

Narrator: Jack Gurney (JG)

Narrator: Norma Gurney (NG)

Company Affiliations: J.P. Porter, *Welcome* Ship

Interview Date: 16 October 2012

Interviewer: Nancy Perozzo (NP)

Recorder: Nancy Perozzo (NP)

Transcriber: Jake Alfieri

Summary: In their second interview, Captain Jack Gurney and his wife Norma discuss their operation of the *Welcome* Ship in the Thunder Bay harbour. Jack begins by expanding on some of the duties of his dredging company, J. P. Porter, like assisting the rock layer on the construction of the break wall. The Gurneys then follow the route of the *Welcome*, and they share stories of each of the grain elevators on the waterfront. They discuss the collapse of UGG A, the Pool 4A and B explosions, the colourful paint job at Richardson Elevator, the steam engine saved from the Empire Elevator, among other stories. They also describe the tugboat graveyard, the demolition of the CPR elevators, the railway's hump yard for switching grain cars, and Mile Zero of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Gurneys end the interview by discussing their successful challenge of a causeway construction project that threatened their access to the Kaministiquia river, their eventual sale of the *Welcome*, and some changes to the grain industry that they saw while out on the water.

Keywords: *Welcome* Ship; J. P. Porter; Dredges; Dredging; Terminal grain elevators—Thunder Bay; Grain transportation—ships; Grain transportation—rail; Grain elevator disasters; Grain elevator explosions; UGG A collapse; Pool 4A explosion; Pool 4B explosion; Dust control; Tugboats; Grain elevator demolitions; CPR hump yard; St. Lawrence Seaway; UGG A; SWP Pool 4A & B; Richardson Main Elevator; MPE Pool 2; SWP Pool 6; MPE Pool 3; Canada Malting; SWP Pool 7A & B; UGG M; MPE Pool 1; Empire Elevator; Gillespie Elevator; CPR elevators; SWP Pool 8; CPR Elevator D; Fort William Elevator F; Consolidated Elevator; Searle Elevator; Cargill Elevator; Paterson Elevator; Northwestern Elevator; Electric Elevator

Time, Speaker, Narrative

NP: We are set up for interview number two with Norma and Jack Gurney, and it is October 16th. I am, once again, set up in their very comfortable home. We are going to continue the interview from October 4th. That interview, we dealt a lot with the importance of dredging and how it contributed to keeping especially the Fort William elevators operating. We didn't cover a whole lot of other things that Jack was involved in that had connections to the grain industry. So I think, just very briefly, he mentioned the construction of the breakwaters when he was talking about the uses of dredges. Jack, I'm just going to ask you to comment a bit about Thunder Bay's breakwater. You can say whatever you like, but if you just perhaps start by saying what kind of connection they have with the grain industry.

JG: Well, that there was no breakwall, the seas would run right off the lake into the elevator slips, and the ships would not be able to get in and out, or they'd bounce around and be damaged, so they'd have to be going to the shipyards all the time, which would be good for the shipyards, of course. But they built the breakwall. It's nine and a half miles long with three openings: The one by the Kam River, the south entrance, and then the north entrance, and the rest of the wall was just finished at a slope for the airplanes, where the airplanes landed in the harbour.

NP: The float planes, near the ship--.

JG: Yes, near the shipyard.

NP: Now when I look at them, at least before I listened to what you had to say when you were Welcome Ship Tour, to me they just look like haphazard string of rubble.

JG: That's correct.

NP: That's all they are?

JG: No it isn't. [Laughs] We had a rock layer named Joe—I can't remember his last name—little, tiny guy, and the dredge operator. There were three operators on three ships, and during the day, Joe Paxton, he was dredge captain. He would load the flat-top scows, and the scows would be taken to Squaw Bay, the rock was blasted out of the mountain on Squaw Bay, and then it was drilled with three holes on each rock, and the dredge had--.

NP: Sort of a hook? A bucket?

JG: No, not a hook. It was three--.

NP: Okay, let's--.

JG: Yes, knock out the settary.

NP: Okay.

JG: It was three claws, and it would pick up each individual rock, and Joe, the rock layer, would look at the rockpile wherever he was working—but we'll say from the lighthouse to the south entrance, the Kam River entrance—and he would lay these rocks. He would judge with his eye the size of the rock and the shape of the rock, and then he would place it on the breakwall. It was quite a--. Yes it was called a hammerstone, that's right. And they'd place the hammerstone for Joe, and the dredge would pick up each individual rock, turn it spin it to suit Joe, and he would drop them on the breakwall.

NP: He was like a mason, almost, but building underwater.

JG: Almost, yes. Building, yes. And the breakwall, by the way, it was 40 feet deep on the lakeside, and the harbour side was dredged to 27 feet, except one section between the lighthouse and the north entrance. That was sloped. The north entrance ran right to the mill, and it was all rock laid by--. Oh yes, and underneath the rock was cribbing. Massive cribbing. It was made of B.C. fir, 12-by-12, and they were squared. The cribbing was put down first, the rocking was put into it, and on both sides.

NP: Now was all this done--. The cribbing, it's underwater. How did they know what was going on underwater?

JG: The cribbing made of B.C. fir—B.C. fir sinks, it doesn't float. So they would sink the B.C. fir and place the rock inside with the dredge, and simple as that.

NP: Just drop it in.

JG: Just drop it in. The cribbing was right at the 37-foot level—no it was 27 first, 27-foot level—from then they just added more rock and more rock. Well, I was just going to say, Mission wall, that's the wall from--. It's concrete, poured concrete. That was done a couple years later. They poured the concrete with a shelf on it. It was sloped on the inside and a shelf you could walk on, on the outside.

NP: Is that the one near Chippewa?

JG: Yes, that's the one near Chippewa. It runs to the lighthouse. It's rock, and then it tapers off to nothing.

NP: My understanding, reading some of the early history of the harbour, is that that breakwall went back a number of years.

JG: Yes, it did. First, there was a breakwall. The first breakwall that was built was built before Bill Lishness ran our company. It was done—I think, I'm only guessing now—I think it was done by McNamara Dredging. The first breakwall, I'm not sure. Then part of it was done by that French outfit. It's gone. Anyway, it was built in pieces and chunks and whatever.

NP: I had people at, I think it was Mission terminal, although I'm not quite certain, had this old photo album of dredging on the Kam and—like it was way back, it was when they were dredging the turning basin—and I think it might've been the McNamara company that did that. They called the fellow who headed it up, they called him Captain Dredge, but they never stated what his name was, but it was the early 1900s when--.

JG: Oh goodness sake, yes it was.

NP: When they were operating. When you were working on it, were they just extending it? Or were they repairing it?

JG: You mean the Mission wall?

NP: No, the main breakwater.

JG: No, they were repairing it. The original one had sunk, and they put all the new rock in.

NP: Would there be any difficulty now, going and blasting the mountain and taking the rock out?

JG: Well Caput (sp?) did it for us. He owned a big area of rock, he had in there—and it was Caput, I remember his name—and he would sell the rock to the city. They in turn would pay us for bringing it over.

NG: Squaw Bay.

JG: Squaw Bay, that's where it came from.

NP: As I mentioned to you, I found it fascinating listening to your stories as you were taking your Welcome Ship Tours, and just so we have it on record here in case somebody's listening to this, we did make copies of your commentary, and it'll be part of our collection so they can track it down.

JG: Oh good, that's very good.

NP: You mentioned several times the elevators as you were talking to people, and I was interested about a few things. First of all, were there certain elevators that were your favourites to talk about? Or were they an elevator is an elevator as far as you were concerned?

JG: They were pretty well an elevator was just an elevator, except I especially liked the three elevators that were up the river on Gore Street, opposite Gore Street. That's where the railway tracks run, and they had special grains, and that's where these two little vessels came in—the *Starbuck* and the *Starbell*. They loaded special grains. That fellow was still operating when I was running a Welcome Ship, he was still--. He's probably--. Well no, he'd be dead.

NP: Mr. Mailhot?

JG: Yes, I'm sure that's his name.

NP: His son is now operating. The only one that's operating.

JG: The only one. Okay, there's only one left, eh?

NP: That's operating. We were talking before we went on tape about what the names of those elevators were, and one was called the Consolidated. They had changed named probably when you were doing the tours because I think by then Saskatchewan Wheat Pool might have owned--. But to go way back, the Consolidated would've been the first one as you were coming up towards the fort. The second one would have been what is now Western By-products, the specialty grain--.

JG: That's it! Western By-products. They're still running?

NP: Yes.

JG: Oh good.

NP: And the third one was Western Grain.

JG: Western Grain, that's right, yes. And the two in the turning basin.

NP: Yes, those were long gone before I came back to Thunder Bay. What do you remember about them? Anything?

JG: Yes, I do. I remember they were loaded, I would say 90 percent of the time, by the whalebacks, owned by the guy in Superior. Well, Meteor is one of them. It's in Superior on display. They were rounded ships like a whale. They had a snout nose, and they would come into the turning basin by the Great Lakes—or by whatever you call it now—and they would run their bow right up into the mud, then back off fast, and turn and go out the basin and reload. They did that steady.

NP: They did their little bit for dredging.

JG: Well, yeah, a little bit. Very little. [Laughing] By the way, when you talk about dredging, when we were dredging the turning basin years ago—not too many years ago—the Great Lakes Paper Mill used to dump their waste. We would load a scow, and by the time we got out to the dump on a hot day, it had turned to newspaper. It would be flipping around all over the scows and the scowman, Mike, he used to hate it! He used to hate them. And the scow, by the way, was 220 feet long.

NP: So let me see if this is correct. They would be dredging, and what they pulled up would then dry out.

JG: Well, no, no. It's put in the scows wet, it's all wet.

NP: How does it turn to newspaper?

JG: By the time they get it out on a hot sunny day—say it's 80 and above—by the time they got to the dump the newspaper would dry and it would turn into sheets and fly all over the place. Tug came back filthy. Weird.

NP: Now those elevators you mentioned, the ones that are down there--. Oh I know, before we go to that, someone had told me that some boats, as the boats got bigger and there were still elevators along the Kam, that they had to back the boats up the Kam.

JG: That's right. I used my son's tugs, turn them in the turning basin right by the Jackknife Bridge—they'd come up the Misson River because the Jackknife was closed at that time—and my son's tugs would turn them in the turning basin and back them up to the elevators.

NP: And then they'd have to back out?

JG: No once they're facing out. They just start the way they go, they don't need to tug that.

NP: A bit of a challenge.

JG: No, not really.

NP: No? Not when you know what you're doing?

JG: Not when you know what you're doing. Most, at that time, there were very seldom ships with bow thrusters. You've heard of bow thrusters? A bow thruster is a variable-pitch propeller in the bow of the ship, with a hole there of course, and they would use the bow thruster to--. If you want to go to port, you know, you turn the bow thruster on that side, makes you go to port. Starboard, same thing. Now, even with the bow thrusters, any deep-sea ship coming in has to have the tug help them, that's government regulations. Unless you've been on the lake—what did Dave say?—12, 14 years as a pilot, then you don't need a tug to come in.

NP: They figure you can do it on your own because you're familiar with the waters.

JG: That's right.

NP: I don't know which way you'd feel more comfortable going, downstream into the lake and back over to the Port Arthur north end, or whether you'd like to start at the Port Arthur north end and come back to the Electric Elevators? I'm just going to mention the name of the elevators and maybe it might raise some thoughts in your mind about the elevators. And Norma, feel free to chime in if there's some stories that you remember that relate. This is a challenge to my memory to put them all in order. The first one, after you've left the shipyards, was an UGG Elevator.

JG: United Grain Growers. That's correct.

NP: Anything that you recall about that elevator?

JG: It collapsed and fell in the water.

NP: Minor point.

JG: [Laughs] And flattened the--.

NG: Pump house.

JG: The pump house at the shipyard. I used to say that backwards sometimes. I used to say the shit house at the pumpyard.

NP: [Laughs] And you probably did that on purpose. I'm getting to know you now.

JG: I did not, it was the damn skipper with me, Dennis! He was always saying, "You're going to say that wrong you know. You're going to say it wrong."

NP: And you did.

JG: And I did. Of course. And then there was Pool 4, you knew that one blew apart.

NP: Norma wants to add something about UGG.

NG: About the writings from the deep-sea sailors were on the UGG.

JG: Oh yes. Because it faced out, yes. When the ships came in, the deep-sea sailors always would write graffiti, lots of graffiti. [Inaudible] Or else they would write, "I miss my wife and three kids. I'm from Arabia." And then it would be written in Arabian underneath. It was neat. They'd have stuff like--. Well, some of it's too colourful to mention but it was there.

NG: It was there.

JG: It was all there.

NP: Is it still there, now?

NG: I think so. I think you'd probably see it.

JG: It would be faded, I would imagine, but you could.

NP: Kind of like hieroglyphics.

JG: You could ask Stan and--.

NP: Gary.

JG: Gary about that.

NG: Dawson, to see that.

JG: Yes. They may--. Well I know Stan would remember. He's older of the two. Five or six years older. And his mum and dad, the Dawsons, they had a bumboat—it's called a bumboat, it's now called the *Rosalee D*—and he would have sailors' mitts, sailors' overalls, everything for sailor—gloves, boots—and he would visit every ship and see if they needed anything from the boat. The skipper would allow the crew to come down on the boat, look around, buy something, then go back up. Of course, some were on duty, and they would say to their buddy, "Get me a pair of size 12 boots, knee high," you know, that kind of stuff. Or a raincoat or whatever.

NG: And then one of the next elevators would be the Richardson one.

NP: Oh, you're jumping over us here.

NG: Oh, okay.

NP: We've got a few elevators before that.

JG: Yes, we got a few.

NP: [Laughs] I'm thinking about the elevator and looking at it from the lake, so where would they be writing? Would they be writing on the bins?

JG: Yes, some would go up on the bins because they would have ladders to get on the boat, they just stick them over, but most of them was--.

NG: Right here. Right on the bottom where the ship would be tied here, and here's the bins here, and there would be the dock, and they'd be written right in here.

JG: And all the way along too.

NP: Which way is that ship facing? Into shore?

JG: No, it's facing the lake.

NP: Okay, okay got it. It's at the end. So when you took your tours, you could show people some of the writing on the walls.

JG: Of course, yes. I did. I did that.

NG: And you might want--.

JG: And I always mention some of them you can't repeat.

NG: You might want to mention that there was a ship that was supposed to be tied there that night that it collapsed.

JG: That's right. There was supposed to be a ship tied, I've forgotten the name of it, and I think it was owned by Algoma Central, I'm pretty sure. Anyway, the foundation came out from under the pilings.

NG: Why wasn't the ship there the day--?

JG: He had a change of orders.

NG: That's right. He had a change of order, but he was supposed to be there.

JG: Yes. He had a change of orders out in the lake. They made the change, and he went to another elevator. Probably before--.

NP: So the Lake Shippers Clearance Association Group had changed the orders.?

JG: Yes.

NG: That would have destroyed the ship and everybody in it.

JG: Oh yes.

NG: When that collapsed.

JG: We, as a dredging company, I was working on the dredge at that time. We dug all winter, picking up concrete blocks. Concrete. Some of it the dredge could pick up. The dredge could only lift 40 tonnes. So they had to get a ball and smash them to pieces underwater and then pick them all up, put them in scows, take them out to lake and dump them.

NP: This was, again, the dumping ground that you talked about last time?

JG: Yes.

NP: Must be some interesting things out there.

JG: Oof, I'll say, yes, there would be.

NG: It provided employment for the dredging company.

JG: Oh yes, all winter long, we worked all winter.

NG: Cleaning up the destroyed elevator, collapsed like that.

NP: Disasters tend to do that.

JG: Pardon?

NP: Disasters tend to create work as we know from this year's floods, right?

JG: Oh certainly, yes.

NP: It must have been awfully cold out there in the wintertime.

JG: It was. Well, we wore heavy duty gear, and the dredge was warm from the boiler steam engine. The dredge was warm.

NP: Good.

JG: And, you know Pool 4--.

NP: Now, before Pool 4—because I'm not sure when this change took place—but there used to be an Alberta Pool between UGG and Pool 4. It may have been gone by the time you started taking your tours.

JG: Maybe not. I think the Alberta was a little one called the Malt Plant.

NP: No that's a little further on.

JG: Oh, further on, okay.

NP: Okay, so let's--.

JG: Pool 4.

NP: Pool 4. Like, UGG then Pool 4.

JG: Yes, Pool 4. UGG, Pool 4, and--.

NP: Richardson's.

JG: Yes, correct, Richardson's.

NP: I'm going to draw a little map here because I don't know about you but it keeps me sort of on track. Turning basin. [Laughing] So we started up here by the shipyards, and right about here is the UGG we were talking about that fell into the water. Then, there was, at one time, a little guy in here called Alberta Pool, but it may have been gone by the time that you were taking your tours.

JG: Maybe, but I think it was called Pool 4.

NP: No, then there was Sask Pool 4.

JG: Oh I see. Sask Pool 4—1, 2, 3—that's right. That elevator. Yes.

NP: Now Sask Pool 4, there was A and B.

JG: I think it caught fire. I think spontaneous combustion did that one in.

NP: Well, this one here, it was the one that had two explosions. 1945--.

JG: That's right!

NP: And 1952.

JG: And did you know one man was in Pool 4 elevator, and the fireman strung a line right across, and he walked hand over hand to safety? Unfortunately, some of the other guys didn't make it. They ran for their cars or into the parking lot. Most of them did. But this one guy--. Had a picture of him in the paper, of the guy up in the line the fireman put across to the other elevator.

NP: Went over to rescue people.

JG: Yes.

NG: Yes, very brave.

JG: Very brave.

NP: Very bad place to be working in the seven-year period to have two major explosions.

JG: Oh yes, that was spontaneous combustion. Now they have elevator belting--. After one of these elevators exploded, they have elevator belting that would--. The friction of the belt running over the rollers would cause static electricity, and once they got the static electricity beat, then it made their jobs much simpler.

NG: Jack would point out to everyone on board, too, the buildings that had apparatus on top of all the elevators. It was essential after that. It was--.

JG: That was an air cleaning device.

NG: And it got rid of all the dust.

JG: Pool 7 had the biggest one—well it was the biggest elevator—and it had the biggest one. You could see them up top and people would say, “What’s that on the top of the elevator?” I’d say, “Well that’s the air cleaning system to take the dust out of the elevators.”

NG: To prevent spontaneous combustion. Now that was mandatory then.

JG: Oh, yes.

NP: I would imagine that--.

JG: Now they’ve improved that.

NP: That you would recall when they’re loading ships and just clouds and clouds of--.

JG: Dust.

NG: Oh yes.

JG: And they were loaded by longshoremen. They used to love to drink, and they would throw their bottles, and when we dredged, we dug up three feet of bottles in every slip. Just crushed glass.

NP: Interesting. Most of the people we interviewed in this project, at some point, talk about alcohol.

JG: Oh yes. [Laughing] Well, they were notorious.

NP: This is another thing, dredging. So you needed to dredge the slips then on a regular basis, too?

NG: Yes.

NP: And were some easier to dredge than others?

JG: Yes. Richardson's was terrible because it was solid rock. They have, even now, today, they have the big tanks. The ships come in—they were drawing say 25 feet or 30 feet—they come alongside these big rollers and that prevents them from hitting the bottom and tearing the bottom out of them.

NP: I don't understand this idea of tanks. Where are these tanks?

JG: Right on the outside of the elevator.

NP: On the dock, or--?

JG: No, no. In the water. They floated.

NP: Ah, okay.

JG: And they were held together with heavy duty--. Like on the Keefer Terminal, have you seen the Keefer?

NP: No, but I'll go and have a look.

JG: Oh, okay. Keefer Terminal has big rubber fenders, they're called.

NP: Fenders I've seen, yes.

JG: Yes, fenders. And they have these tanks, which acted as the fenders on Richardson's Elevator.

NP: To keep the ship out a bit from the--.

JG: From the rock.

NP: From the rock underneath.

NG: Because they couldn't actually dredge the rock. They could before. When they were dredging the Seaway, they would come to a rock or something they couldn't dredge up with the rock, and then they would turn around, and they would dynamite it.

JG: They blasted it.

NG: But you can't do that when it's right beside an elevator, so that's why they would sink these tanks in there to prevent--. Because they couldn't dynamite the rock because the elevator was there.

JG: Couldn't dynamite Richardson's.

NG: So they just kept the boat away from the dock.

JG: When Pool 6 burned—no, she blew apart. Yes, she blew apart. And they made a parking lot out of it now.

NP: Yes. Now Richardson's. I know you had a story in your commentary about its colour, because for those who don't remember it, what colour was it?

JG: Orange.

NP: Did visitors oftentimes comment on the colour?

JG: Yes, they did.

NP: And what did you tell them?

JG: I said, “Not only is the elevator orange, they had two ships: the *Senneville* and the other one is gone. They were orange.” That’s all I knew about it.

NG: And you also used to say, “They must have got that paint on sale.” But we didn’t know there’s another story with regard to that. You know that story.

NP: That story was told to us by George Richardson, one of the owners of the company.

JG: Oh yes, okay. That’s why you would know that.

NP: It was modeled after--. I don’t know which person it was. I don’t think it was Geroge’s wife. It might’ve been one of the managers whose wife was complaining about how boring the elevators looked and when asked, well, what would she suggest, and she said, “Well something like what I’m wearing,” which was, as we would say in the fashion industry, cream-colour and pumpkin. Would that be?

JG: Cream and pumpkin. [Laughing] Yes, that’s kind of neat. I wish I had known that.

NP: A truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. So it wasn’t just a good deal on the paint. Now once we left Richardson’s, then we came to the oldest and tiniest elevator—on the Port Arthur Waterfront anyway—and that was Pool 2.

JG: No. Yes. You’re right. What am I arguing with her for? [Laughing]

NP: You’re a very smart man. Can I get my husband to hear that comment?

JG: Pool 2 was built by--. Yes, that was Pool 2.

NP: CPR, way back when.

JG: Way back when, yes.

NP: Eighteen--.

NG: That was the one that they used to--.

JG: They had a big trestle out on the waterfront, big wooden trestle.

NP: Do you remember that? Was that there when you were--?

JG: Yes.

NP: Oh really? So it's that recent that was there?

JG: Well, that was there for a couple of the years when I was there and then they tore it down. They had that for the shallow--. Pool 2 was very shallow, and it too had rock in it, so they could not get the ships up close. The ship would come and tie to the pilings, and they would load it through this long chute.

NG: With wheelbarrows.

JG: Yes, with wheelbarrows.

NP: Originally, in the wooden one.

JG: Originally, it was the wooden wheelbarrow, that's right.

NP: That was quite the--.

NG: [Inaudible]

NP: Yes.

NG: Compared to the Bay.

NP: Yes. Well, a story related to that—and we'll come to the elevators on the Kam, the old wooden ones there—they were built in late 1800s and early 1900s.

JG: That's right, and that's the one Pete demolished—my brother-in-law, he worked in the demolition crew.

NP: But they were building a warehouse because they couldn't get the elevator built fast enough. They were unloading wheat as fast as they could get off the trains, and as they were building the warehouse, they were filling it up so just--. [Laughing]

JG: Oh wow, eh?

NG: It was a boom time.

JG: Amazing, amazing.

NP: Pool 2, just a cute little elevator, I think. And then you come to Pool 6. Anything you recall about it? It was the one that in the year 2000, it was imploded. So when you were taking your tours, it was still there. What do you recall about it?

JG: I used to say, "That elevator, the first manager of that elevator was Joe Belanger, my brother-in-law's father." Did you know that?

NG: I thought it was Manitoba he was manager of.

JG: No, he was first manager here. At that time, that wasn't owned by Manitoba.

NP: The strange thing, and it'd be interesting to look at that, because that elevator did change hands even when CNR—or Canadian Northern I think was the original—then--.

JG: Canadian Northern was the original. My dad worked for them.

NP: Oh, did he?

JG: Yes. He was storekeeping in Neebing and--.

NP: Right, you mentioned that.

JG: He started out as—what, what was he?—and then he went to Rainy River.

NP: So it was the Canadian Northern, then, before Canadian National.

JG: That's right, yes.

NP: I think at some point Sask Wheat Pool rented it, but I think maybe Manitoba might have too. So you never really could tell. That's one of the things we'd like to do with our history, is that we'd like to have it have all of this information. Who owned what and when and what happened to them.

JG: Those problems would be solved if you could get all that information, yes.

NP: Now that one, when you were taking your tours, did it have two sides to it or was it--? Like at one time, it was sort of it had a workhouse and then bins and then another workhouse.

JG: Pool 6?

NP: Yes. But that was early on, so I'm wondering if by the time--. One of these disappeared at one point.

JG: Yes, that's right. I don't recall them. I don't recall the workhouse out there but who knows.

NP: That one was good for ships, right?

JG: Yes.

NP: It had a nice slip and good and deep.

JG: And then, if you go to Pool 1--.

NP: Well, you're a little ahead.

NG: About Pool 6, isn't that the one you used to describe how much the capacity was and then he said, "Give or take a few kernels."?

NP: [Laughs]

JG: Yes.

NG: Wasn't that you had it down to the exact capacity of that one?

JG: Oh yes.

NP: Well, and that's what I was wondering about because you had, in listening to the tour, you had so much information. How did you get your information?

JG: From mostly Bill Lishness and me going to the library.

NG: And the museum.

JG: And the museum and writing all this stuff down that I found on whatever. If it pertained to the harbour, I wrote it down and put it in some kind of a thing where I could use it.

NG: He also--. You researched it, and then you went also to the elevators themselves and got information from the elevators themselves.

JG: Oh yeah, I got a lot of information from the--. Pool 1 was managed at that time, first, like I said, by my brother-in-law's father, and then it was ran by Jackie Mallon's father.

NP: Which is definitely Manitoba Pool.

JG: Definitely.

NG: See, and you just said Pool 6 was the one managed by him and now you're saying Manitoba Pool.

JG: He was! He worked on this elevator, and he worked on this elevator. When he was at Pool 6, that's when this big--. He was a professional wrestler in Montreal.

NG: Oh okay.

JG: And this monstrous guy came out and said, “You don’t look too tough to me Belanger.” And Mr. Belanger picked him up and threw him right in the lake! [Laughing] And then he’s yelling at him, “You can come try me anytime, and you’ll end up in the lake every time.”

NG: [Laughs] And he was the superintendent of there and then here?

JG: Yes. And Jackie Mallon’s father ended up superintendent here.

NP: Okay, so we move on from Pool 6, we go past the Ore Dock, and then we’re at Pool 3.

JG: That’s right, Pool 3. She had 7,000,300 bushels of grain. I remember that part, say that so bloody often. Anyway, [laughs] some of these things are stuck in my head forever. They’re going to clamp me and, first of all, that little box will come with me from Laurie, “Get me out of here.”

NG: We have a box. Maybe we should put a stop on it for a minute. [Laughs]

[Audio pauses]

NP: I’ll just say that we’re starting up again. We took a little break for chocolates and tea, yes, and it’s as wonderful as it sounds. We had finished off with what was the Manitoba Pool 3, but it started its life as Reliance and then--.

JG: And Pool 3 actually has—if you go down the river, or down the harbour—you see white tanks so they could get more in the elevator. They had extra white tanks—I forget—six of them. They ran between UGG and--.

NP: And Canada Malt.

JG: Canada Malt, yes.

NP: Sort of off to the back here. Now, I don’t know if we have on tape, when were you born?

JG: In 1931. February the 25th—the 21st.

NP: And Norma, do you give your age, or you don't?

JG: She's nine months older.

NG: June the 5th, 1930.

NP: Okay. The reason I ask that is-- '31, so you were both around. Were you here when the elevators exploded at all?

NG: Yes.

JG: Yes.

NP: You were just kids. Well, teenagers.

NG: I remember when it happened because so many people died, and it was a shock. Our uncle died, Lundberg.

JG: Yes, right. He was working on the top of an elevator and got electrocuted.

NG: That's right. He had a ladder come to contact with something on the top of the elevator. But that explosion killed somebody else we knew, and I can't remember who it was at the time.

JG: I can't remember either.

NP: And who was--. What was the name of your uncle?

NG: Oh, Lundberg.

JG: First name? Lun.

NG: They called him Lun for Lundberg, I think.

JG: Yes, short for Lundberg.

NG: But his name was Lundberg. L-U-N-D-B-E-R-G.

NP: Do you remember what elevator he worked for? What company?

NG: No, but his son would, and he could ask for either--.

JG: Oh Lorraine! Lorraine would.

NG: Lorraine would. Lorraine High.

NP: H-U-G-G-E?

NG: H-I-G-H. On Empire. And her number is--.

NP: I think I may have known--. Has that family lived on Empire for a while?

NG: Yes, they have.

NP: Because I lived on Ernestine, which is just off of there, and I think I knew this family.

JG: A good friend of mine, Trapper Bain, did you ever know him?

NP: Yes.

JG: He was a barber. He was my barber all my life.

NG: That's [censored] is Loraine High's phone number.

NP: And it was her--?

NG: It was her father.

NP: Her father, okay. But there was another reason I was going to ask that question. Oh! Did you know anything about wartime storage of grain at all?

JG: No. I only know about the nine submarines that were built with Canada Car. They launched--. You can see—no you can't anymore—still see where they had a groove in the bank, right down and into the turning basin, right by the old elevators.

NP: Now, when you're talking about the--. Maybe we'll come to that.

JG: All nine of them were lost, by the way, in the lake. Never got out of Lake Superior, never found them. All crew aboard went down with them. Sad, but true.

NP: Wow. So Canada Malt then was the next one on the list. Anything you recall about what you used to say about Canada Malt?

JG: Only that was my favourite elevator in the whole world, and I gave the [inaudible] how big the elevator was in bushels.

NP: They would ship malt far and wide, wouldn't they?

JG: Yes. It was called Canada Malt, and they shipped far and wide was right. The railway tracks were a busy, busy place. They had a hump over here in Westfort. A hump was a big hill, homemade hill, and the trains would be coming from the west, pushed over the hump, and a man would ride down on the hump controlling the speed into the trainyard. Then he'd hop down and run again to the end and there'd be maybe 15 guys doing that, running back and forth and climbing up it.

NP: That doesn't sound particularly safe.

JG: Oh, it wasn't safe, no. But it was a job.

NP: It was what they did.

JG: Yup, that's right.

NG: But you used to say that malt was made for making beer and so that was your favourite.

JG: My favourite elevator, yes. It was always my favourite, of course.

NP: Then we came to 7A and B that started out as separate elevators, but they were owned by Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

JG: That's correct. And what are they called now?

NP: The Viterra.

JG: The Viterra, that's right.

NP: Were they the biggest? Thunder Bay's biggest?

JG: Yes, they are the biggest ones. Nine million bushels in this one, and it was not quite nine million bushels in this one.

NP: Then there's a little elevator called the Thunder Bay Elevator.

JG: Yes, it was, yes.

NP: It was closed down pretty quickly.

JG: That's where my son used to tie their tug, remember Norma? McCabe's. McCabe's elevator.

NG: Yes.

NP: That's the next one. That's the UGG M. It was McCabe's.

JG: Right.

NP: Pool 1, anything strike you about that?

JG: Anything about Pool 1? No other than the manager was my brother-in-law's father, and he threw the guy in the lake. Then there's the little P&H. One million six hundred thousand bushels.

NP: Just a small little guy but still operating.

JG: Oh, it still is.

NP: As we follow the *Welcome* ship down, and we head into the Kam River, right out on the, just sort of in from the lakefront, there was the Empire Elevator.

JG: That's right.

NP: Do you remember anything about it?

JG: Sure, it blew up and caught fire. I don't believe there was one man killed. What they did when the firemen were rescuing the guys, they happened to pull this—no it was left after the elevator exploded, that's right—they happened to pull this big steam engine out. It was on the dock for many, many years. Now that dock is owned by--. What was his name? You know, brought rocks and gravel in--.

NP: He got salt and stuff?

JG: French's Rock and Gravel, and then it was bought by--.

NG: Stiff?

JG: No, our friend who lives beside Jack, or close to Jack. He said--.

NG: Just a minute Jack, no, we're talking about--.

JG: It was three big mounds there.

NP: Just to tell you a little bit about the continuation of the story about the steam engine, it is still in being, and it is in storage somewhere near Kakabeka.

JG: Oh really?

NP: Waiting for an elevator activity centre to develop, so they can have a home for it.

JG: Wow! Isn't that neat! Holy Moses!

NP: Yeah, there we go. So now you know what happened to that wonderful steam boiler, or engine, whatever it was.

JG: Well, it was a fairly massive thing. It had a little wheel at the back and a big belt about that wide would spin and the motor was right under the belt so that it would spin the same steady.

NP: Before the place burned down.

JG: Yes, wow, that was really something.

NG: Scurrying down to the other side--.

NP: Yes. Okay. Now we've headed into the Kam River, and before my time, but just barely, there were a bunch—well I shouldn't say a bunch—there were three elevators that CPR built. Were they still around when--?

JG: When I was--. Yes. I just remembered. I thought maybe you would like the names of the ships that last loaded there.

NP: Yes, for sure.

JG: The *Starbuck* and the *Starbell*, they were sister ships, canallers. They were 249 feet long.

NP: Now, are you sure that's the CPR ones or are you thinking of the elevators that are a little bit further along? The ones you talked about before.

JG: No, the Purves and the other one?

NP: No, no. Remember we talked about the Consolidated, Western Grain Byproducts, and so on? These ones were farther up, these ones were almost near the Royal Edward Hotel, they were up that end of Kaminstiquia. Now all you see are a bunch of piles.

JG: And you see the holes where the bums used to go in and the concrete, they're still there.

NP: What about the holes?

JG: That's the foundation of that wooden elevator that Pete worked at. Norm, remember I mentioned Pete before? He worked there at demolishing them. He would demolish those. Underneath the old elevators—now railway tracks in there now—was these concrete forms that held the elevator up, concrete underneath. They had holes inside.

NG: You could see them from the river.

JG: Yes, you can see them from the river. On the railway, of course, you had guys running—no jobs, you're in the Depression—running from east to west to west to east and they used to hide and sleep. They'd get a mattress somewhere and cardboard boxes and put them in these holes and go to sleep. I think I used to mention--. I may not have. It is kind of a sad story to tell anyone.

NP: But it was reality.

JG: Yes, it was.

NP: So they were all gone by--.

JG: The bums were gone, yes, but the holes were still there.

NP: And the elevators are gone.

JG: And the elevators are gone, yes.

NP: Then we--. Actually, there was one, I don't know if you ever mentioned it, but it was across the—I was going to say across the street—across the river from it. Just a little--.

JG: That's right. I used to know the name of it. The old--.

NP: Gillespie.

JG: Gillespie Elevator, yes! We as kids used to run up inside of the elevator, and it was full of pigeons, all kinds of pigeons. They had-- Was there a ladder in that? No, that was in Pool 2. Anyway, we used to carry lines to the top, put them down, and shimmy down—with knots in it—so we could climb up and down. Good exercise and all that kind of stuff. It was fun.

NP: You're the first person I've talked to that was actually inside there.

JG: Oh, I've been inside.

NP: It had a fire, I understand, in the 1920s, I think.

JG: Yes, and the old pilings from these elevators-- Right in the McKeller River there's a whole bunch of old pilings from the part of the elevator where the ships used to tie up and come in.

NP: Somebody told me that at some point when there was a lot of shipping on the Kam that there would be times when you could walk from one side of the Kam to the other just going from deck to deck.

JG: Almost. I know in the winter they would—all the shipping companies—would load their ships with grain and call it winter storage and there'd be-- I have pictures of it somewhere. I guess they're in the museum. Not the museum in the-- What's the gambling place in Port Arthur?

NP: The casino?

NG: They have all kinds of pictures in there.

JG: Tommy Steck, he ran on the tugs with me and George and--

NG: Jack's pictures.

JG: Mine's in there too.

NP: I think I've seen it. **[Audio pauses]** Okay, so I'm going to lead into this. We had a bit of an off-tape discussion, and I believe where we left off, we were talking about, first of all, your brother-in-law taking down these elevators.

JG: Yes. On the river, yes.

NP: Now, don't let me forget this because I want to come back to it—so Norma if you remember—but you had mentioned Tommy Steck. Now Mr. Steck from--. I think you mentioned in the last interview he worked on the tug.

JG: He was an engineer.

NP: If you just expand off something we talked about offline, and that was the tug graveyard.

JG: Oh yeah. All the old wooden tugs were scrapped at a graveyard. The graveyard was on the Mission. There's a concrete wall on the Mission, and it runs and almost to Chippewa, but there has a couple of openings in it. The old tugs, the old wooden tugs, were taken in there and sunk. What's that word they use? They opened the valves, and there's a word for it--.

NG: They would destroy it. They would sink it.

JG: Yes, they sunk them, but there's a word meaning it was done deliberately.

NG: Oh yes, it deliberately sunk in the graveyard.

NP: That's a sort of sad story. What happened to a tug that they knew they had to take it to the graveyard? I mean with the horse and things like that, you can sort of tell, but what was wrong with a tug that was so bad they couldn't fix it, and they would tow it to the--?

JG: The *Mount McKay* and the *Brad* were both wooden. It was difficult breaking ice or early fall when there's skim ice, skim ice would cut into the wood. One time on the *Rutherford*, I was changing the crew. The crew was out by the *Welcome*, I was changing the crew, and I remember pumping water like crazy out of the *Rutherford*. She was a wooden tug, 50 feet long, and I was skipper on her. So I got a chunk of canvas onboard, and I slid it down and pushed it with a pike pole to cover the hole in the wooden boat. It still leaked but it was far from going down.

NG: But that's where they would take the boats and they would scuttle them.

JG: Scuttle, that's the word!

NG: In the graveyard over at this particular spot, that's where you could do that.

JG: In the Mission wall.

NP: So what would be some of the names of the tugs that are--?

JG: Tug *Brad*, tug *Mount McKay*. There's three of them that I know, all locally known. What was the other one?

NP: Was there a ceremony?

JG: No. No ceremony. The *Rutherford* was to be sunk, and the guy bought it. George was going to buy it, but they wanted too much money for it. George and I were operators on this tug, and he said, "I was going to buy it and make it into a yacht," but I said--.

NG: We were talking about Tom Steck. He used to try to salvage as much as he can. He was a real salvager. He would salvage as much as he can before they were scuttled. Tom Steck was also a great one for keeping pictures and he's donated most of his pictures to the local casino and you can see them on the walls there. He's always interested in the history.

JG: Some of the old-time skippers that he knew—I didn't know them—but Harpell was there, Vince McCabe I think was still there, and they were young. They're hard for me to recognize, but old Harpell was 98 when he died. So he was--. What a gentleman. Oh, what a gentleman.

NG: Tommy Steck, the fact that he had so many pictures and had a lot of different parts of these boats and tugs and whatever. He was quite a historian and salvaged a lot of things that were worth while salvaging. He donated a lot of material to the casino because the casino is named after every port in Ontario. That's the theme of the casino. So that was good that he got that all done before he died.

NP: Well, speaking of that, did you ever salvage stuff, do you have memorabilia related to the scows or the tugs?

JG: Yes, I have a metal spike, 12-inch spike on the—unless you threw it out—on the workbench out in the garage.

NG: We do have--.

NP: From?

JG: From a wooden scow.

NG: Now we do have two lanterns that Captain Martin gave us, and they were off of tugs at one time. We have them.

JG: They were off the *Abitibi* tugs.

NG: Off the *Abitibi* tugs, and we have them and they're authentic off the tugs. We have them both. He had them, and he was one of the captains there, and he was one of our captains on the *Welcome*. He gave them to us, and so we still have one on the fireplace one on the window.

NP: What happened to the *Abitibi*? Do you know?

JG: Yes, the *Abitibi* was a white tug, and she had a sister ship, and she was white. Anyway.

NP: Did they end up in the graveyard?

JG: No, they went down east. One went to the West Coast—through the Panama Canal, I might add.

NP: Really?

JG: Yes.

NP: Oh, okay, neat.

JG: And so did the *Incan Superior*.

NP: What's the *Incan Superior*?

JG: That was a ship that ran from Thunder Bay to Superior, Wisconsin, and my son Dave was an engineer on it for 12 years.

NG: It had rail tracks on it, and it was Incan—Incan also owned the Great Lakes at the time—and they would take the paper from the Great Lakes here on railcars, and then they had it railed right to the ship. They put it on the ship, and daily--.

JG: Every two days.

NG: To Superior, Wisconsin, where they would unload them and then bring them back. When the Great Lakes changed hands, they sold the ship to BC, and it went through the Panama Canal. Now it's still operating out in BC.

NP: So where did they load it?

NG: Right in the river.

JG: Right by the coal dock, where all the coal is.

NP: On the Island? On McKellar Island?

JG: On McKellar Island, yes.

NG: On the same side--.

JG: On the same side there's a long slip, and that's where they load it.

NG: Thirteen years my son worked there.

NP: You did mention—and I'm very proud of myself for remembering to come back to this—you were mentioning that your brother-in-law was involved in taking down these elevators.

JG: Yes, he was.

NP: Did he ever talk about the experience?

JG: No, other than it was hard work. They were all wooden bins, and you had to cut the timbers out and ship them somewhere—I guess the CPR or someone got them—and they'd load a boxcar up with them and ship them out and that would be it.

NP: When would that have been, do you think? Even if we have a decade.

JG: I would think, I was--. How old was I when I started?

NG: Probably in the 1950s, '40s. Late '40s, yes.

JG: Yes, 1940s.

NP: That fits with my postcard collection of the 1950s that had this looming elevator at the end of Victoria Avenue.

JG: That's right.

NP: Just really gothic, almost.

JG: Ugly was what it was. It was just square, with a roof like that, and they were ugly.

NP: Don't talk to me about ugly and elevator and the same sentence! [Laughing]

JG: Sorry about that.

NP: Okay, as the *Welcome* ship is moving up the Kam River, passing the hotel hobo, and getting to Ogilvie's, before Jackknife.

JG: That's right, the Ogilvie's. The Ogilvie's, another one of my favourite elevators. I used to say they made Ogilvie Oats and something else. I had some information from them, but I don't remember.

NP: Flour?

NG: Oh yes.

JG: Oh flour, yes, that's right.

NG: They had fires there, too.

JG: They did.

NG: They had some problems. They changed hand a few times, that one.

NP: It was Pool 8 when I first knew it.

JG: That's what it was! You got it right.

NP: Now, Jackknife bridge, it didn't have much to do with elevators, except on here. This is McKellar, right? And then there's Mission?

JG: Yes.

NP: I think on the other side of Mission there was the Starch Works. What do you know about the Starch Works?

JG: I knew that--.

NP: Oh, so this actually comes across here.

JG: The Starch Works was built in the first World War, and it changed hands. I used to stay it all the time, five times that I remember, it was a Starch Plant.

NG: It was owned by the university at one time too, didn't it?

JG: Yes, that's right. University had a building set up just around the first bend in the Mission. Where are we here?

NP: Well, my map has sort of gotten away from me here.

JG: Okay.

NG: But in your mind--.

NP: So we have the two Islands. So this is the McKellar, and this is the Mission, right? As the Kam comes this way and out. So Starch Works would be here. That iron ore or the coal place you were mentioning--.

JG: Iron ore and coal. It was the iron ore first and then the coal dock.

NP: You said the university had--

JG: They loaded sulfur.

NG: The university had this one, and it also had something to do with wood at one time.

JG: It was five things they did. They had wood. It was a lumber mill, a planing mill, a flour mill, and a--.

NG: It had quite a few things.

NP: Now before we leave Ogilvie's, it also fell into the river you know.

JG: Yes, I knew that. I have pictures of it leaning. And do you know how they got it back?

NP: No.

JG: With tractors. They put tractors on the workhouse and around some of the bins, drilled holes right clean through, around some of the bins, and with tractors they pulled it upright. Hard to believe, but they did it. I got a write-up on it somewhere in those. No, not--.

NG: Well, that's something to look up.

NP: Yes.

JG: Hi Glenn.

[Audio pauses]

NP: Hold it. Okay, now, we had a special guest and that's been taken care of. So now we're moving along. We were talking about the Starch Works and how it had many different lifetimes and that faces onto the Mission, right?

JG: That's right.

NP: Now there's two elevators there. Sort of, I refer to them as the road out to Chippewa.

JG: Searle's Elevator, and it was the Great Northern and now and--.

NP: No, I can correct you on that one. Searle's was always Searle's.

JG: Always Searle's? Oh, yes, absolutely.

NP: The one next to it was the--.

JG: Right beside Abitibi.

NP: Right beside Abitibi, it was the Grand Trunk.

JG: Grand Trunk, I should've known. I should've known because my dad worked for the Grand Trunk too and my grandfather, he also worked there.

NP: Not at the elevator, on the trains.

JG: Not on the elevator, he was a hostler.

NP: So was that ever part of your tour? Those two elevators?

JG: Oh yes. I used to go right alongside, especially if there was a ship in. One time there were some deer from the Mission caught in the ice, and I phoned the Harbour Commission. They ran over with line—no—there were guys from the Abitibi Mill saw them, and they came out with lines, and they threw them, and of course deer aren't sharp enough to grab it in their mouth and be pulled out, but the guys from the elevator--.

NP: Which was Cargill probably, or National by that time.

JG: National or Cargill. Anyways, they put ladders on the ice and walked out on the ladders and helped the deer out. Threw a line around them and pulled them out. The ice was about that thick. Thick enough for them to--. And because it was near the Mission Mill, it was thinner.

NP: About two inches by--.

JG: Yes, and the deer would break the ice and then, all of a sudden, *plop*, and there was as far as they could go.

NG: Now the Cargill today, and the Searle now, they're still very active today, aren't they?

JG: Yes.

NG: That seems to be a very active area still.

JG: The foreman--.

NP: From a dredging--. Sorry, finish your thought.

JG: No, no I was just going to say the foreman is the father of our guy that cuts the lawn.

NG: Oh okay. Now it's more accessible by ships without having to go so far up the river and through bridges and so forth. I would think that the Searle Elevator, for that reason, it's very accessible to the rail and certainly accessible for the ships.

JG: The ships can go straight in, back out, and turn in that little basin right there. With bow thrusters it would be no problem. Years ago, they would've gone back and fill, back and fill, back and fill. What fill means is the propellers would turn and just spin it a little bit with the wheel hard over and back and turn, back and turn, back and turn, and out they go. Now, they have the tugs. That's my son Dave's job, to turn them, with no problem at all. They just throw a line on, one forward one aft, back it out, spin them, and they honk a salute. Salute has three short for the short salute, five long for the long salute. Different--.

NP: You know, you're talking about these salutes, and I'm going to ask you a question that I'm curious about and haven't been able to have any verification of. Lake Shippers Clearance Association, a group that you're familiar with, someone had told me that at one time, before all the modern communications, that they used to use flags. Do you remember that at all?

JG: I don't remember because I was young.

NP: You were just a youngster.

JG: A young kid. But I know when I was in navigation school, I had to learn it. As obsolete as it was, we had to learn.

NP: The semaphore.

JG: The semaphore yes and Morse code. We had to learn it.

NP: According to this story, which I've yet to come across somebody who actually either used or was directed by the flags, they actually had different flags for different elevators to direct the ships.

JG: Yes, they did. That was way before my time.

NP: So we took a little side trip up the Mission and we are now heading to the bend, beyond the Jackknife bridge where there was another elevator, right on that bend. Elevator D.

JG: That's right, and beside Elevator D was that the old that's still there. It was rope and twine we used to call it. Now you're coming to Elevator D, that's where I used to swim off that dock. Norm, remember? In the three-mile race and that. Now, what about Elevator D?

NP: One of the things that I remember listening on your tape was that in--. When was that tape, '84?

JG: Yes, it was.

NG: Exactly.

NP: There was just a part of Elevator D left so they must have been starting to demolish it?

JG: Yes, they were, and that gave me an inside look for a couple of weeks of what the elevators used to look like. It was all tile, all tile, all the way to the top. Then they had, like you were saying about the fellow who cleans the elevators underneath, and you could see dust, and you could see all kinds of stuff, and I found that very interesting. I used to say it in the narration until the elevator was gone, of course. Then it was gone. Then it was a hole in it—a hole in my narration. [Laughing] But I used to immediately go from Elevator D, right to the hump.

NP: So where was the hump? You know where Elevator D is. Here we have Elevator D on the turn, and then you're coming up. So this is Elevator D, then you have the Consolidated. I think that might have at one time been called Superior, but now it's Western Grain Products, and then there's Western—I think it was Pool 5 at one point—and then Paterson's.

JG: They were the three elevators in front of my grandpa's house on Ford Street.

NP: Ah, okay. So where was the hump in relation to that?

JG: Okay, let's see.

NG: Right back here.

JG: Yes, you draw it Norma.

NG: Right in there, wasn't it?

JG: These are all railway tracks here.

NG: they would go into different ones, go into each elevator, and this was the hump. They would shoot them and ride them into the elevator.

NP: Except the railway tracks were coming in this way.

JG: That's right.

NG: So the hump was here.

JG: No, no! Let me try with my weird hands. The D--. There's two elevators that are left, are there not just two?

NP: There's two left. This one's gone.

JG: Yes, this one's gone, I know. Two left, okay. The hump was a bunch of railway tracks. I mean a bunch. I think it was 11 tracks wide, and that ran over--.

NG: Through Westfort and underneath.

NP: You know what might help us here is where was the hump in relation to the walkover bridge.

JG: The walkover bridge is in Westfort at the bottom of Brown Street.

NP: Right. So where was the hump in relation to that?

JG: In between.

NP: Okay, good, that locates it for us.

JG: I thought I had pictures of it, but I guess I don't. It doesn't matter. You got lots.

NP: If you can look up pictures that you have that might be useful, we can make scans of them and just give them right back to you.

JG: I wonder. You know when I painted Stan all those pictures of Kakabeka?

NG: You don't have anything in there related to--. Well, you have the elevator.

JG: No, I guess not. I suppose.

NG: You're doing fine.

NP: So we have the three elevators—the Consolidated, Western Grain By Products today, and what would've been Pool 5 when you were giving your--. Well, these would've been E and F when you were giving your tours. E and F and then Pool 5. Fort William Elevator, that's it.

JG: Fort William Elevator, yes, that's it.

NP: Anything you recall about saying about them?

JG: No, nothing really. I can't recall much about them other than they ship special grain now. I think you were talking to the managers?

NP: Yes. Mr. Mailhot.

JG: Yes, Mailhot, and that's all I ever knew.

NG: The next one after that, what is that, Paterson isn't it?

JG: Paterson was demolished, as you well know, and then we went into the turning basin.

NP: There's my turning basin, right now, out of place.

JG: Yes, it's out of place.

NP: Out of place but it's there. Now there was an elevator that I think was on the turning basin, but it would've been gone long before your tours. It was called the Black--. Smith and Black or Black and Smith.

JG: Could well be. There's two elevators left up there now.

NP: Well, they were, but they're gone too.

JG: Oh, they're gone too? Oh my God.

NG: Yes. And that was the Electric and the--.

JG: The Electric that's right.

NG: And the Northwest.

JG: I used to know the watchmen well. He would come down and wave at the boat coming by because I'd sneak right in beside it. Of course, you knew, I mentioned it a few times, it was nine submarines that were built at the Canada Car and they all went down—not a man saved.

NP: Now you mentioned, and I don't know if it was on tape—might've been before we started—that Miles Zero or One--. What is it?

NG: Mile Zero.

JG: Right there. There's a picture of it. Right here.

NP: Of the--. That's fine, I'll look at it a little later. Where is that, exactly? Is it on the turning basin?

JG: No, Mile Zero is in Port Arthur.

NG: You said it was in the turning basin. That Mile Zero of the St. Lawrence is in the turning basin.

JG: I always said that because the Pagoda is in the wrong spot, it should've been up there. Miles Zero is the Great Lakes Paper Mill. That's Miles Zero.

NG: The turning basin.

JG: The turning basin.

NG: That's what we've been saying.

JG: That's not the true Mile Zero.

NG: No, no, that's what we said. That's what you always told me, and that was Mile Zero of the St. Lawrence Seaway. It started there and it went right through to the Atlantic Ocean.

JG: That's right.

NP: So it would be right at Great Lakes dock then?

JG: Yes.

NP: They have a dock, do they? I've never seen it.

JG: Yes, they do.

NG: You could take a deep-sea ship right to their dock. It could go through all the locks, and it was dredged to 27 feet, and you could get right to their dock, and that was Mile Zero.

NP: This is interesting because, you know, I think this is how we started the conversation at our first interview was talking about the 27 feet dredging and how that was accomplished by the company you worked for, but what this also brings up was something we were talking about before this tape. That was the whole story of the Causeway. Certainly, all of the elevators along the Kam River were dependent upon dredging to a depth that could accept the latest of ships but tell us the story of the Causeway.

JG: You brought it out here today.

NG: Well, the story of the Causeway is the fact that it was dredged to 27 feet. Then they were going to put a bridge--.

JG: No, thank you, honey.

NG: They were going to put a Causeway that would prevent any ship from going up, it was dredged to the proper depth, but you couldn't get under the Causeway and that's when--.

JG: Show her a couple of those letters.

NG: I gave them all to her, she's got them all.

JG: Oh, you gave them all to her.

NG: They're all in an envelope.

NP: So where was this Causeway proposed?

NG: Right where the existing Causeway is now. Where the existing bridge is now.

NP: Between--.

NG: On Pacific or whatever there and going right over from the East End.

NP: East End to McKellar Island?

NG: That's right. That's where they were going to put it, but it was just going to be a Causeway, and no ships could go through it. The *Welcome* ship could not clear it, and we were not that high. That meant that if we couldn't get under it, none of the tugs could get under it, and none of the big ships.

JG: That's right.

NG: We had contacted Transport Canada and talked to the Minister of Transportation because we were under the impression that you can't block a navigable water in Canada, and that was the St. Lawrence Seaway. No one could block it without permission from the people who were using it. So it was stopped even though the consultants charged the city \$80,000 for their consultant report, but they couldn't use it because the Minister of Transportation wouldn't allow it.

NP: Couple of questions I have are if you couldn't get obviously under a Causeway, which was between the mainland and McKellar Island, why couldn't you just go down--?

NG: The Mission? And that's what they were saying.

NP: Well, the McKellar River.

NG: The McKellar.

NP: Or the Mission?

NG: No, the Mission, and they wanted people--. They said then boats could go down the Mission, and that would mean that they would have to do some maneuvering to get back up underneath the Jackknife bridge to get back up the river to the--.

JG: Elevators.

NG: To the people that were there that still needed to have a ship come to them. Plus, the *Welcome* ship was using that river and so were the tugs and so were the ships that went directly up to the river to the Great Lakes and so forth because it was easier to navigate going straight ahead than the sharp curves of the other ones. We weren't licensed to go outside the breakwall because that requires a different kind of ship and a different kind of licence, and we had to stay in the controlled harbour or river. We were not licensed to go outside the breakwall.

NP: So the breakwall extends how far? Does it extend beyond the mouth of the Kam?

NG: Well, no, we'd have to go right to--. In order to go down the Mission, we'd have to go out on open water to go down the Mission, and we would've been exposed. Well, we just couldn't. We weren't licensed to, and it would be too rough. There'd be days and days and days we couldn't even go on a harbour cruise. We couldn't go to the Fort. So that meant that we just couldn't operate anymore.

JG: We'd be out of business.

NP: And you had to go into open water because there's a little island here, and it's pretty shallow between the island and--.

JG: Mutton Island.

NP: So you had to go out around it?

JG: Out around that, yes.

NP: So the *Welcome* took that much water or--?

JG: No, only three feet.

NG: She was meant to be an inland boat, but she was meant to be in protected waters. She was not meant to be out in open seas.

JG: We called it Minor Water 2.

NG: That took care of that.

NP: And once you got out past the other side of Mutton Island, you were in open water especially.

NG: Yes, and we weren't licensed to do that.

NP: Now who--? Did the two of you spearhead this questioning of the Causeway?

NG: Yes, I took that on as my responsibility, and I started--.

JG: She gave that all to you.

NG: By contacting--. I knew that law said that you can't block a navigable water, so I went right to the Transport minister, and then he contacted the coast guard, and I have given you correspondence from both sides. Then we were supported by Paterson and Saskatchewan Pool Elevator and the cement—all these people that do business on the river.

JG: Oh yes. We have the cement docks there.

NG: And the whole thing they supported us, and they weren't allowed to build it in the end, and they had to come up with a better design, which they did. Now the bridge that's there today, we could go underneath it today with the new bridge, but the Causeway we could not have. We did manage to stop that with a collective. And all of the hotels and the tourism people and they all backed because they realized that as long as we couldn't go to the Fort, that means people would not stay in Thunder Bay any more than one day. Where when they went to the Fort, they had to stay two nights, so we got support from all the hotels from the tourist industry and so forth. They supported us. So it was good in a way. It was kind of a battle that we fought. It was upsetting at the time because we thought it was a terrible thing that was going to happen. So after that they were very cautious about what the rules were before they built the other bridge.

When they built the other bridge, one of the tugs that moves the ships around into the elevator, the *Point Valour*, the wheelhouse on that ship is too high to go under the existing bridge that's there now. So the city, in its wisdom, they were able to make a financial settlement so that they could get another tug or take the wheelhouse on top of it, which they didn't do because you can't just cut off a wheelhouse off a ship. It's designed in a certain way. They were able to buy another tug, but they have to go through the Mission, they cannot go up the river.

NP: What year was this? Do you recall?

NG: I think this is '84. I'd have to correspond with--. I think it was '84 and '86 and around there when it was all settled. Went to many meetings.

JG: Toronto, Ottawa.

NP: And what was the city's position on this?

NG: They were shocked. I guess they just thought that the engineers that spent all this time doing this--. I don't know why they would do that without checking about blocking navigable water. They just thought they could build a Causeway and went through all the trouble of designing it and everything else and then, oops! With the Jackknife bridge they had to keep it open because it was blocking navigable water, they had no options. Either keep it open or build another one because that was the law, and as long as everybody was going up there, they had to keep it open. So it costs the city considerable money. At that time \$80,000 is a lot of money to spend on a plan that wasn't going to work.

We felt very good because they came from all over. I mean, the people that supported us they were--. In fact, when I phoned the Minister of Transportation, I told him, "We're just a little boat. We carry 200 passengers, and we're not that big, but we go up this navigable water, and we think some place along the way people just can't block it." He said he'd get back to me, and they did in spades, and they just pull--.

And everyone along the harbour, all the elevator operators and superintendents, they were calling us and saying, "What do you want? Do you want a letter? We'll give you a letter and we'll make sure that--." They love to have the little boat go around and describe their elevators and everything and the boat did that for 23 years. This was in '84, and we did it for another ten years after that. So it was really important to a lot of people. It was worth the fight. It really was. I think now we have a better bridge, and we have a bridge that all kinds of little boats can go underneath it, even sailboats. In the end it was a win-win situation.

NP: Great. Now, I was away from Thunder Bay at the time that you were operating the *Welcome*. What was the fate of the *Welcome*?

JG: It went to Lachine, Quebec.

NG: It was--. Well, Jack had some health issues. He had had some little strokes and had carotid artery surgery. That was in '93, and that fall he was not in very good health so we--. Tourism had fallen greatly too because of the casinos that were all over in the States and Canada. It was hard to compete for your tourism daughter when it came to the casinos or going on a cruise boat or going on any kind of scene situation. So this chap had called from Lachine, Quebec, and he needed a vessel right away because the vessel that was there was not seaworthy anymore, and he needed one right away. He offered us a deal. We just thought it was the right time to sell it, at that time, because of the downturn in tourism, and we had been operating for a long time. It was a lot of work, but at the same time, we enjoyed it. We agreed to sell it to him because, well, there was another issue that had happened. They were going to change the Marina, and they were going to take away our parking areas, and they were also going to do some of the other things that city. They wanted--.

JG: They wanted to plant a bunch of trees.

NG: Well, they wanted to take away our loading to unload and to fuel the ship. By that time, I guess I got a little exasperated and I said, "Well, I think I'm going to call my son-in-law," was our lawyer and tell him, "Let's go ahead and sell this." So we are partners with Richard and Joan Johns and Jack, and I decided that was the right timing because we just didn't want to fight anymore about anything. [Laughs] We agreed. We phoned my son-in-law. We went, and we signed that afternoon. We sold it to Lachine, and Jack delivered it right to his door. And it still operates today, and it operates under Montreal Cruise Ships, and it's still called the *Welcome*, only in French.

JG: Yes, *Bienvenue* or something.

NG: They have two ships. A twin-hull boat that operates out of Montreal, and this still operates out of Lachine. It's mostly charters, they've changed the--. They changed a lot of things on it. They've improved a lot of things, and it's still running. Just before Jack had his heart attack five years ago, we were going to go down there and go on it. We never got to that. It's still down there, and it was the right decision. Had that not happened, I'm sure it would be rusted to hull at the shipyards. Because things do happen for the best, at the right time, and that was best for us.

NP: Over the time then that you started in seventy--?

NG: Two.

NP: '72 and then to ninety—?

NG: Four. When it was delivered to them.

NP: Right. How much had changed in the grain industry over that time that would've had an impact on your narration as you went along the--?

NG: Lack of ships in the harbour.

JG: Lack of ships. The big thing would be the lack of ships, yes. Even now. My son Dave is on the tugs. He brings the ships in. Even now, they have bow thrusters which eliminates a tug, and some are like the old type, converted from steam to diesel, so they need tugs still. And trucks, yeah.

NG: Mostly, lots of the shipping that was done by--.

JG: Rail.

NG: By rail and by ships. Now there's a lot of things being trucked and--.

JG: Like grain, you see the grain coming in from Manitoba in grain trucks. They look kind of low, flat ones. They've got 16 wheelers and then grain is now shipped like that. A lot of grain is shipped to China this year and last year by rail to BC.

NG: And a lot of it went to the west, into the Orient, to China and Japan. A lot of them started going west because that's where the market was. So the markets changed. Also, it was expensive to bring a ship right up to Thunder Bay, and I guess it was cheaper for them to go the other way.

NP: I guess when you first started out, there was probably a fair bit of action on the Kam River, but by the time you finished, had they stopped dredging?

NG: Yes.

JG: Dredging stopped about 16-18 years ago, eh? When I was on the last dredge?

NG: Yes. And so, the dredging, that's why the Searle Elevator, it's accessible because it's right there. I think there was a sand sucker here a few years ago, just cleaning up a few areas, not all that many.

JG: The government sounded the rivers—all the rivers—and the turning basin and the Mission and they had a sand sucker come up and--.

NP: What is a sand sucker?

JG: It's a massive pipe with a great big fan in it and it sucked the water out of the lake—there's big openings on the side of the dredge—out of the bottom, in through the blades, and then it would spit it out. They had pipes, miles of pipes--.

NG: Inland.

JG: Inland.

NG: And it would put the sand, whatever they were taking out of the bottom of the river or of the lake, they would deposit it further inland, and it was landfill.

NP: So for this sand sucker--.

JG: You know what had a lot of landfill, was--.

NG: The Keefer.

JG: No. Well, the Keefer, yes, but Buck Buchanan. When they dredged his place, they got a whole bunch of sand because between Pool 2 and--. What was the other wood place, Norm?

NG: Northern Wood Preservers.

JG: Northern Wood Preservers. There's sand, lots of sand. So being Buck, he got it dumped.

NG: And he had the sand sucker there, and they pulled the sand up from the bottom and deposited it.

NP: So what I'm seeing is this big vacuum cleaner that--.

NG: That's exactly it.

JG: That's what it is, yes.

NP: And then they would set up the route that the pipe went, and then it would come blowing out the other end?

NG: Yes, that's so good. It wasn't like putting the sand into scows and dumping it out in the river. Then you require tugs and the scows and all that. This was one operation.

JG: I ran the one tug, *Bronte Bess*, to put the pipes together.

NG: So the pipes had to keep going to the areas that were--.

NP: When would that have been done because somebody--? Did anybody take any pictures of that? Because that sounds fascinating.

NG: I'll bet you that you could get some from the Keefer Terminal.

JG: You could find out from my book from when I ran the *Bronte Bess*, that would give you an idea of when it was.

NP: Okay. From your--.

NG: Yes. That would be in there.

NP: Okay, good.

NG: But that was very interesting, and people could see that from the Keefer Terminal. You could go down and could see this happening. It was quite interesting.

NP: Yeah!

NG: I think they did a lot of that when they made the floodway.

JG: Yes, they did. That little river that runs opposite the Keefer, they dredged right into the mouth of that, way up.

NG: That's right. You could find out more information about the floodway. They used sand suckers for that floodway because that would be like that.

NP: Neat. I have a couple of general questions for both of you, especially given your experience with the tourist trade. Our group, called Friends of Grain Elevators, for lack of being anything more creative, we came together as a group because we thought that Thunder Bay had a special attraction because of its grain trade from the late 1800s to even now. Well, first of all, and I want you to be honest about this, not diplomatic. I'd like you to be honest. Do you think that a grain elevator activity centre—and I call it an activity centre because it would have to go beyond a museum, museums are not quite enough these days—do you think it stands a chance of being--?

JG: Popular?

NP: Popular.

JG: I think so. I would--. Well, I shouldn't talk because it's part of my life, but we had all kinds of tourists—German tourists, Finnish tourists, and Hungarians—and the Germans and the Finnish loved it most of all. I'm sure they would make a comment on, "Oh I was on it," or, "I thought I was going on it," or "My mother took me on it," or my daughter or whatever.

NG: I was quite involved in tourism and was the president of NOFSA and was really involved in it for years. I look at it this way: If you were going to start an activity centre for the elevators, I think that you'd have to—similar to what Duluth did—if you could get a lake ship and have it alongside an existing elevator that is no longer operational but you can have a tour, so you have the ship, maybe the ship could even be the activity centre inside the ship. Now if you could get the ship beside the elevator, now you've got more than one thing. People would love to go through the ship. So you'll have a ship tied beside an old elevator that can be functional in such a way. Maybe one bin would be operational, or just even the display of it.

JG: Even old Pool 2, if it was tied alongside there, most of the working stuff is probably still in there.

NG: Well, look at the Irvin. When we're in Duluth there's people going into the Irvin all the time, that ship. Of course, now for Halloween they have all the spooky stuff going on there. People come from here just to go to that. I think that, with the ship, I still think it's unfortunate that the *Whalen* is where it is because they've got a lot of information in the *Whalen*. But they got the grant money for it being there, so there's nothing you can do about it. Maybe eventually that will grandfather itself out, and you can move that someplace, because that would be nice.

You would get the ship, and you'd have a tug that moved the ship around in the elevators and broke the ice to get to the elevators, and then you'd have the elevator. The ship has so much space in it. That would be your activity centre. And in the activity centre you could board a ship.

JG: That's a good idea.

NP: That's a very good idea.

NG: Yeah. And so, it becomes--.

JG: She's brilliant.

NP: Are there any ships left?

NG: There would be some. Some in the graveyard and some place around, there's always been.

JG: What happens to the ships now is they're sold to Japan, they're sold to Spain--.

NG: For scrap.

JG: For scrap. And the ship goes out--.

NP: Or India and off they go, and I've seen a documentary on that.

JG: That's right. They go through the locks and through these different destinations and they're scrapped.

NG: I think, perhaps, I don't know if all of Paterson's ships had been scrapped but I think if there is a laker out there that is available, that would be something to pursue while they're still even floatable, so they can be towed. Because Gary Dawson, he towed the *Whalen* up here. I think that might have even better than--. It would've been nice to have the *Assiniboine* or something like that up here but still, if you're going to do something with regards of the elevators and the history of Thunder Bay, right down on the waterfront. There couldn't be anything better. And as long as the ship is basically put in beside the elevator and put in securely, and that can be done, and then you turn around and you have access to it by road, and now keep as you can to the Marina Park because now there you go.

You got your Marina, and you've got the recreation centre, and you have everything else that's going on down there. And here's something else to see, and it's only just a block or two away. Parking and the facility would be the ship. You'd only have to heat one area of it. You'd have everything you need to function. Plus, have a tour through the ship at the same time. And getting on a ship--.

JG: One location would be, possibly, the old grain Pool 6 elevator because they have the dock that's already there and that's where the--.

NP: But they don't have an elevator anymore.

JG: I know but they have the rest.

NP: We're an elevator group.

NG: It has to be an elevator.

NP: It has to be an elevator, sorry. [Laughs] You know other people have suggested Pool 6, and I said, "I'm sorry, there's no elevator!"

NG: Now the small--.

JG: Okay, where is the one standing?

NP: Another possibility, and I'd like to run this past you because of your experience, is to partner with an operating elevator.

NG: Yes!

NP: And one that is working is this little one here, Western Grain Products, on the river.

NG: On the river.

NP: And he has--.

JG: Oh, the little one under Westfort.

NP: He has everything there. Even though he's upgraded to meet modern day standards. He has the old telephone system. He has the old rope-drive system still there, and the old boilers and everything.

JG: How neat is that?

NP: So what are your comments on that possibility, including could you tie a ship up there?

NG: And it's on the mainland, so you don't have to worry about getting over anything.

JG: Norma, you got train tracks, lots of train tracks.

NP: If you come in off of Kingston, there's no train tracks.

NG: That's where--.

NP: Paterson is off of Yonge, so you've got James Street comes like this--.

JG: Where George lived.

NP: There's the underpass, and then you go this way, and then it's right in here. So Yonge Street where the Paterson was. They're right here. The railway tracks are here, so it's this underpass that gets you past the railways. There's the river.

NG: That would be good because--. But I'm sure you could get--.

JG: I was thinking of the--.

NG: The P&H little elevator. I guess not--.

NP: Still operational.

NG: Is it operational still?

NP: Oh, yes.

NG: Because that's always busy.

NP: Yes.

NG: It always used to be.

JG: Which one?

NG: The little one. Little P&H.

JG: The little--. Oh yes, right.

NP: The other possibility there, and Tim Heney's listening, sorry Tim, is that where you have the P&H here and then there's the Neebing comes in here, right?

NG: Yes.

NP: Then Keefer is over here. And--.

NG: The coast guard's in there too.

NP: The coast guard's over here?

NG: Yes.

NP: Right. I think the Port Authority used to be in this building but now they're over here.

JG: That's right, they did.

NG: That's right.

NP: So there we've got--. That's where our display--. You didn't see our summer display, did you?

NG: No.

NP: Oh, too bad. People really liked it. So there's that kind of access there, whereas you may not be in the elevator, but you're within sight in a manageable little bay or slip.

NG: Now could you--.

NP: Well, first let's talk about this river one.

NG: The only thing with the river one--. See right away, now you're putting it in the same spot, similar to where the *Whalen* is, and people just won't get through.

JG: Yes, with the underpass.

NG: I don't think they will.

NP: No, you'd need a lot more advertising than if you were doing it up at the Marina.

NG: Absolutely, yes.

NP: Sort of halfway between the Fort and the Marina.

NG: That's the only problem. And then you're out of the lake too.

NP: Yes.

NG: And the lake is the attraction because you have such a view.

NP: Well then, it's not--. You'd mentioned when you were talking earlier about one of the reasons why the people liked the *Welcome* was that it encouraged people to stay another day.

NG: Oh yes.

NP: By having something away from the Marina, might also encourage that.

NG: Yes, get them to stay another day.

NP: But anyway, I'm interviewing you, not myself.

NG: No, no, this a two way--.

JG: But that's a good idea.

NG: I like this area because of the availability. First of all, the Keefer Terminal here has so much parking, it's so massive, and so anything you do here you go right from the mall, right over and you're there and there's lots—

JG: Sears and everything are there.

NG: There's everything. It's so accessible. There could be a sign right at the mall to the activity centre and so you've got--. Now you've got access, now you've got people. People are coming. Now if you were to do this, I think you've got the right idea right now where you are because you could—and I don't know about the permission from the coast guard—but if you could get a ship put in here that you could make into your activity centre here. So now you're coming in and you're just coming right to it.

Then there could be a walking tour over to the P&H, and if they would allow you to take a tour of it, or see the elevator right across the slip from us right now and we're able to get a visual of it, and you could get pictures of it, maybe you can come have a viewing pod down here some place. It could go get bigger and bigger because the viewing pod would be for people taking pictures of it while it's being loaded, or you could take pictures of it right across from it. This to me seems to be the logical place. Got to get that traffic. I always said they would load up the car and take the Fort cruise--.

JG: I'm always afraid of these railway tracks in here. The whole yard is there. And you got to go over the overhead--.

NG: No, this is--.

JG: Yes, you could still make it down there.

NG: No, not here. No one would come through here, ever. They would all go through the overpass, go into the Keefer, down this road you know where--.

JG: That's a long way.

NG: No! We'll drive over there today. I'll take you over.

NP: Two minutes.

NG: Two minutes!

NP: So it's question then, I've been in here, the guard house is here.

NG: Here's where David's boat is here, you go over and the tugs are right here, that's not far, right? And then you go here where Captain Mann used to have his office and that's where they are, right there.

JG: Okay.

NP: So it's a question--. The railway tracks are coming in this way, so there's--. I think probably their car shed is on that side, so I don't know how you get across the Neebing here.

NG: Oh yeah there's a little--.

JG: Little bridge.

NP: I don't know if there's a--. I don't think there--.

NG: But you could have a viewing pod here. We could see. I think that might be--. Where your located right now is probably the best spot that you could probably get, if you can get something more.

NP: Persuade the powers that be. Okay, so I'm going to go offline here because I've got another question for you, but I want to--. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that would like to have taped before I shut off the machine?

JG: I don't think--.

NG: Well that we enjoyed your company, Nancy Perozzo!

JG: I think we pretty well covered everything.

NG: This has been a pleasure for us to have you in our home. There you go.

NP: Oh, you are such schmoozers. Thank you so much. This has been a great addition to our Voices of the Grain Trade project.

End of interview.