I've enjoyed the challenges. I've enjoyed the learning process.

**[1:15:23]**

NP: So the positions that you held, you had your--.

BB: I started as the comptometer operator. Then I managed that department, which was at that point called the Manifest Department. From there, basically, I became the office manager in that period of time, and from that to the assistant manager. And after it was deemed that we were really kind of top-heavy in management as we were reducing staff, then I became basically the coordinator for the grain, vessel loadings. And since then, I'm shipping and administrative coordinator.

NP: Now you were a rare bird in that you were a woman in what is almost exclusively a male dominated industry. Did you find that worked for or against you, or a little bit of both?

BB: I think a little bit of both, you could say. Until you established that you knew what you were doing, you were looked upon as kind of--. Yeah. But after that, I think I proved that I knew what I was doing, and I was totally accepted, I felt, anyway.

NP: Mary, are there some questions that you have on your list before I just ask a general question?

MM: Not really. You've covered some of the things that I was thinking about.

NP: Okay. Good. We're hoping—whether it will ever happen or not—to establish a centre in Thunder Bay, a historic centre, related to the grain trade and the international grade trade, meaning the shipment from the Prairie elevators through the elevators on the coasts or at the Lakehead and out to export markets. If we were ever to have that come into being, what part of the history of your organization do you think would be important for us to tell the story of? I mean that's a rich history, 103 years.

BB: That's a hard question. I mean, basically, we were established for a purpose, and we'd like to think that we accomplished what was originally set up for us to do.

HF: Yeah, I think so too, that during our what's going to be 103 years of existence, that we did provide a small piece to the transportation chain and helped the grain flow efficiently and smoothly through the port. Hopefully we'll be remembered as such.

NP: I wonder—and I don't know if you know—but it would be very interesting to know how the ships' captains thought about coming into a Canadian port relative to coming into other ports, as far as, you know, was life hell when they got there? [Laughs] Or did things go smoothly?

**[1:20:08]**

BB: Well, then you're looking at our opinion, and our opinion is it went very smoothly. [Laughing] Well, you know, it's just--.

NP: I think you would have heard over the years if they hadn't.

BB: Absolutely.

MM: And you would have changed had there been sufficient criticism of your work.

BB: That's right.

HF: But I think it helped to make it easier for the captains because all they needed that one central contact.

BB: That's right.

HF: No matter where in the port they were loading, all they did was contact our office and that's where they got their instructions from. So I think it made it easier for them, in my opinion.

BB: They were getting instructions from one place instead of ten.

HF: Yeah.

NP: Well, thank you very much. This has put one other puzzle piece into our puzzle. I really appreciate that we had the chance to talk to both of you. I think you should be on standby. [Laughing] So thanks very much.

MM: Do you have any comments on areas that we didn't cover?

BB: No, I think you've covered everything, and hopefully we've answered your questions.

NP: I don't know, Bev. I think I want those stories. [Laughing] Thank you very much.

**End of audio part one.**

### Audio Part Two

Time, Speaker, Narrative
NP: As long as our power's on.
BB: Just a second. Just a second. How do you--?
HF: Something like three--. Does it still work? [Dinging sound] Okay.
BB: Because this was--. It was in bushels and stuff, so it was just very difficult to convert it. But it was basically, you take a number and--.
NP: Can you get it from your angle?
BB: And if you were multiplying by ten or by 12 it was twice, and then once over.

NP: This, I don't know, you say it was really easy, but it's not really easy. [Laughing]

BB: It was! No, it was. It really was.

HF: You just needed a concept of numbers, really.

BB: Yeah. [Pressing buttons] And it was just moving, you know?

NP: And was there a piece of paper that came out of there?

BB: No.

HF: No. No, it was just--.

BB: It was just your printout right here.

NP: Oh!

HF: That's your answer down below.

NP: Oh. Oh, that's neat. So you're taking this away with you, I hope.

BB: [Pressing buttons] See, this one, so you're adding.

MM: And so, your answer is here, and you transfer it pen and paper to what you've got?

BB: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, everything was pen and paper.

HF: Actually, I think when we moved back from the Trizec Building to this building--.

MM: Mary, I'll take that, and I'll just take a closer picture of the--.

HF: I think this this was going to go to the trash, and I didn't have the heart to, so I took it home. And then, when we were doing our 100-year anniversary a few years ago, we were thinking about all the stuff we could put on display, so I brought it back in the office.

BB: Yeah.

HF: Because it was sitting in my garage for a few years because I just didn't have the heart to throw it out, right?

BB: I think I had one that was just a little bit newer than this.

HF: You mean one at home?

BB: No.

HF: No.

BB: We got rid of them.

NP: I'm just going to move your little hips over there and just take a picture of the name of it.

BB: But that was our adding machine.

HF: It's got a plate on it here. Is it up here? "Copyright 1913," I think it is. The top one here.

NP: Did I just wreck it?

BB: No, no.

NP: [Laughing] Just destroyed your artifact!

BB: See, we used to have--.

NP: See if I can--. There's probably a close-up thing here. I did take a course on this, you know, but--. [Laughing]

BB: It's portrait or--?

NP: Yeah. One would think so, eh?

MM: So meter is its root word here. Computation-meter. It's a computation-meter.

HF: Yeah, so we could use it to add or multiply and--.

MM: I guess one of the points I was wanting to comment on off the record is that I've done a lot of work through my career with non-profit organizations, and I think you should be very proud of the fact that you are recognizing that perhaps the landscape has changed, that you're folding your tent in a gracious--. You know, you're not going out kicking and screaming. You're--.

BB: It's just a fact of life.

MM: Yes. You're convinced that what you've done is good, and you're proud of it, and I think that is just a really important thing to record.

NP: What is this thing? You're quite right, Mary.

HF: That would be a--.

NP: A weather forecaster.

HF: A weather forecaster. Your early version of a barometer, I believe, it is.

NP: Hm!

HF: Because it would--.

MM: That thing would go up and down with the atmospheric pressure.

NP: Oh, yeah. And report it on there.

HF: I don't know if it was still used when I started, but apparently, you know, the junior in the office would have to come in in the morning and change the paper and put ink on the end.

NP: Why would they do this?

HF: And then you would see, you know, if the weather's changing, whether it was going to snow tomorrow or rain or whatever.

NP: Oh, Lake--. I like this. This is something we need for our display. [Laughs] We're doing a display at the new waterfront building in Thunder Bay, and--.

HF: This is Lake Ship's, so I don't know where this--. It must be fairly old.

NP: Yeah. We could find out where it came from. Oh, maybe they'd have one in the Thunder Bay office.

HF: Comparative sizes of Great Lakes vessels.

NP: This is exactly what we need.

HF: Copyright 19—What does it say down here?

NP: 1980, so it's not that old.

**End of interview.**