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Company Affiliations: Canada Steamship Lines (CSL), Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)

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Summary: Retired captain for Canada Steamship Lines Brian Hudson discusses his long career aboard lake and ocean vessels. He begins by describing his brief period of work in grain elevator car sheds both as a boxcar shoveller and then as a switchman for the CPR. He then discusses joining the Seafarers' International Union and getting his first posting as a deckhand on the *Fort William*. He lists the various positions on the ship and their main duties, the different types of ships he worked on, and the main commodities handled. He describes his ascent from deckhand to captain, his experiences transporting grain to American and Canadian ports, and his experience sailing through the Panama Canal. Hudson explains the step-by-step processing of loading grain at an elevator and shares possible difficulties in transportation, like weather, traffic, and narrow spaces. He recalls his interactions with other groups, like Seaway pilots, stevedores, grain trimmers, and Canada Ports Clearance Association. Other topics discusses include improvements to health and safety, increased security, downsizing of crews, technological advancements, stories of challenging manoeuvres, and stories of bad weather on the Great Lakes.

Keywords: Canada Steamship Lines (CSL); Ship's captains; Grain transportation—ships; Great Lakes trade; St. Lawrence Seaway; Seafarers/sailors; Deckhands; Lakers; Ocean-going vessels; Bulk carriers; Self-unloaders; Package freighters; Ship loading; Terminal grain elevators—Thunder Bay; Ship pilots; Health & safety; Grain trimmers; Stevedores; Canada Ports Clearance Association (CPCA); Downsizing; Panama Canal; Seafarers' International Union (SIU); Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR); Switchmen; Car shed; Boxcar shovelling; Railcar unloading; Grain dust; Duluth; Terminal grain elevators—St. Lawrence Seaway

Time, Speaker, Narrative
NP: It is the afternoon of Feb 28th, and we are interviewing in Thunder Bay. I am pleased to have the person to interview today available. I am going to ask him to introduce himself and just say a little bit about his part in the grain trade.

BH: My name is Captain Brain Hudson, born in Thunder Bay and started sailing September 1, 1976. I have been previously been working on the railway, and I was outside the Seafarers International Union office. I was talking to a friend of mine Doug McMillan, and he told me that my application had been approved and would I like a job. I said, "What is that all about?" It was a Friday afternoon, and he said, "Well, I have a job for you in the Soo for you tomorrow." So, I went into the railway that afternoon, and I quit my job, and I got on a Greyhound bus, and I went to the Soo.

NP: Who was that job with?

BH: It was with Canada Steamship Lines, and the ship was *Fort William*. It was a package freighter.

NP: How appropriate! Were you born actually in Fort William then?

BH: In Port Arthur.

NP: In Port Arthur. Did that cause you some frustration for you?

BH: Not at all.

NP: I am going to step back just a little bit because you said you worked on the railway. Obviously, that has got something to do with grain as well. What was your career there?

BH: I was a switchman for CPR, and we pulled and filled elevators.

NP: When did you start with them then?

BH: I worked for them for about four years, and then I worked my seniority up to the place where I would be force foreman and had to work midnights. That was not the life for me, so that was the end of it.

NP: When you grew up in Port Arthur, were you close to the waterfront at all?

BH: When we were kids, it was kind of stay away from the waterfront because it was dangerous. There were hoodlums and pirates and bandits and that kind of thing, you know. That was what was put into our minds, and there was drugs and alcohol. So I never spent any time at the waterfront other than looking at it from Hillcrest Park and Boulevard.

NP: What was your first experience with an elevator?

BH: I got a job working at an elevator cleaning the grain out of boxcars.

NP: This was prior to your railway work?

BH: Yes, prior to the railway. It was a super dangerous job. You had to keep carrying this great big board up. It was on the pulley, and you stick it in the grain, then you had to put your foot on the cable and ride it out pulling the grain. The grain would go into a hopper, which would go up into the elevator. The first day on the job, I saw one guy hanging upside down, and he had lost his leg from one of these cables.

NP: On that day?

BH: Yes.

NP: So how long did that job last?

BH: A couple of months in the summer.

NP: Hard, physical work.

BH: Really hard. I was a little bit of an asthmatic at the time, and we didn't have facemasks, and there was grain dust, and the heat was horrible.

NP: But you decided you would stay on the railway?

BH: Yes. Then I went to work on the railway, and I liked that job. There were lots of really good guys to work for there and to work with.

NP: What did you learn about the grain trade from the railway's perspective?

BH: Just all the different grades of grain and how many bushels that would fill up the ship.

NP: Where were you working? Were you working in the south side in the Neebing Yards as a switchman or did you move around?

BH: I moved around all over the place. We would work at Current River elevators and what was called the pocket which was down in between Keefer and Northern Woods—those elevators. Then there were elevators to service out in Westfort as well.

NP: Which railway did you say you were working for?

BH: CPR.

NP: Did CPR service all of them? Because at one time I understood that CPR and CN sort of divided up which elevators.

BH: That is true. I could not tell you which ones were which though.

NP: Did that create a problem that there were different lines going into different elevators or were they all set up?

BH: No, there were different yards and totally just different boxcars.

NP: What can you tell me about being a switchman on a railway? What does that entail? I just have a picture of somebody pulling the switches.

BH: What you have to do is line up all the boxcars to shove into an elevator. We'd go with the engine, and you throw a switch and go in here, and you pick up the boxcars, and you pull back. You close that switch, and you open another switch and go into another line and just make a whole pile of boxcars that you would eventually pull back and push into the elevator.

NP: You are on the ground and the engineer is on the train?

BH: Yes.

NP: You would be responsible for the one end of the team that is working on making sure that there are not too many cars pushed into the elevator?

BH: That is where you count them up, and you have to signal, using hand signals at that time. Quite a few boxcars ended up in the lake. Guys not paying attention. You got demerit points for that.

NP: How many could you get away with?

BH: I don't know. It's hard to tell. [Laughs]

NP: Did you ever lose any?

BH: No.

NP: A careful person.

BH: Yes.

NP: I have seen pictures of them, where they would all be--.

BH: You have to get divers down and pull them out. It is a big deal and costs a lot of money.

NP: That would have been—you said 1976 you went down to CSL—so it would have been the early '70s that you were working on the railway?

BH: Yes.

NP: Was that a busy time?

BH: Very, very busy.

NP: Do you remember how many cars you would handle in a day?

BH: All the jobs were different. The length of the rail where the boxcars would go, it was all different. You had an order, and you would have so many cars and all the serial numbers, and you would just pick them up and push them in.

NP: Were the switchman assigned to different areas then?

BH: Yes, different jobs.

NP: The Current River area would have what you call the pocket, which we refer to as the Intercity string of elevators.

BH: Yes.

NP: Were they pretty much all operating then?

BH: Yes.

NP: Did you learn anything about elevators, being that close to them then? Did you like them or not like them?

BH: I didn't like them for the grain dust.

NP: I don't think they had their new filter systems in then?

BH: Oh no, it was horrible.

NP: In what way?

BH: Just the dust and breathing it in. It is almost claustrophobic.

NP: You were outside.

BH: Yes. It wasn't so bad working outside, but inside the elevators was pretty dusty.

NP: Were you in the car sheds?

BH: Yes.

NP: Where they were unloading. Would you actually be in the car shed as a switchman?

BH: Yes, you would push right through, and you would be riding on the side of a box car giving hand signals when to slow down and how many cars to go and stuff.

NP: That didn't sound too safe either.

BH: Not in today's world. We used to run the length of them, 100 boxcars, on top. We would just run the length of them, and that is what we did. I did it for exercise. You didn't have to, but you could, so we did. I don't think they do that anymore.

NP: No, not with anybody watching anyways.

BH: Yes.

NP: Anything else that you can remember about that time before we move on to your major career?

BH: No. I liked the railway because I could work in the afternoons. I could get off in the evening, so that I could play tennis in the morning and then do whatever after work that night. It was a good job. If you did a good job, and you worked hard, and you had a good team, you got an early quit, so you would not have to put in a full eight-hour shift. Sometimes you would get home at six hours or six and a half hours.

NP: You would get your job done?

BH: That is the jobs you look for is the ones with the early quit.

NP: Yes. I suspect, too, that you were working with the guys who had started up after the war?

BH: Yes.

NP: What can you tell us about the difference in the young guys and the old guys?

BH: I thought there was a pretty good camaraderie amongst everybody.

NP: Helpful?

BH: Yes, there was a good bunch of guys. They wanted to teach you as fast as they could, so that it would be easier on them. So if you picked it up, you were a good guy.

NP: Let's move along. You were talking about Doug McMillan, who was a good friend of my sister by the way, saying that your application had been approved. What did you apply for?

BH: I just applied to get into the union, the Seafarers Union, SIU. He told me a little before that that I was approved. He came out and snagged me off the side of a boxcar in the East End and said, "Look I have a job for you tomorrow if you want it." I said, "Well okay, let's try that." I wasn't doing anything but working midnights.

NP: Did you apply for a particular job?

BH: No, just applied to get into the union. You could start off as a cook or a porter.

NP: But you knew that you were going to seafaring obviously.

BH: Yes.

NP: Were you used to boats?

BH: Just recreational boats.

NP: Does this seem like a stretch to go from railway to hopping onto a freighter?

BH: I just wanted to do something different. I knew the first day that I was on a ship that that was what I wanted to do.

NP: How did you get down to the Soo?

BH: By Greyhound.

NP: You took the Greyhound. I think you said that. Just take us through that first day or two.

BH: The first day, I remember I was told that I had to go paint the ship's side. At that time--. And it was a smaller boat, but apparently, I was too enthusiastic, and I got in trouble for working too hard from the other guys because I tried to paint the entire ship's side because I thought that was my job. [Laughs] I did a pretty good job of it. Then I had to learn all the ropes and knots and practise that a lot. Actually, the guy who hired me that day is John Quarrel. He is still alive. He was a captain with CSL. I see him at the grocery store once in a while. He thought that I was a big enough guy and from Thunder Bay, so he hired me.

NP: When you went to the Soo, did you go right on the boat or do they put you up someplace?

BH: Oh no, I went right from the bus stop to Algoma Steel where the boat was unloading steel.

NP: So it was right in the midst of working?

BH: Yes.

NP: Was it Algoma Ship Lines?

BH: No, it was Algoma Steel Company. That is where the dock was.

NP: Whose ship was it?

BH: Canada Steamship Line.

NP: Of course, yes. When you first went on the ship what do you see and what were your quarters like?

BH: I was pretty lucky. I had my own room. I was just relieving a guy who had gone on vacation, so it was only going to be for a month. I enjoyed it, super enjoyed it.

NP: Did you stay on the ship, or did you go off at night?

BH: No, you have your cabin on the ship. We loaded up steel coils and took off down to Windsor where we unloaded them.

NP: What appealed to you right away about sailing?

BH: I just liked the fresh air. You are working outside. Every morning you get up and you are somewhere different, which intrigued me because I like travelling. It was always important to me to travel.

NP: Who made up the crew?

BH: In those days, it was mostly Newfoundlanders and Cape Bretoners, and there were people from Quebec as well. Not many people from Ontario. A lot of the Newfoundlanders moved up to St. Catherine's, so they could jump off the ship and be with their family while they are transiting the canal, and the Cape Bretoners as well. Lots of people moved to St. Catherine's. That was the big hub.

NP: What was the size of the crew?

BH: At that time, that ship was probably about 22 people.

NP: I think maybe you are one of the first ones that we have had as certainly ship's captain. Who makes up a crew? What positions are on a crew?

BH: You start off with the captain, then there is the first mate under him, second mate, third mate. And then working with each of the mates would be the wheelsman. So there would be three wheelsman. They are now called able seaman now. Then there would be the deck crew, so many deck crew. Then sometimes they would have a bosun, which is the lead deckhand or a leading seaman they call it. Then in the galley there would be at that time a cook, second cook, porter, and sometimes night cook. Then in the engine room there would chief engineer, second engineer, third engineer, fourth engineer, and an electrician.

NP: They are all full-time, and they are all on the ship?

BH: Yes.

NP: How long did you sign up for? Usually a month, or you were just a relief person?

BH: Yes, I was just a relief person at that time. At that time, there was no real scheduled vacation thing. Some of the guys would come on in the spring and stay right till Christmas, and those were the guys who really didn't want to go home. But now the captains work two months on and one month off. The unlicensed crew work three months on, one month off. The officers, they

generally work it out amongst themselves to get their time off. It is all about getting your time off. It is not about making more money. It is about getting your time off.

NP: Maybe it would be worthwhile to just follow very quickly through your career. You started off as a deckhand. How did your career progress and why did you choose to move all the way to the top?

BH: I knew the first day that I was on the ship that I wanted to be captain.

NP: Why was that?

BH: I don't know. It just struck me that that was what I wanted to do.

NP: You liked the uniform? [Laughs]

BH: Not many guys wear a uniform. Not anymore anyway. I worked as a deckhand, and then I went from deckhand to watchman, which is that you are on watch with each of the mates, which is a leading hand on deck. Then you get the orders from the mate, and you get the deckhands to do all that work. From watchman I went to wheelsman and from wheelsman I went to third mate, second mate, first mate, and captain.

NP: A set of progression. And were there examinations to take along the way?

BH: Yes. When you start writing your licenses, you had to have so much prerequisite sea time to fulfill each license. I always had the license done before I had the sea time because I was so interested in getting ahead, so I had all the examinations written. Then I just had to get the sea time. Then you have to do an oral in front of a Coast Guard.

NP: Not to dwell a whole lot on the positions, but as you talk about deckhands and wheelsman and so on, in my unintelligent way I assume what they do. Could you just very quickly go through those people and maybe the major responsibilities that define those classes?

BH: If you are a deckhand, you are just doing a lot of the ship’s maintenance like chipping, painting, carrying out unloading and loading operations, opening hatches and closing hatches. There is the watchman who gets all these jobs done and keeps the deck organized. The wheelsman on watch, he usually was the guy in charge of attending the security on the ship like watching the gangway and whose is coming and going. The third mate would be carrying out the orders of the first mate for loading and

unloading operations. The third mate's also the safety officer on the ship, so he is in charge of all the safety stuff—lifeboats, breathing apparatus, extinguishers and helping train guys for drills. The second mate is the navigation officer, so he is in charge of all the bridge equipment and charts and correcting charts. The first mate is in charge of payroll and loading and unloading operations for stability of the ship. The captain just oversees the whole thing.

NP: Yes, I had misconceptions almost all the way through there. You think of the watchman as the guy who goes around and just watches.

BH: Yes, well, that is really what the watchman does and has all kinds of jobs. He goes and sounds the tanks to make sure you are not taking on water. He sounds the tanks once a watch, and he records that in a book in the wheelhouse. They go around and keep things organized. Each person had a different part of the ship they had to keep clean like the floors and the walls. That is what the watchman did.

NP: How long was it between when you started and when you became a captain?

BH: I started when I was 26, and I was captain when I was 40.

NP: Okay. Are you still active?

BH: No.

NP: No. When did you retire?

BH: I didn't retire. I got put out to pasture because of my back. I was in a couple of bad car accidents, and I could not do the job anymore. Transport Canada deemed me "unfit for duty" so they would not renew my licence.

NP: And in a circumstance on a ship, there is no sort of other things that you could do? That is disappointing.

BH: Yes.

NP: The *Fort William*, what kind of ship was it?

BH: A package freighter.

NP: I just interviewed someone the other day who talked about the package fleet, Dennis Johnson. He was with the Port Authority. Package freighters were really numerous.

BH: Yes, at one point.

NP: Was that always the case? No, because they disappeared.

BH: They disappeared because containers on railways took that business away. It was just easier to manoeuvre all the manufactured goods by rail.

NP: And all those ships?

BH: They were converted or scrapped. The *Fort William* went on to be the *Steven B. Roman,* which is a cement carrier. It carries cement from places like Pickton to Toronto and Cleveland to Toronto. It is a pretty steady business. I worked on that ship as well when it was converted.

NP: What kinds of ships beside the packet did you work on?

BH: I worked on what they called is a flat back, which is just a lake boat with no self-unloading equipment. Then I went on to work on self-unloaders, which are where the money was for the company because if you make it into port, unload, and nobody would have to be there. So, there was no crew on shore clamming the stuff out or having to use suction to get the grain out of the holds. We just do it on belts and shoot it over the side.

NP: Who is responsible for that on the ship then?

BH: The first mates for cargo operations.

NP: So flat backs and self-unloaders.

BH: At one point, I worked on a passenger ship in the Caribbean. I was trying to make sure that instead of taking a vacation I got a job in the Caribbean. So, I went down there for a few months then I came back so my sea time would go right through. It was like a vacation. I was so eager to get my licences finished.

NP: CSL is a big shipping company in Canada. What can you tell us about working for them?

BH: They are a good company to work for. Paul Martin was the owner, and he was a good guy. They looked after us very well.

NP: What ships were in their fleet at the time do you recall?

BH: I could not name them all.

NP: Yes.

BH: I could show you them all.

NP: We will do that once we are finished the interview.

BH: Why don't we take a break, and I will take you downstairs and show you--.

[Audio pauses]

NP: We just resumed after a fascinating tour of the personal museum and all kinds of ships, memorabilia, and some wonderful paintings and photographs. We left off talking about the Canadian Steamship Lines and what it was like working for them. They are a big operation. Who were the major customers might be the best way of handling it and what kinds of loads did you mainly--.

BH: I think the biggest company was Stelco in Hamilton. We used to take a lot of iron ore in there from Sept-Iles, Port Cartier. Hydro for coal. St. Lawrence Cement was a big customer. We used to bring clinker there and cement.

NP: What is clinker?

BH: Clinker is a raw material that is not taxed when you bring it out of the States. There are just a few additives to it to make it into cement. It is a very lucrative commodity to carry.

NP: Is it a K or a C clinker?

BH: It is a "C". The grain trade, that was big.

NP: What can you tell us about the grain trade?

BH: We carried grain from Thunder Bay to places in eastern Quebec like Port Cartier, Baie Comeau, and we took grain as well from Thunder Bay to Duluth. I was on that run for quite a while which was nice. We used to take oats down there, and they would unload them into the elevator, and then the elevator loaded them into trucks and went to Minneapolis to make Cheerios. I have taken barley from Thunder Bay to Toronto, and that was for malt for beer making. We took grain from here to Midland quite a bit. There were many legs of the grain trade for sure.

NP: I am going to ask you a little bit about sailing those ships into the various grain ports. Starting from Thunder Bay then I guess the closest port would be Duluth?

BH: Yes.

NP: What is like taking grain into the port at Duluth? What is notable about that run?

BH: It is a pretty straight shot. It is about a 12-hour run down there. Some of the elevators are very accessible down there, and we really had to refine the way that we suppress dust in the port at Duluth. We did some major engineering things there trying to reduce the amount of dust into the environment.

NP: Can you explain for a layperson why that was necessary? What was it about unloading that created all that dust and what kinds of things you tried to do to improve it?

BH: The belt system on the ship would get the grain moving pretty good, and all the chaff would come off the grain and then go into the air. What we had to do was to contain it on the boom and put a nozzle on the end of the boom that went into a hopper that we had a tarp over and then they had a big extraction vacuum to keep the dust down. That was all because of the Environment Protection Agency.

NP: Was that the only port where you had to do this?

BH: No, that is where it started, and we started making these hoppers and stuff specifically trying to suppress the grain.

NP: That is not an issue here in Thunder Bay because we don't offload grain. Were they doing any offloading when you started?

BH: No. They always loaded here unless you got overloaded and you had to unload some. The grain trade here was pretty big at one time. It was very busy.

NP: We will come back to the changes--. Because Duluth is the closest port, how many elevators were you delivering into there?

BH: Three.

NP: Was it more of a challenge, one more of a challenge from a docking perspective?

BH: The easiest one was General Mills because as soon as you went through the Arial Bridge it was straight ahead shot. The next one was UGG, and there was another one at Superior. There was a rickety old dock and broken down timbers, and it was not very safe to dock there because you could do some damage with the weight of the ship.

NP: Do you have to turn around at Duluth? You go in through the one under the one bridge and then how do you manoeuvre to get back out? Can you just turn in that inner bay? You don't have to back or anything?

BH: The St. Lawrence River basin you turn around in. But ordinarily after we unload the grain, we'd go and load ore at the high dock in Duluth, and then we take that down to the Lake at Stelco.

NP: As you then head down past Lake Superior, where would the other--? And you mentioned Midland?

BH: Georgian Bay.

NP: Georgian Bay. Were there any other elevators still open along there?

BH: Goderich.

NP: Goderich. What about those elevators and what were they like to manoeuvre into?

BH: It is all part of the job. You didn't have favorites or anything, I don't think.

NP: Not so much favorites as this one are easy and that one is a pain in the neck?

BH: They are all equally challenging under different weather conditions.

NP: Tell us more about that. How do weather conditions impact?

BH: One thing about Duluth is that when that St. Louis River gets rolling with rain, it all comes out through the Arial Bridge, and it can be a huge current. I remember there was one time it was so strong that I had to anchor and wait for the water levels to subside before I could go into the port. There is stuff like that that you have to watch out for and then there are huge gales. If you get a huge northwest wind coming down Lake Superior, there is a fetch all the way from Wawa to Duluth and that can make it challenging to get into those piers because of the huge waves crashing over them.

NP: What is a fetch?

BH: A fetch is a length of the water that wind has a chance to build up the sea. It is like from shore to shore.

NP: Since we are talking about elevators, let's just talk about the elevators here in Thunder Bay. You must have been just about all of them as well?

BH: Yes.

NP: You said you had your captain's papers by 1980, was it? I recall around there.

BH: Yes.

NP: Which elevators were you delivering to then at that time? Were you going up the river?

BH: No. We went to the two elevators just up the Kam. I can't even remember the names of them now.

NP: Cargill and Searle?

BH: Cargill.

NP: Mission? Although it would not be Mission by then.

BH: Anyway, we went in there quite frequently. That was a tight place to get in and out of. Very tight. Richardson is another tight one to get and out of. The other ones are pretty straightforward—P&H and Pool 4 and those ones.

NP: Not too bad?

BH: Yes.

NP: Is the Harbour relatively sheltered so that the wind conditions and storm conditions you are talking about like they had in Duluth were not usually a factor in Thunder Bay?

BH: Probably the hardest place to get into is Thunder Bay Terminal when you have to turn outside the pier and back in. If you have a wind from the west, it is pretty difficult. If you have a westerly wind, you are nose on to most of the elevators.

NP: The actual process of unloading at the dock, or let's say here we are loading grain at the dock, take us through the process as you are coming in to the harbour approaching the breakwater. You are going in to get a load of grain. What happens?

BH: We have to start with the discharge of iron ore, then the cleaning up our discharge of coal and cleaning the ship up for grain and having a grain inspection on arrival. We have to clean it up pretty darn good to pass inspection before you can even load. That is the biggest thing coming up to the Lakes is to get the ship ready and clean to load grain. That is the big deal! Then when you arrive you have to have a grain inspection and once you get passed you can start loading. Then as you load, the first mate has a load plan, and the deck officers follow the load plan with the grain trimmers. They shift the boat so that the grain can be loaded onto the boat.

NP: Let's assume that we are loading at Canada Malting. You bring the ship in, and they start loading. What happens first? You have the ship tied up.

BH: Yes, the ship is tied up and it gets past inspection, then you start pumping ballast out to take on the weight of the grain. You have to keep the ship trimmed so if you have to shift to another elevator you have to load specifically to keep the stability of the ship and the ballast so that the captain can manoeuvre the ship.

NP: Does this mean that you have to go in and out?

BH: You shift up and down the dock to put the grain in the different holds.

NP: Does that usually go smoothly, or can anything go wrong?

BH: Tons of stuff can go wrong for sure. Sometimes you have to stop loading for rain and put all the hatches on which is a mad scramble then you have to take them off and load again, and in between rain showers, it is kind of a pain. Then wintertime there is snow and ice. I remember a couple of times coming up the lake where we have to stop out in the harbour and break the ice off the winches just to come in and tie up because you get so iced up from coming up the lake.

NP: How do you get the ice off? It's not like you have a lot of hair dryers.

BH: No, you have got big oak ice mallets, and you have to pound the ice off.

NP: There are just a big--.

BH: They are a big sledgehammer made out of oak.

NP: Is it operated by hand?

BH: Yes.

NP: That must be lots of fun!

BH: When it is 20 below.

NP: When it is 20 below.

BH: You are standing on steel decks with the wind howling.

NP: Dangerous too would it not be with the ice?

BH: Yes, it is slippery.

NP: Are people tied on? Do they have to have safety harnesses when they are doing something like that?

BH: Not really.

NP: No?

BH: No. If you are going up and down the ladders in the cargo holds, you have to have a safety harness on, and that is all part of the process of cleaning the ship. There is a lot of up and down there.

NP: My husband one summer had a job cleaning up the holds of the ship and essentially what it was you just go down with a bunch of rags and clean it up. Is that what you do nowadays too if you are cleaning up, or do you hose out what do you do?

BH: You hose out, and you use big brooms to sweep stuff up and clean it up. It is mostly water hosing it out.

NP: And this is the deckhands job?

BH: Yes.

NP: I can see why you would want to be captain.

BH: Yes. [Laughs]

NP: Monika, if I am missing questions just add them in. We are going all over the place. We had started heading down the lakes and there was Midland. Was that before or after the first lock?

BH: Oh, that is in Georgian Bay, and is nowhere near the lock.

NP: Okay. That is off to the side.

BH: Yes.

NP: So most of the grain shipments then would go through the locks, at the Soo?

BH: Some, and there is local traffic, and you go into Sarnia which was a hard elevator to get into and out of.

NP: Why was that?

BH: It was just below the Blue Water Bridge, and there is a huge current there, so it was tricky and difficult because you had to go down past the elevator and turn around in the river and come up and then go in. It was pretty tricky. The first time was pretty tricky. Then there is Port Colbourne where we took grain into Port Colbourne as well. I have taken grain to Toronto for, as I said, for malt or for breweries.

NP: Was that right in that stretch between the Island Airport and downtown? That is pretty tight.

BH: Yes, Canada Malt.

NP: That is a pretty tight and busy or it was busy.

BH: Yes, it was.

NP: How does that work? Do people just stay out of your way?

BH: Yes, well you have to watch the rules of the road with the ferries and pleasure craft. Might is right get out of the way. You are constricted by your draft. You can't go outside the channel where those guys can. They are pretty good about it.

NP: Have you ever had to stop the ship? I mean put the brakes on and--. It doesn't have brakes. In an emergency situation, if you had to stop your forward motion, can that be done and how long would it take you?

BH: If you're out on a lake and you want to stop, it would take you three quarters of a mile to stop because of the momentum. I never, ever remember actually having to slam on the brakes.

NP: What do you put on, thrusters or rear thrusters or whatever they are called?

BH: Rear propulsions, full astern.

NP: You are heading down into the locks, so describe that process.

BH: You are headed to Port Colbourne, and you have to monitor the radio, and the Seaway tells you in what order a ship will get to the lock. Whether you are down bound or up bound, and they time it and try to keep the traffic as smoothly as possible. There are eight locks in the Welland Canal.

NP: That slows you down?

BH: Oh, it is a long haul. You know when you get in there you are going to be working 12 or 14 hours straight.

NP: How long does it normally take you to get across the lakes if you are going to here straight to the locks?

BH: Straight to the Soo, 24 hours.

NP: And another--?

BH: Then you go down St. Mary's River, and you go across Lake Huron and then go down St. Clair River across Lake St. Clair and down the Detroit River into Lake Eerie, across Lake Eerie to Port Colborne. On the lakes is where I have sleep, so I can pilot the river.

NP: Do you prefer the open seas sailing or do you like the challenge?

BH: I like the challenge of ship handling and pilotage.

NP: You mentioned pilotage, and that was another term that came up the other day. What is the actual connection between you and the pilotage people? How does that work? When do you get in touch with him and when do they link up with you and how do you communicate and what do you communicate?

BH: There is mandatory pilotage in the St. Lawrence River, and as you come down Lake Ontario you line up a pilot to come on at Tibbett's Point, and then he pilots the ship down to the locks. Then I would come over to take over to do the locks, the ship handling around the locks.

NP: When you say--?

BH: This is a saltwater boat where the pilot comes aboard at Tibbett's. We do our own pilotage going down the river.

NP: Okay.

BH: Until we get to Montreal and then a pilot comes on at Montreal and that is mandatory pilotage for us for a domestic fleet.

NP: So there is an actual person on? Again, I have all kinds of misconceptions. Another person comes on and actually takes over the instructing of the crew at least in a navigational--?

BH: Yes, he pilots the ship.

NP: Yes. So he comes on and then where does he get off again?

BH: The pilot comes on in St. Lambert lock. He gets off at Three Rivers. Another guy gets on there with a pilot boat, and you drop the gangway down to the pilot gets on. They exchange. After Three Rivers, you get a pilot to Quebec City, and you switch again there. Then you take another pilot there to--. And I'm losing it.

NP: You are going to Quebec City down to--?

BH: Eastern Quebec down by Sept Isles, but I just can't remember the last pilotage point.

NP: Why so many?

BH: Because they can only do so many hours, and they have to get off and another guy comes on. By the time I piloted the river from Lake Ontario to Montreal, I am ready for a nap.

NP: How long does it take you to get out? If you are not stopping anywhere along the way, how long does it get you to get out to the rest of the St. Lawrence?

BH: Depending on traffic and everything, from Montreal, it is about three days to Halifax.

NP: How many knots are you doing and restricted to there?

BH: The speed limits vary between 10 and 12 knots. That is about as fast as these lake ships will go is about 12 knots.

NP: Anything else that you can tell us about the haulage of grain that is particular to grain? Does it present particular challenges or problems?

BH: Problems are just something you just fix. I can't name anything specifically but keeping the cargo dry. I was just carrying the grain.

NP: Does it shift?

BH: No.

NP: No, not if it's done right?

BH: The entire hold is filled up, and there is nowhere for the grain to shift. Whereas iron ore, which has little peaks like this, and if the ship rolled, you could get the roll.

NP: Do the holds have to be full then?

BH: It is all about making money and carrying the most product that you can.

NP: Okay.

BH: To the Seaway draft.

NP: Yes. But there is no safety concern that it needs to be filled to the top. You can spread a load around?

BH: Yes, that is what the grain trimmers do when they are loading. They load it so that it is even throughout. Coal will fill the hold as well, so there is no moving around. Iron ore is probably the biggest danger of rolling. You load it to angle of repose that it doesn't have an effect.

NP: I am wondering about the division of duties or cooperation between the stevedore foremen. Have I got that right that comes on to oversee the loading of the grain?

BH: He works in conjunction with the first mate.

NP: The first mate. So what is there working relationship?

BH: It better be good! [Laughs]

NP: It would seem to me from knowing about both of those positions, that it might be a question as to who does what and who has responsibility or authority?

BH: You do not lock horns and you can't. I was very fortunate because I was a boy from Thunder Bay, and they were proud to have a guy from Thunder Bay loading the boat and just working with him. I never had any problems with all of them. They were good friends.

NP: What would you lock horns on? What would be some of the contentious issues?

BH: Maybe the shifting of the boat and the line-up of doing it correctly. If he had a guy that was inexperienced as first mate and didn't know the proper order to shift the boat, to make it economically feasible to load the ship? Then the experienced foreman would probably give him a few ideas on how to lessen the number of shifts to get it done and get out. That is about the only thing I would say.

NP: That foreman the one that is coming onboard ship?

BH: The grain trimmer?

NP: Yes. He really needs to know your ship too.

BH: Yes, and they are really familiar because they loaded it so many times.

NP: So you could have an inexperienced trimmer or are they mostly?

BH: They are all senior guys, and they know what they are doing.

NP: yes.

BH: Yes. One of my good buddies I went to school with he was a grain trimmer, Harry Whitney, and his father was a grain trimmer as well.

MM: We have the Whitney grain trimmers shovel, and his son lives around the corner on Riverdale Road, and at his house in the [inaudible]?

BH: No, this is a different Whitney.

NP: Monika, is it? Yes, he has a grain trimmer's shovel though.

MM: His father's name was Ely Whitney.

BH: This guy's name was Wilson Whitney, his father.

NP: Maybe it is a family trade?

MM: I think it was a family thing because his brother was doing it as well.

BH: I didn't know that. Have you talked to any stevedores or grain trimmers?

NP: I personally have not. We have one Tom the famous Thunder Bay Mc--. There is a whole family of McKinnons. The McKinnons. I was just in Empire Stevedoring yesterday and got a couple of names from there, so if you have some recommendations, I will ask you at the end. As far as your career as a captain, where did you travel? You were not exclusively on the lakes?

BH: I worked for the international fleet quite often anywhere from Thunder Bay to Vancouver through Panama.

NP: Taking grain any of that time?

BH: Never through Panama.

NP: No?

BH: No. I carried stone through Panama and potash that is about it.

NP: What is it like going through the Panama Canal?

BH: The first time I went through the Panama Canal, it was run by the Corps of Engineers from the States, and it was like going through a Hollywood movie set. It was pristine and everything was in its place and was really well managed. Then the Panamanians took it over and the roof would be off over here and there would be piles of garbage behind that building and it really got run down from when the Corps of Engineers ran it.

NP: Does it run fairly efficiently, or are the ships stacked up to go through? First of all, do you have to book?

BH: Yes, it is all run through your agent on your arrival time and the size of the ship and what you are carrying. Refrigeration ships got priority and passenger ships got priority.

NP: How long would you have had to wait then on a bad day? Days?

BH: No, not days. I don't ever remember waiting more than about 18 hours.

NP: What about the port of Vancouver and Prince Rupert?

BH: I have never been to Prince Rupert. But there is a Pilotage Authority in Vancouver that they send a pilot out to bring the ship into the port.

NP: I am going to check, and I think we have 20 minutes, so now is the time for a break again. I am going to check my question list and we will look at that before we start up again. **[Audio pauses]** Your career lasted how many years approximately with CSL?

BH: From 1976 until 2004.

NP: That is 38 years.

BH: I know I got a 25 year watch out of that.

NP: My mathematic is not great. Over that time though, there were probably a fair number of changes in the shipping?

BH: One of the biggest changes was safety.

NP: Tell us about that.

BH: When I started out, we were running around in tennis shoes and no hard hats. That changed in a hurry from steel toes to hard hats. It was a big safety deal. Another big deal was 9/11 and how that changed all our Customs people working and getting in and out of ports in the States. It just took the fun right out of the job I am telling you.

NP: What was the change? What kinds of things changed?

BH: The paperwork and how many days you had to have in it before you got to your arrival port. All the paperwork, it was just a bunch of problems.

NP: You became a desk guy?

BH: Yes.

NP: Did they actually come on and do inspections?

BH: Yes.

NP: Did that change to the intensity of the inspections?

BH: Yes, I would say. There are ports I would go into like Toledo and would jump on my mountain bike and drive into town and clear the ship at the Customs house there then drive back. It was different.

NP: It was variable?

BH: I remember I had to go to anchor in Portsmouth in Maine, and the army came aboard all geared up, and it was all the Coast Guard guys. They are all guns and everything and made me put everybody in the rec room. They had had a bomb scare. They thought it came from the ship. A woman phoned in a bomb scare and by VHF radio they thought it came from my ship. I said, "The women on the ship, there is two. They don't come to the wheelhouse for any reason. It is manned all the time. So I don't know what you are talking about." They had me running around getting paperwork and documentation and searching the ship and all this. It was not a very pleasant experience.

NP: Now the safety situation, we talked a little bit about that within your earlier career with the railway. What kinds of accidents were common on a ship?

BH: People losing fingers and stuff, handling the mooring wires. That was a problem. Inexperienced people, and inexperienced people in the winch and on the wires. Slips and falls, heart attacks, galley people cutting themselves. It was a historical part in history changing from when I started sailing to now. It is completely different.

NP: Does the safety measures actually make a difference?

BH: They improved it 100 percent, yes.

NP: It is the same thing in the elevators. The elevators and probably the railways for a very long time, the accidents happened, and it was almost assumed to be, "Well, that is the nature of the job." What do you think, especially on ships, changed the attitude and lead to finally having action?

BH: I think it was just the maturity amongst the company and the officers and the crew—just more awareness. Trying to avoid stuff happening. Rather than trying to do something yourself, get help. Then we had all kinds of stuff like confined-entry-space drills. You had to get all kinds of knowledge about that because you opening up a manhole and just crawling into the tank is what we did when I first got there. But there are all kinds of gasses that could be down there, and if you get someone overcome by gasses then the next guy to help you, he is going to get overcome. Then we had to monitor the gas levels with devices. It was just a whole safety thing that transpired.

NP: Any changes in the makeup of the crew, the types of people who became crew members?

BH: The biggest deal was the reduction in crew. The company wanted to make more money. They were pretty greedy about that, so they reduced the number of jobs. Overtime for the other people increased. That is a safety factor, too, you know. We had to monitor

how many hours a guy worked, and you would have to knock him off and make him go to sleep. There was a lot of monkeying around trying to get stuff done with fewer people. So it was a lot more of a job.

NP: Do they just reduce the number of people within each position, or do they actually get rid of some positions and combine positions?

BH: They got rid of some positions.

NP: Which ones out of the ones we talked about?

BH: I think the night cook was the first to go and then the porter. There would only be two people in the galley for 26 people.

NP: In 24 hours?

BH: That was a big reduction. The officers used to have their rooms made up and cleaned on a daily basis. I think that is out now, and that was the porter and the second cook would do that kind of stuff. So now the guys have to clean their own rooms. Some guys are not that clean. I have walked into the captain's cabins that I had to clean from top to bottom after I had been on vacation just for the nicotine on the walls. It was gross.

NP: Was there no smoking policy at all in certain quarters?

BH: I started out a no-smoking-policy long before the company did. I would have absolutely no smoking in the wheelhouse because I didn't want to get called in an emergency out of my bed and run into a white, yellow fog. That is when I had to be on the game, you know. I just didn't allow it.

NP: And the company?

BH: And the company many years after came into the thing where you could only smoke in certain areas. But the mandatory pilots we had to take, they got pissed off that they couldn't smoke in the wheelhouse. Too bad, you know, don't come on the boat. Send somebody else.

NP: Interesting right in the middle of the lake the same battle that is going on in office buildings around the country. [Laughs] What about the ships themselves, other than the fact that you move from ship to ship, were there major changes in the ships or the communication equipment?

BH: We developed a whole electronic system. It was the biggest thing we did electronically. I got in on the ground floor with that. We had a company from Boston that had an electric chart system, and they brought it on our ship. I was the first guy in the world to navigate the St. Lawrence River with an electronic chart. So that was a pretty big deal.

Then we all went on to work with a company from Vancouver, Offshore Industries, and they had a way better chart system. I even was sent out to Vancouver by my company to tell these computer guys what we needed to make it a better unit. So I got to implement all kinds of stuff. I invited him to come on my ship going down the St. Lawrence River so they could see exactly what we were doing. These guys are computer geeks. They never got out of the office and go out and see a ship and what it does. By doing that, we super developed an electronic chart system at a high speed, and it was very, very accurate.

NP: How does an electronic chart system vary from, I am assuming, paper charts? How does that work?

BH: You would have your screen display and have your ship right on the display and it could tell you where you were in the river, so you knew where the shallow spots were in the buoy system and everything. The biggest projects I worked on the Hibernia Project. They put 411,000 metric tonnes of magnetite ore from Newfoundland. We pumped that in the slurry through a pipe into the bottom of the Hibernia rig and ballasted it to the sea floor. They likened that whole project of building the rig, and what we did, it was the same on the technology level as the space shuttle. It was right up there. I even had to go to Memorial University in Saint John, Newfoundland, to do a course in a simulator. We had to simulate coming up to the rig with the tugboats and hooking up this big pipe to put the slurry in. We all had to do that before we even got involved in the project. That was pretty interesting.

NP: When you talk about that and using a simulator, the ships you are on are pretty big ships. So I would think your first time being responsible for it, especially navigating it, must have been challenging? It is not like driving a car for the first time.

BH: Oh, it was very challenging. Getting back to this Hibernia Project, the first time I tied up to the Hibernia Project, it was in dense fog, and I didn't even see the rig until the next day when the fog cleared a bit. I had to do it all by electronic chart and radar. So that is what I am saying about the electronic chart. What a fine system that was!

I remember the first time I took over a ship, I pulled into Clarkson near Toronto, and we were unloading. I can't even remember what we were unloading. But anyway, the captain got off and said, "Okay, it is your job now." I had to back her out of there. The

first job I had to do was go to the first lock in Port Weller and turn the ship and back it into the drydock. Every Tom, Dick, and Harry was in the wheelhouse—all these engineers and guys and talking. It was pretty hard to concentrate and do that manoeuvre, which I had never done in my life, for the very first time. You had to pump out the ship, so that the bow could swing over the wall of the locks, so that I could back it in.

NP: That seems to be almost unfair for your first time. Was the captain trying to tell you something? [Laughs]

BH: I don't know. Trial by fire I guess, eh?

NP: Yes, I think so.

BH: But I did it well, and I didn't have any problems. I was congratulated on how well I did.

NP: Are some ships easier to maneuver and manage than others?

BH: Yes. The newer ships, of course, they have Kort nozzles, which is a big nozzle that surrounds the propeller and that is your rudder pretty much. You get good propulsion with that. The old *Halifax*, that was the last steam turbine in the Canada Steamship Line fleet, was a very, very hard operation because it was so slow to manoeuvre. If you were going ahead you would have to actually stop the shaft and have it reverse. From going ahead to astern took a long time. So you really had to have your timing on. And it was really bad to windage as well. The stern caught lots of wind because of all the apparatus for unloading gear.

NP: When you say it steamed, was it coal as well?

BH: No. Bunker C.

NP: What is that?

BH: It is heavy duty crude oil. They supercharge it, eject it, and it fires.

NP: We started to talk about the changes in the crew, the types of people who took jobs did that pretty much stay the same, and when you are thinking about that, think about what would be the dream crew member for a captain?

BH: The officers were coming from the cadet system more and more as time went on because people could go to school and get sea time and then go on a ship and get a bit of sea time and that way they would get their licences easily, whereas I started off as a deckhand and worked my way up and went to school on my own. We got a lot of inexperienced people like that because they didn't spend so much time on ships, and they were getting licensed.

NP: This is Navy cadets?

BH: No, Merchant Marine cadets. There is a cadet program in Owen Sound, and there is one in Rimouski, and there is one in Saint John's, Newfoundland. The result of the person is only as good as the person you put into the system. So you got some good guys and you have got some lame guys. I always found the Newfoundlanders were the best to sail with because they knew they had to be away from home, and they just took that for granted that they had to leave home. They were the most pleasant people to work with.

NP: Did people actually get homesick? Not that they would admit it.

BH: Oh, boy, come around Christmas time, everybody was trying to figure out how they could break a leg or whatever to get off the ship. Not break a leg but slip and fall and all kinds of different accidents just to get off the ship to go home. That was the worst time of the year, leading up to Christmas.

NP: Was personnel a big job for the captain?

BH: If you didn't have to do anything with personnel, it would be a dream job! Personnel is a hard thing to battle with because when you are out on the ship, you are the police chief, the fire department, you are the psychologist. You've got to know how to read people and have them work for you to get the most out of them that you can.

NP: Putting yourself back in as a member of the crew, what would be the dream captain based upon your experiences of the various captains that you worked under?

BH: Somebody who knew what he was doing, didn't take chances in weather. I was in some pretty bad storms that we should not have been there to begin with.

NP: And you feel that way now even though you have been through some of them yourself? Sometimes people who are inexperienced think the storms are bad, when if it is an experienced captain, it is not so bad for them?

BH: No, I was with some of the experienced guys that got caught, and that wasn't very pleasant.

NP: Can you give a story related to that?

BH: One time we were anchored off Cape Breton and they had to put in a new cylinder liner in one of the engines, and rather than run some hours on the engine at anchor, we picked up anchor and went out and got caught in a big storm. The engine had not been running properly. We got into a big storm, and it was not too comfortable.

NP: Was that about the closest call that you had from the standpoint of weather?

BH: One storm we got into off of Cape Hatteras, we lost the engine, and we were rolling from side to side in I would say 50-foot waves. An inexperienced person had opened up the stern door to the engine room, water had run down through the door and shorted out all the steering, and we didn't have any steering. We were lucky to have the best electrician in the world, a guy from England, and he managed to rebuild the steering system, and we regained the steering many hours later. It was probably 12 hours later. That is the only time in my whole life I wondered if I was coming home.

NP: From the standpoint of weather, what is Lake Superior like?

BH: It is a monster! It is so deceptive. Just out here you can get waves coming from many directions because all the highlands around here and the topography. The wind can set up waves. You can't read them. There is no pattern to them. They are all chopped up. That is pretty interesting. Lake Superior, you really have got to respect it. That is another reason I wanted to work my way up to ocean-going captain because I was working on newer and stronger ships and with the latest equipment.

NP: Whereas the lakes ships were not in that category?

BH: They were just degrading. The Halifax, it lost its class to go to Halifax because the steel had so much degradation inside it. The Coast Guard took away its grade class.

NP: Are different cargos harder on the shell of the ship then others?

BH: Potash is one of the worst. It is more corrosive than salt. Salt is very corrosive.

NP: Is grain pretty benign?

BH: Yes, absolutely.

NP: Did you like unloading one product versus another?

BH: I didn't like unloading grain that much because of the dust. I didn't like dust. But coal and iron ore and that kind of stuff there was no big deal. Stone is good and clean too.

NP: Interactions with other players in the grain system. We talked about the stevedores, or the trimmers, and I am interested in your connection with the ship's agents. When you become involved with them and what do they do for you, what do they require you to do for them?

BH: If I was going through Panama, I would have to get a hold of the agents many days ahead of time and send him all the ship's papers and custom papers and stuff like that, so he could clear the ship to get through Panama. It was all done by fax, so that was pretty easy.

NP: Was there a change in communications equipment over your time?

BH: Yes, when I started out there was no cell phones. We got into all different kinds of communications, satellite phones started up and then cell phones. My company kept right ahead of the program with that stuff.

NP: Which is the group that does the sea worthiness of the ship inspection?

BH: That is Transport Canada.

NP: Okay, Transport Canada. Did that go pretty smoothly?

BH: Yes, we had to have spring inspections all the time, and it seemed like every different port had different ideas on what was important. It was pretty hard to pass some guys, and everybody had a different idea on what they wanted done, which was crazy. It should have been standardized across the board.

NP: Yes, the same department.

BH: Exactly.

NP: What about the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the ones that did the inspection of the holds for bugs and stuff? Any incidents there?

BH: No. If you did your job, you didn't have a problem. In my time, I never got held up or turned down at any time. But lots of guys did and some ships would have bugs and they had not cleaned up properly or done the arrival stuff properly. That is what you are getting paid to do so you might as well do it well.

NP: Anything you can think of Monika before I go into the general one about our centre? You have told us about some of the things and stories you remember. Are there any other memorable stories from your career that you would like to pass on to us and get them off your conscience or your chest?

BH: One year, we had a pretty good storm on Lake Huron. The ship was moving around quite a bit and as we entered the St. Mary's River, about one and a half hours. As I got into the river, I got a call from the engine room from the chief engineer. He said, “We are going to have to go to anchor. We just lost the engine." I was heading right into a rocky shore. I said, “We are not going to anchor. We are going to ground." I got the third mate to run down and drop the starboard anchor and put the brake on it. I just managed to swerve clear of all the rocks and go up on the clay bank. That was pretty lucky. So, I phone Soo control, which I have to do, and I told them I had gone aground. It was Christmas Day, and it was about 35 below. Ordinarily, you would have to wait to have tugs come down to pull you off, and they would have to come down and inspect the ship. I just said, "Look, I am not taking on water because I am in ballast. I am going to pump some ballast out and going to back off here. I am going to come up the river, and we will go into dock, and we will do the inspections there." He said "Aye, aye, it sounds like you know what you are doing." So we pumped out the ballast up forward after we got the engine back, and we went up to the Soo and had to have inspections and divers down and the shore superintendent came up from Montreal. It was a big to-do about nothing.

NP: Not something you like to do everyday, especially at that temperature?

BH: No, it was a lot of paperwork.

NP: I am getting the impression you don't care for paperwork? [Laughs]

BH: No. [Laughs] That was all part of the job, but why make more paperwork than there already was.

NP: Yes. How many captains were in your fleet? It was probably up and down, but how many did CSL employ?

BH: Just on the domestic side, there were probably 30. I am just taking a guess.

NP: You know, you have sports teams and there is sort of a rivalry between them, and some teams think they are better then another teams. What was the interaction between CSL and the, let's say, Paterson's line or The Upper Lake Shipping, or are you just didn't know those guys?

BH: I knew them from school. Lots of the guys were officers and stuff. But there was no major rivalry or anything.

NP: No?

BH: Here I go again. I'd say CSL was the best company to work for out of all of them.

NP: What made CSL--.

BH: Because we stayed up with technology and had really good marketing people, and we were always busy. We always had more contracts than we could fulfill, and we would have to hire other companies' ships to do our projects when they didn't have cargo.

NP: Did you have any connection with the marketing people?

BH: Absolutely.

NP: How does that work?

BH: If they had some kind of a cargo they wanted to pick up and there was a ship that had never been in there, they would want us to do some research about it and find out--. A feasibility study, that kind of thing.

NP: I guess you represented your company to that company when you actually did the business?

BH: Yes.

NP: They would want you to be a good representative?

BH: They wanted us to carry as much cargo as possible too. It is all about money right.

NP: Yes, that is how you keep a job.

BH: Yes.

NP: We are hoping, I think I mentioned this when we're talking a little bit about our project before we started taping, that we are hoping to have an elevator designated as a National Historic Site. In that, we also are trying to persuade the federal government to host an interpretive centre related to it. It would deal with all things grain-trade related. If we were to be successful, what about lake shipping or laker or ocean shipping of grain, what kinds of things would be good to feature there? Or even about shipping in Thunder Bay because most of the shipping in Thunder Bay was grain related, not exclusively but a fair bit? What kinds of things do you think that people should know about the history?

BH: I think they should know about the mechanics about how a lock works, which is very important because if there were no locks there would be no grain trade.

NP: Not much of one because they would just be going to Georgian Bay?

BH: You would not be going, as there is a lock at the Soo.

NP: Oh, is there?

BH: Yes.

NP: Okay. My geography is not great.

BH: You have to go through the Soo Locks. I think that is something that should be on display there, is the mechanics of a lock. I think there should be something on navigation and buoyage. The buoy system.

NP: Tell me about that?

BH: You have to know your starboard hand and buoys and your port hand buoys. There are all kinds of different buoys. Cautionary buoys, diving buoys, middle ground buoys.

NP: Were you likely to pass many ships going across Lake Superior in a 24-hour run?

BH: Not so much pass but meet because they all go about the same speed, but you would be meeting people. There is a separate shipping lane that comes to Thunder Bay, and there is a separate shipping lane that goes to Duluth.

NP: Okay. I wondered about that as we have a camp out near the border, and occasionally, I can see ships because I face out towards Isle Royale.

BH: Where is your camp?

NP: Little Pigeon Bay.

BH: Okay.

NP: Is the shipping lane then on the west side?

BH: There is no designated shipping lane there.

NP: Okay. I don't see them very often.

BH: That could be a guy going up the west side of the lake to avoid a westerly wind or a storm. Sometimes you will see a ship come into the harbour here for protection from a storm rather than run down the lake.

NP: Okay. I have another question. When you clean out hatches--.

BH: Holds.

NP: Holds. What happens to the stuff? I am wondering, every once in a while I get a big fuzz of grain-like dust on my shore, and I seem to attach it to the ship going by. Is that possible?

BH: It is absolutely possible.

NP: Should that be being done? [Laughs] I'm sorry, we don't need this on tape. [Laughs]

BH: I have been up in the wheelhouse when I was first mate. I remember coming up and we were going to Duluth, and I looked back and there was this great big sheen of oil behind us. I called the engine room and I said, "What are you doing?" "We were just pumping the bilges." "You were pumping more than the bilges," I said. "I live on this lake, and I am kind of pissed off." But it was like 4:30 AM, and I didn't report it to the coast guard, which is my job, and I should have. I should have called the captain, but I didn't.

NP: That is interesting to know that the preferred route would have been on the easterly side of Isle Royale. That is why I only see it once in a while.

BH: It would be probably weather related.

NP: Okay. Neat. We have the buoy system, and we have the lock system. The Seaway, it has a number of miles. Where do they start counting from and where is Mile Zero?

BH: Probably Tibbett's Point. I am not sure.

NP: I thought we had a Mile Zero in Thunder Bay, but I wasn't sure if it was at Great Lakes. There was dredging into the Great Lakes Paper mill. But when they stopped dredging the river, I wondered whether it started in Thunder Bay?

BH: I have no idea about that at all. I know nothing about that.

NP: Interesting.

BH: We never dealt with that at all. It had nothing to do with our trade. Even as a pleasure boater, I have never heard of that.

NP: Going back to what should be featured in the centre, I am just thinking of all of your memorabilia downstairs. Whatever we can collect about the old ships and things like that would, I think, be of interest anyway.

BH: For sure. It is very unusual to have that much stuff in one place.

NP: It is very unusual!

BH: I am a pretty good picker.

NP: Yes. Who gets it in your will? Not that I am a vulture! [Laughs]

BH: No. Actually, I have a great big five-tonne anchor in the front yard, and I have willed that to TBT Engineering. They are going to put that at Mariner's Memorial Park, you know by the Paterson Building. I have already got that worked out with them and all the stuff downstairs is probably going to go to Thunder Bay Museum.

NP: Now the elevator that we are sending in for designation is right next door to TBT Engineering, so that is perfect that you have donated it to them!

BH: Okay.

NP: Good.

BH: When I talked to them, and I talked to Rob there, he was pretty excited about that. "We don't want it any time soon." I said, "You are not going to get it any time soon." They said they would put up a plaque.

NP: Yes.

BH: They are right into it.

NP: Yes, and that is one of the desirable features of that particular elevator. Any other people that we should interview? You mentioned--.

BH: Captain John Quarrel.

NP: Right. We should mention that he is the captain. Anyone else in the city?

BH: There is another captain, Steve Zawacki. He lives out at Kakabeka.

NP: How is that spelled?

BH: Z-A-W-A-C-K-I.

NP: With CSL as well?

BH: Captain. Yes, he was CSL.

NP: Any of the guys living here who did more of the non-captaining stuff?

BH: You talking Gene Onchulenko?

NP: Yes. He never worked on a ship, did he?

BH: No.

NP: No, just Ports Clearance. That is the other thing I should have asked was Ports Clearance. How did you interact with them?

BH: It was Customs and Immigration, and it was mostly done by fax prior to arrival and rarely would you see a Canadian person coming down to do anything other than to search a ship. But in the States in most ports, Customs and Immigration come down. In Toledo, I had to ride my bike uptown to do that.

NP: The Lake Shippers Clearance Association, the ones that told you which elevators to go to?

BH: That was done through Winnipeg where our agent there arranged with Lake Shippers, and then Lake Shippers would tell us prior to arrival what elevator we were going to, and that kind of thing, and how much we were going to take.

NP: That is interesting. So you actually dealt with the Winnipeg office, even though there was a Clearance Association here?

BH: Yes, Mark in Winnipeg would talk to me, and I would tell him how I wanted to arrange the cargo. Then he would talk to Lake Shippers, and Lake Shippers would put us into the different elevators, because you had to make four or five elevators to get a load on, for some reason. To keep everybody working.

NP: The Wheat Board?

BH: Yes.

NP: The Lake Shippers Clearance Association no longer exists. It went out of business this year. A lot of changes there.

BH: There were some good people there to work with, too. They were very understanding.

NP: Do you remember some names? Roy Ward.

BH: Roy, yes, he was a really good guy.

NP: Yes.

BH: I always enjoyed working with him.

MM: Canada Steamship Lines, how long have them been in business? I would like the history of the company. The headquarters are Montreal and have been around do you know since when? Any idea?

BH: Over 100 years.

NP: Yes.

BH: You could probably figure that out. Have a banner in my garage that would have the date on that. Let me go check.

[Audio pauses]

MM: Canada Steamship Lines, my question was do you know how old it is and the start of it?

BH: It was started in 1845.

MM: In Montreal?

NP: Was it always the Martin Family?

BH: No. It was owned by the Grey Nuns at one point.

NP: Really?

BH: I believe so. And Power Corp owned it before Paul Martin. It has got a huge history.

NP: Yes, there is probably a book written on it, I assume.

BH: I have downstairs.

NP: Okay, good. Thank you very much. Lots of very good information and new information. That is what we like to see in our interviews as being adding to the puzzle pieces, because when you look at the grain industry, it is not just one component that makes it successful. It is all the things working together. Maybe the last question I will ask is you're part of that grain trade, and this is why we are here talking to you. What part do you think you have played in making Canada a successful grain trader? In other words, if you didn't do your job well, how would it have added to a not successful grain trade?

BH: I don't really have an answer to that because I did my job well. I did it to the best of my ability.

NP: By doing that well, how did that make us--?

BH: By working with different markets all over North America, we opened the door for a lot of different trade.

NP: Yes.

BH: Just working with different outfits and being good ambassadors to build the business. That is what I always considered myself to be, as an ambassador for the company!

NP: Yes. Not many people say that, but that is so true.

BH: Oh yes, you had to be. There are lots of companies that could pick up the business at the drop of a hat.

NP: Yes. It comes down to personalities.

BH: Yes.

NP: Successful companies recognize that. Thank you.

BH: Thank you.

End of interview.