

**Narrator:** Herman Hutt (HH)

**Company Affiliations:** Paterson Steamship Lines

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**Summary:** Life-long ship electrician for Paterson Steamship Lines Herman Hutt discusses his career on the Great Lakes. He begins by describing doing his apprenticeship in Germany during the war, being a prisoner of war in Canada in the Dorian area, and coming back to Canada after the war to get work. He shares stories of working at the Port Arthur Shipyards doing electrical work on newly built ships before deciding to work on the ships themselves as they sailed. He discusses the maiden voyage of the *Paterson* taking grain to Port McNicoll, his routine duties on the ship, and the freedom of hours and work as an electrician. Hutt shares stories of issues with ship equipment, of going ashore to different towns when docked, of visiting other ships to share a drink with the crew, and of having to take over the wheel in the Seaway. He describes the differences between the two ships he sailed on—the *Paterson* and the *Senator of Canada*—discusses the pollution of ships in the lakes, and looks back through his sailor’s discharge book. Other topics discussed include the increase in training and education for sailors, stories of missing the ship while in port, being in the Seafarers’ International Union under Hal Banks, and being a ship keeper during winter lay-ups. He concludes the interview by looking through photos of his work travels.

**Keywords:** Paterson Steamship Lines; Ship electrician; Grain transportation—ships; Electricians; Immigrant workers; Port Arthur Shipyards; Ship building; *Paterson*; *Senator of Canada*; Bulk carriers; Lakers; Ships—equipment and supplies; Steam power; Ship repair; Great Lakes trade; St. Lawrence Seaway; Western Engineering; Alcohol use; Ship winter storage; Shipping accidents; Seafarers’ International Union; Hal C. Banks; Labour unions; Terminal grain elevators—Thunder Bay; Terminal grain elevators—St. Lawrence Seaway; World War II; Prisoners of war; Port Cartier; Baie Comeau; Cleveland; Hudson, Ohio; Detroit; Port Alfred

Time, Speaker, Narrative
NP: It’s June 20, 2012, and I am sitting in the games room at the Walford at 20 Pine Street in Thunder Bay, Ontario. And I’m going to ask the person who is the subject of this interview to introduce himself.

HH: Well, my name is Herman Hutt. I was born in Germany. I'm, in the moment, 86 years old.

NP: And where in Germany were you born?

HH: By Stuttgart.

NP: Oh, okay.

HH: Yeah.

NP: So can you start by telling us what kind of work you did related to the grain trade?

HH: Well, my job, I used to have an apprenticeship in Germany, and then during the war, I was prisoner of war in Canada. I was prisoner of war first in Medicine Hat, Alberta, and then I went from there to a bush camp by Dorion up in the Black Sturgeon. I was there almost two years cutting wood. From there I went to England, then England to Scotland and come back to Germany. But in Germany, it was bad, bad, bad time. There was no work. Nothing. So I applied for a visa here, and I got it, so I come back.

NP: That's a whole story, I would assume, the prisoner of war. Has anybody ever interviewed you on that?

HH: No.

NP: Would you consider a second interview talking about that?

HH: I could do that, yeah.

NP: Okay. Well, let's do that because although it's outside of what this project is, I think it would be a very important story to be told. Did I get this right that just before the war you became an electrician?

HH: Yeah. I'm born 1926, and in that time, Grade 8 was the highest you could go in a public school. After that, you had serve apprenticeship, that was automatic. It doesn't matter what you want, you have to go to the trade school after. So I applied for electrician. I wanted to be an electrician. I have to serve three-and-a-half-year apprenticeship. You didn't get paid. You get only two [German] marks a month, and those two marks--. I can't remember exactly. It was not enough to pay the fare. My father had to give me money to go to the fare, the plane fare.

NP: So your parents still supported you then, I guess, while you were doing your apprenticeship?

HH: Yeah. Then after three and a half years—normally it would be four years, but it was wartime, so they cut down a half year—you have to pass the exams. Then after that, you have to get one year in the workforce. That was in the peacetime, but in the wartime, it was already preparing you for the army. We had instead of [inaudible], we have guns. You clean guns and so on. That was 1943.

NP: Just to prevent us from having to do the math, what year were you born?

HH: '26.

NP: '26, okay.

HH: Yeah.

NP: How did you choose to come back to this part of Canada as opposed to the other places that you were, or even England and Scotland?

HH: Well, yeah. I was in England. Like after Canada, the bush camp was finished, but the papermills would like to keep us. I guess in that time it was short on labour. Anyway, but the English government said we are English prisoners of war, and we have to go to England. So when we went to England, the first place was St. Andrews, Scotland-nice golf place. I never played golf, but it's nice up there. [Laughing]

Then from there on, I went up in the hills to build an electric dam there. I was there for a while. Then come back. Potatoes are-- I tell you, they have big potato fields, and the tractors just go round and around and around. The guy, the owner, was smart. Now, we were prisoners of war. We'd never seen a woman for years close by, and he had on one side he had the Land Army girls, and the prisoners of war on the other side, and the track to keep around. He never stopped. And then when we were finished, we went over to help the girls. So I was in Scotland. It was a good time, yeah. I have no complaints about it.

**[0:05:35]**

So from Scotland, I went down to Blackpool, and I was working there in the Air Force Academy. That was nice too. Then I worked with one guy—he did nothing, and I did nothing. [Laughs] So I worked there. From there, then I come back to Colchester. Yeah. I worked on a farm there for a while at Colchester. Every prisoner of war could apply to stay in England, but you have to go to Germany to discharge and then come back. But you have to get a sponsor. Like I mean, a farmer have to sign that you were--. But the farmer, he think I was lazy. The English workers, he'd talk about football, and I was the only one who knew anything about football, so I was ahead of them. But when the farmer come, I was behind. Then I was already past him once. So he thought I was behind him. So he never knew nothing.

So when it come that he'd sign for me to come back, he wouldn't. But then a friend of mine, yes, his farmer would sign, so I could come back. I had a girlfriend in England. A couple of them got married, not right away but after. I had a girlfriend, and I told her I'd come back, but then I had to go back to Germany to discharge, and it was a different life in Germany. In England, it was nice if you married. You go to the pub, she'd sit there knitting or drink a cup of tea. You'd shoot darts. It was really nice in the country thing. In Germany, when I come, there was drinking, you know? So I forgot about England.

After a while, I had money from England, that I got in England. It goes by [inaudible] number. Like 21, I was number 21. I should get in July, a discharge in July, but the English government say if I would sign up for war agriculture, I could be out in January, but only in England. But I would still have to go to Germany to discharge. So I said, "Hell, I'm young." So I sign up, and I was in civilian clothes. I could go out every night and everything. I got four pounds and ten shillings. I had to pay seven shillings for the food and camp, and that was okay.

NP: And when you went back to Germany, then, you decided not to go back to England. So how did things work out that you ended up coming to Canada?

HH: But, you see, in Germany, everything was destroyed. Stuttgart was 75 percent destroyed, and there was work, lots of work, but no money. I start up as electrician, but my boss, he have to take me. That was the rule. Like if you had been in the army and come back, he have to take you, but he had lots of people from Russia. The Germans from Russia and Poland, they come. So they all had family, and I was single, so he say, "Oh, take a day off." Yeah, but I could take a day off, that's okay, but no money. So I end up with a couple dollars or a couple marks. So I say, "Hell with it," and I applied for the Canadian visa.

**[0:10:06]**

NP: And were you given a choice of where you could go, or you picked here?

HH: Yeah, I had three choices: Australia, South Africa, or Canada. Now, I know Canada. I know Canada. There was work in the bush. Yeah. I didn't mind, so I decided to Canada.

NP: And did you come straight to Thunder Bay?

HH: Oh, yeah. I know Port Arthur. I know thereabouts, so I applied for that one.

NP: And when you applied to come here, did you have to have a job waiting for you?

HH: No. See, that's--. When I left Germany, I had \$10. A ticket and \$10. When I went over Genova, Italy, and I have to take a night there before I could go on a boat, I had to take a hotel room, and it cost \$2.50, so I have \$7.50 left for Canada. When I come to Port Arthur, I had \$2.

NP: How did you get--? Where did you land initially?

HH: Halifax.

NP: And then by train all the way here?

HH: Yeah. But I have the ticket. The food and everything was paid for, you see. I got the ticket that includes the meals. So I was okay.

NP: So how did you end up working on a ship? Because that's where you spent most of your career, wasn't it?

HH: I worked in the bush for--. I come in October, I think it was, and I worked there until January, February.

NP: And what year was this?

HH: It was 1951.

NP: Okay.

HH: I come out, and the bush was--. Like many, I made two half-cuts a day. It was good in no time. When it came close, he would like to take me to the new camp, but I say, "I go try something." When I went to town, the shipyard was looking for men, so I went down and--. My English was good enough for me, just like now maybe. I never learned English in school. It was just from picking up. I went down there with Biesenthal. He was a Jew. I thought he hated Germans, but he said, no, he didn't hate the Germans. He said, "It's not the Germans who done the trouble. It's the system ." But he was okay.

NP: And what was his name again?

HH: Biesenthal.

NP: Biesenthal?

HH: Yeah, yeah. So--.

NP: And he was the manager of the--?

HH: He was the electric shop, in the electric shop. So I got down there a second-class electrician and I have to serve six months or whatever it was. So I worked down there. So after, I was there until *Sir James Dunn*, *Thunder Bay*, *E. B. Barber*, and then the *Paterson*. And there was no more ship after the *Paterson*.

NP: And it was the *Paterson* boat?

HH: Yeah, the new one. The first *Paterson*. There was no more boat after that, and there wasn't much work. Then they were finished with the nut house [Note: He could be referring to the *Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital in Current River. Editor*] and whatever they call folks on up there. They built by the General Hospital there.

NP: Yes, the Ontario Hospital?

HH: Yeah. But I just build that one in that time on Dawson Court.

NP: Oh, yes. Okay. The senior's--.

HH: That was finished, and there was not much work to do. So I applied for the job as electrician on the boat, and that was the first boat Paterson got with the electrician shop on it, you see.

NP: Let's go back to your remembrances of the shipyard. So what did an electrician do at the shipyard?

HH: Well, on the boat, you have to do wiring just like in your house. All the motors, everything would have to be installed. Yeah.

NP: Was that your first time working on ships when you joined there?

HH: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

NP: Can you remember anything about when you first started? What you thought about the job, what you thought about the ships?

**[0:15:01]**

HH: First thing first, it was cold. It was in the winter. It was minus 15 in that time that was still very cold. You didn't have to work. You could go sit down. You know, when you are inside the ship in steel, it's just like being in a fridge. So that's--. And I worked there for almost two years.

NP: Do you recall any of the people who worked with you there? Or the names have gone by?

HH: Oh, they're all gone. I don't think there's anybody alive. They're all gone.

NP: Were there other people from Germany when you worked there or were you--?

HH: Oh, yeah. There was quite a few. Everybody comes, yeah. Lots of guys, a welder, and this, that. Like when you go to the shipyard down there, if you knew nothing else, they put you on as welder, like they teach you how.

NP: Did you come across any of the people that you were at the prisoner camp with that had also come back to Thunder Bay?

HH: No. But we had in a prisoner-of-war camp, we had one clerk. He looks after the canteen and everything. When I come back, and I was the first time I went into the New Ontario—remember that, the New Ontario—and I sit down there, I looked up, and I

couldn't believe it! Here he was! [Laughs] He was down. Like he had no more money, nothing, but he didn't have any money, but I bought him a beer anyway. But that's the only one. Yeah.

NP: So was he Canadian, or he was German as well?

HH: French Canadian from Quebec.

NP: Ah, okay. So they closed up the shipyard or stopped doing shipbuilding.

HH: I left before that. When I was there, they had the three minesweepers to build, but no more big boats. I think the *Alexander Henry* they built after that, I think, yeah.

NP: So how did you find out about the job with Paterson's?

HH: No, that's *Paterson* boat. I go to shipyard. Like, they put the crew together, and Paterson never had an electrician on any other boats. In the first build of them other boats, they were so rotten. Them guys couldn't even sound anymore. You know the tanks have to be sounded every day? Yeah, some of the mates told them. They'd say, "Don't drop it the way down." You know you drop it down and it's *Whoo!* There's a rot of about three, four feet long. If you do it that way, you'd put a hole down there.

NP: So why do they sound the--?

HH: Tank, water tank.

NP: The water tanks. The ballast tanks?

HH: They have to be every day. Every watch you have to check them.

NP: Now, what are they checking for?

HH: For the water. It leaks.

NP: Ah, okay. So you don't want to hear *plop*. You want to hear *clink!*



HH: Yeah. [Laughs]

NP: So they were putting together a crew, and for the first time, they were putting an electrician on the ship?

HH: Yeah. That's what Lloyd--. You see, Lloyd--. I don't know if he decide to put electricians on that size of boat. I think myself made a good crew, a good engineer crew. They could call me out, the electrician.

NP: So Lloyd's, the insurers, required an electrician?

HH: Yeah. Have an electrician on the boat.

NP: So was the *Paterson* launched here?

HH: Yeah.

NP: And did you go on its maiden voyage?

HH: Oh, I was on the day we left here.

NP: I beg your pardon?

HH: I left with the boat.

NP: Okay. So what was it like on your first voyage?

HH: Well, I was scared. Let's put it that way--scared first. I was electrician, but all these other things. Like electronics or something like that, they had no idea, and that was something new for me. If I leave here, Thunder Bay, the next port is 19 hours away. If something happens between, I couldn't help the chief engineers or anything. I couldn't ask. They have no knowledge of electrical work.

**[0:20:20]**

NP: So did anything go wrong?

HH: As we left the shipyard, or the grain elevator with the load, the hatches have to be closed. On there, you have to hatch grain. You lift the hatches and then dump it. The hatch grain didn't work anymore. There's a limit switch, and that limit switch wasn't set right, but it went up and down when we was already out in the lake. Now, I closed the hatch, but I didn't know the setting of the switch. But I closed the hatches by reverse every time the switch lift, yeah? Then I reversed to lower down. We closed the hatches. The hatches were closed when the shipyard boat come along. He come out and--.

NP: The shipyard boat came out to check it?

HH: Yeah. But we didn't know what was wrong.

NP: So you weren't very far out then?

HH: No. We were just outside the breakwall.

NP: Do you recall where they loaded the--? Which elevator?

HH: Yeah. The one by the shipyard there.

NP: The United Grain Growers [UGG]?

HH: Yeah, yeah.

NP: Right by the shipyards.

HH: Yeah. We got the full load there.

NP: And then you headed out. What was the weather like?

HH: It was not bad. We went to Port McNicoll. Yeah. The first time I see the two passenger boats tied up there, Port McNicoll.

NP: Which passenger boats are those?

HH: The *Keewatin*. They run there all the time. Yeah.

NP: What was it like on the ship? What was life like on the ship for that 19 hours, did you say?

HH: On the ship, it was not bad. You have crews. Like I mean the deckhands, most likely, from Newfoundland, or the wheelsman, New Brunswick. Then the engine part often in Georgian Bay. Then in the wintertime, you laid up in the Georgian Bay, and so in the spring, you start with the crew, then the engine room starts about three weeks before the forward end.

NP: Just to make sure everything is--?

HH: No, you have to remember every valve have to be grinded and inspected. The inspector comes, and every valve has to be grinded. When he gives the okay to put it together, that had to be done. Before you done it--. And then after about five or six years, they laid them off before Christmas, and you come back in February or March, a little bit early. That means you didn't have to pay the Christmas, you see.

NP: So the crews were from—a lot of them anyway—from the Maritimes?

HH: Oh, yeah. You could say the forward end was most likely from, outside the captain and the mates, they are from Georgian Bay.

NP: So on your crew, if you recall back to the first ship, the cook staff and the sort of the maids did you say, where would they have come from?

HH: The cooks, by Kitchener someplace, I can't remember now. The cook, him and his wife, and the night cook, she comes from outside Midland. The second cook, she was a French--. She comes from down Quebec or something.

**[0:25:08]**

NP: We have a display going on at the Marina, and on the wall, we have pictures of people, and there's one picture there from the Paterson Collection that has three women in it, who I think are the kitchen staff. When you come to visit, take a look and see if you recognize those women and can give us their names. We don't know where they were from and--.

HH: No, I don't know them if they are on the newer ships.

NP: No, they would have been probably on the older ships. It likely would have been around the '50s or '60s, but anyway.

HH: Yeah, I'd know them.

NP: So when did you start with Paterson?

HH: I started with Paterson '54.

NP: '54. So as you sail along, what are your responsibilities? Do you just get called in the case of emergencies or--?

HH: Electrical. You see, that's the difference. Electrical work is something--. You have to clean the motors, change the bearings. It's part of electric work, you see, not just changing light bulbs. [Laughs] I sailed on the boats 30 years, and every four years is inspection. You go in the drydock, and then they test in the drydock. They have to test, and they test all the electrical work. I never had one ground, or anything in it. That's when you check all your things in the daytime, in the summertime. You check everything over.

NP: Did you have a routine? Like you start and one end and work to the end, or did you establish one over time? Because after all, this was your first boat, right?

HH: I mean, yeah. What I did was I had my rounds, go around and check, but I had to get used to the sound of the turbine. It was a turbine ship. You had to get used to it. It's something after a couple of years, you know exactly the speed you go, by the sound. Like you didn't have to tell you, you know the sound. Yeah. So that's what--. You check on the boat. I only did the electrical work, but you had the steamboat part. That was still the steamboat from years and years ago. They had no indication.

The one went out--. As I was there, I just talk about now the engine room. One went as firemen. We had oil firemen, automatic everything. They just have to pull the lever, you know. He didn't know anything about steamboat or anything practical. Theoretical, practical, he knows just pull that lever. Now, if something break or something, he wouldn't know how to fix it. You have the indication now. They start it after. But before--. For instance, a chief could write a ticket, chief ticket. His wife went with him and wrote the ticket, then he didn't know how to write. That was chiefs. So there was no rules of, "Oh, you have to do--." Nobody told him you have to do that or do that or do that.

NP: He just learned by experience?

HH: Yeah.

NP: And hoped he had a good teacher.

HH: That's what was wrong. Them guys never learned anything. Theoretically, they could do nothing. He know how to open the valve, but he have a hard time to close it. He don't know it. Like for instance, we had generator. We had two steam generator and one diesel generator. Now, when we come to port, we have to put the second generator on. Then we used all the winches and everything, you see. You use more steam power and all these. We use more pumps and everything. So you have to warm up, like put steam in it, and turn the generator slowly just to warm them up. You can't just put them in there. And the most time, they forgot. When they put the generator on, they forgot to open the main valve and put it full steam. The generator kicked out. And that happened quite often.

**[0:30:48]**

NP: So if the generator kicked out, would it actually damage the generator? Or you just have to start over again?

HH: Start over again, but it is--. You see, they didn't have--. Now, they have to go to school. Now, they learn this stuff. But at the time--.

NP: And there you were, new to the job, and nobody there who did the job before.

HH: See, when the generator kicked out, they called me. Then I went down there, and the first thing I opened up that one. That's what it was.

NP: So you had to teach them.

HH: Hm?

NP: You had to teach them.

HH: [Laughs]

NP: Or try.

HH: Well, not only that. Then I worked in the wheelhouse in my spare time. Actually, I have no regular hours. I went up forward in the wheelhouse, and then out on the lakes, I learned how to steer. I could steer the boat on the lakes. I worked on there. Every time something went wrong, the mate or the captain said, “Hey, something is leaking there, steam leaking. Fix it.” So I fix it, and it was just a little bit thing to do. But I didn’t get overtime or anything, but then the engineers complained. They said, “That should be my job, my overtime.” So, okay, go ahead.

Now, you have to remember, the heating, like the copper pipe where the steam goes through to heat. The heat is different pressures than here. Like in your house, you would have a different pressure in the heating system. So the engineer, he called, “Okay, you have a leak in the wheelhouse.” So he went up there with a solder gun, an ordinary solder gun. Soldered it. It stopped the leak, but not for long. Then the boat, the extension of a boat, like the movement of the boats, is strong on the line. If there is no loop, you see, they’ve got extension loops. When you go there the first time, and it’s a storm, and you see the boats going up and down, you get sick, and then you think, “It’s going to break apart.” Well, if you go through the tunnel, there is more to that. There’s the steam pipes going in the joints, you know. Yeah. They move like an accordion. That’s the extension. He didn’t know. So it hold for one day, and then again.

NP: Until a little bit of rough water.

HH: In the rough water, just the steam alone. The movement of the boat--. Like, the boat always is--.

NP: Yeah, you can even just feel the vibration, having been on ferries—and those are small boats.

HH: So that’s the other thing. Them guys, when the winches—four winches we have, two up front and two back--. Well, actually, there was three up forward and three back, like the one after winch and the one anchor winch. You used them going through the canal or to tie up. Now, usually, when they come, the wheelsman was operating the winches. No. Not the wheelsman. The deckhands. Deckhands operated the winch. No, no, no. Watchman. The watchman will operate the winches.

**[0:35:32]**

He’s standing there between the winches. Now, them winches have steam in them all the time, and when you shut them off, the cable, you have a big loop. You see, the cable you put on shore with the big loop? Okay. So the loop goes over, and then you stop, but that never stopped. The guy standing there, if that loop come, if he’s not fast when that loop come, he would be dead. So what

happened? Oh. For a big--. I seen it, so I went to the chief, told the chief. The chief told the second, second went out, opened up the valves, and shut it again, and it shut. Yeah, but just in that moment, if he would leave if for two or three minutes--. Yeah.

NP: Still back to where it was before?

HH: Yeah. So he got mad at me. So I watched it again when we was already going through the canal. So I went to the mate, told the mate about it. I tried to get it fixed, and he wouldn't do it. So I called a union meeting about the ship's [0:37:15 --]. So I called a union meeting. Somebody make a motion. One guy make a motion. So I went to the chief. No, to the captain. The captain come down with me, yeah. Captain Ramsay was his name. He come down, he open the valve, close it, [inaudible]Tried it a couple times. He went down to the chief and said, "Are you going to fix it?" And he got the second, "Are you going to fix it?"

When he opened that valve, this little pin-like hole was in the seat. There's a seat down there in there where the steam fits in. That was pitted all around right across, and the steam come out there, and that's how--.

NP: So what would cause that kind of wear?

HH: The steam. The steam. I presume there's some kind of dope in the steam. Like, they put--. That was again chemical into the steam. Somehow, the sand or something was in there--.

NP: And wore down the seat, yeah.

HH: But there they could, easy.

NP: Winches seem to be very dangerous things, too.

HH: Dangerous. Yeah.

NP: Were there other incidents that come to mind that made your life a little bit interesting, rather than day to day?

HH: Oh, it was interesting. I mean, I went onshore whenever we pass it on. I enjoyed going in them nightclubs. I enjoyed it. It was nice being in Cleveland, and then in the bars. It was nice. Oh, down here in Ohio, that's a nice place. That's quite a nice--. When you go out there, there was a small town. There was an ore dock and an elevator, and when you went in there, the school kids know the *Paterson* or the *Senator* was in. Then we walked downtown. Or when we was enough guys—four or five guys—then we took a

taxi or something. And if you've been to the bar, this was Italian. When you're in the bar and you had three or four drinks, then he'd say, "Okay, the next one is on the house." Then it was close to suppertime, the guy would say, "Let's go, we have supper." Out comes the pizza. [Laughs] That guy knew how to keep them there. The crew was there from the time we got in until we left. [Laughs]

**[0:40:37]**

NP: So that was in Cleveland?

HH: No. In Huron, Ohio. Huron, Ohio. It was a nice beach, but then at the end, the beach was full of fish every morning, dead fish. Oh, yeah. Every morning they cleaned it up.

NP: What was causing that, the dead fish?

HH: That was on Lake Erie, you see. Lake Erie, if you go down there, you'll sometimes all the fish shine. The lake shines all over. They're small, that long.

NP: Like the smelts?

HH: No, the fish shine, just like--. Yeah, just like--. Sometimes you can see nothing but that fish.

NP: Pollution maybe?

HH: Not enough air. We come out of Port Stanley one time and there was fish, dead fish, all over.

NP: Did you learn much about the grain trade being on the ships?

HH: Well, we went quite often to Baie Comeau, which is a big elevator. Big elevator. We were on one side, and the Russian boat was on the other. We was a small boat compared to them. Gee, they're big. I learned the elevator grain--. Baie Comeau is just nice. They had a papermill there, and then they've got the aluminum plant, and then the elevator. So there was always work there in Baie Comeau. It doesn't matter where you go, the people was friendly and all this. But the grain elevator, that was one thing. The boats come in, and you could go over there and get a bottle of whiskey, you know, a case of beer.



NP: Share a drink with the other crews?

HH: Oh, yeah. I don't know if you know him, Tucker, Tom Tucker? He lives here.

NP: No.

HH: He was second engineer. We had fish on the boat. We fished through the outer gangway door. Out comes the ugliest fish you ever seen. Any warts here, and the thing here standing out. Yeah. So we always throw them back in again, you know? So there was an Italian boat beside us, or on other side. We was unloading, they was loading. So we went over there, and you always got wine there, you see.

So we went over there and, "You guys, do you want something to eat?" He brought out a pizza. Tucker, he said, "Oh, that's really good. That's really good. What do you put there?" And he opened the fridge, and there was the ugly fish. [Laughs]

NP: Did you ever find out what kind of fish it was?

HH: No, I don't know. They gave it a name. They had a name for it down there.

NP: So were the Canadians always drinking the other guys' stuff, or did you guys supply them with anything when they came to visit you? [Laughs]

HH: Oh, no. They come over maybe to eat on our ship, and we'd go over there. I'd say we more over there than them over here. Then the Canadian didn't have the alcohol like they had. There's no alcohol on the boat. But that wasn't true. There was more beer than anything. I mean, when a guy went on shore, he always brought a six pack or something like that around.

**[0:45:22]**

NP: But it wasn't--. Like they didn't have a store of whiskey on the ship like others?

HH: They wouldn't allow it. No alcohol onboard.

NP: Was that always the case? Did that change over time?

HH: No, no. It didn't change.

NP: Or from when you started?

HH: It's still there.

NP: Yeah. And that was the same when you started?

HH: Well, it's a good idea. If they would have it, you never know, they would be killing each other at nights. It's a lonely trip if you get--. Say for instance, we'd go off on Port Cartier up to Thunder Bay. It's a long, long trip.

NP: How long is it?

HH: I think it's five days.

NP: Oh. No port stops?

HH: No. It's just the Seaway, going through the Seaway. But for having a beer or anything like that? No.

NP: I was talking to a young fellow who works for the Canadian Grain Commission down in Quebec City now, but he grew up in Baie Comeau, and he talked about the whales that came in at the grain elevator to feed just down where they--.

HH: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

NP: Did you ever see that?

HH: No, I didn't see no whales, no. I see the whales up in the Saguenay River, them white ones.

NP: It's beautiful there isn't it?

HH: The white ones.

NP: It's just a beautiful part of the country.

HH: Yeah. I have a picture of Port Alfred in there. Port Alfred, that's up in the Saguenay River.

NP: Did you have a favourite port?

HH: My favourite port? American. I would say Huron, Ohio. That's favourite. There was actually no crime. You see, in Cleveland, I was in Cleveland one time, and that's this one white, that's one, and the next one's black in that time. The black moved, yeah. So in one bar we always went in, that changed. It was white before, and then they come a couple months later, and it was black,

NP: So you weren't too welcome? Or--.

HH: It was welcome in the black ones, but I didn't want to go in there, no way. Then in Detroit, in Detroit one guy--. I changed, I can't remember if it was a \$10 bill or \$20 bill I changed. When I put the change in my pocket, I feel a hand from the man next to me come in there, nicks it. Lucky, one behind was a black one sitting on--. He told me, "You come." He had a motorcycle out there. He said, "Come, I'll drive you." He drove me back to the boat. He say, "Not safe."

NP: Not safe? Hm.

HH: One time in Cleveland, I was downtown, and we was ready to go out about midnight. So I took a taxi. The taxi wouldn't take me--. No. I took the bus. Sorry, it was I took the bus to the end of the bus--.

**[Audio pauses]**

NP: Then we can continue. Sorry to have interrupted you. We were getting some extra noise from a heavy rainfall. We can probably still hear the thunder. So if I recall, you were talking about a time where you were--. I can't even remember now what--.

HH: Cleveland.

NP: Cleveland. And you were going off the ship?

HH: No, no. In Cleveland I went downtown and back to the defense plant, I think it's called. The steel plant. I took the bus, but the bus only goes so far. From there on you have to go through a black section. And so I went to a bar that was a white bar by there, and I tell them to call a taxi. There's no taxi would come and take you.

**[0:50:23]**

NP: Some rough areas then that you had to--.

HH: And I walked. Then I have to go or lose the boat. So I walked through there at night. Nothing happened, but I walked through. When I cleared the gate, the guy wouldn't believe it.

NP: What happens if you miss the boat? Did that ever happen to you?

HH: Oh, yeah. Well, if for instance, in Toledo, always the captains tell you when you leave. He say, "Okay, we leave at 12:00." Then you're there at 12:00. But lots of times, they finish before that, and you have to go, and they can't hang around there. There are other boats waiting, so they have to go. Then when you're late, you take the pilot boat or something out.

NP: Is that at your expense, or it depends whether they leave ahead of time or not?

HH: No, I don't think we ever paid. That's the pilot would take you out.

NP: When Alexander Paterson sent me a note and said that you would be interested in being interviewed, he said you told him about an incident.

HH: Yeah. That's unbelievable, and I never told anybody the story. I'll tell it now. I don't think there's anybody alive from it.

NP: So start with when it was and where it was.

HH: Yeah. We went through the Seaway, that must have been in the '70s. We went through the [inaudible]. Usually what I do, I go make my rounds in the daytime and all this, and the navigation light was corroded. So I took it down, fixed it, but that's so sensitive, the lenses inside here. The light had to be dried so the reflection goes the distance, you see. So I fixed that one, but then at nighttime, I went up there and was going to tell them that the next time a boat come along, they should ask for that, if he can see it. Then I can adjust it, eh?

I come up the wheelhouse, and the wheelsman left the wheel. There's nobody on the wheel, middle of the river coming up, and a boat coming. Now, I know how to steer out in the lakes where there is no many--. Hundred feet wouldn't make any difference.

[Laughs] But there, it made quite a difference. So the pilot, nobody else but the pilot there. So I couldn't--. He was already out the door. So I grabbed the wheel. I didn't say nothing.

Now, the boat come on. I never steered with a boat. With a boat, you don't have much room. I never steered--. You know the waves? The waves the boat gives, you have to hang on. I never did that one, but I passed it anyway. But if it would come, the range is not far away. The range is from where the lights--. See, there's two lights, and you have to line them up. You go that way, and you say, "Going over to the lights line," and then you line them up, and then you steer. But lucky, he come back. The wheelsman come back before anybody know.

NP: Where had he gone?

HH: I don't know. I didn't ask. Never mentioned anything to him. If I would have said that to anybody, the captain would have lost his job, first mate lost his job.

NP: So we don't know where they went? They just sort of left?

HH: I think he went to shit. He had a shit. [Laughing]

NP: And what does--. And the pilot?

HH: The pilot didn't know. The pilot knows there was one man standing there. He just turned around once. Yeah.

**[0:55:09]**

NP: And what does a pilot do?

HH: The pilot? He takes the ship through the canal.

NP: So he should have taken the wheel?

HH: No, no.

NP: No?

HH: No, it should be the captain or the first mate. The mate should be there. That was it. And I never told anybody. Never. But now, they're most likely all gone.

NP: That must have been frightening.

HH: Yeah.

NP: But proud of yourself once you saved them thousands of dollars. [Laughing]

HH: Well, after, I realized what I did. What would happen? I mean, we would run aground. There was no way, no way that I could steer when the ranges come. I couldn't do that. [Phone chimes] **[Audio pauses]** We called the wheelsman "pussy foot." He always said, "Don't pussy foot around with me." He was from the Soo, Sault Ste. Marie, but I don't think he's alive no more.

NP: So when you're talking about people that you worked with, who did you admire the most from people that you worked with?

HH: For what? For--?

NP: For the ship, just--.

HH: For their ability?

NP: Yeah.

HH: The captain.

NP: And who was the--?

HH: Captain--. I had all nice captains. The first captain, Captain Jewett, he was nice, really nice. And the other ones, I have no complaints. They was really good.

NP: Do you remember--. Captain Jewett was your first?

HH: Yeah. They're all in there. They're all in there.

NP: In your--?

HH: All of them sign here. All of them have to--.

NP: In your "Continuous Service of Discharge." So how do you get this book?

HH: Well, every time you get discharged--. If you start sailing, you have to have that book. You get one. You see, you get one when you start sailing.

NP: From the Department of Transport?

HH: Yeah. And then there, they mark down in there. You see then "VG," that's very good. It was very good. But now if one have a bad, like I mean a really bad captain, you couldn't put it. They put in "Not requested," you see? The next captain, he see the discharge there and see "Not requested," you know it's bad.

NP: So you could have very good, good--.

HH: They all very good. There was no good.

NP: But there was? Like yours is very good, but what could you have, okay, good, and very good?

HH: Well, I don't know what the rest of them have, but the very good was everybody. I mean, you have to do something wrong to get any difference.

NP: So that took you--. I'm just looking at the book here, almost like a passport of sorts, right?

HH: Yeah.

NP: And you have kindly donated it to us. Thank you very much. And it takes you right from your first voyage, which was December 10, 1954, would that be right?

HH: December? No, no. That's the discharge.

NP: Oh, I see. Oh. June 2, 1954. Sorry. That's exactly what it says. And then when was your final discharge?

HH: Discharge? I can't remember now what it was. I went after Goderich again. After Goderich. I sailed one more year. Thunder Bay discharge. Oh, yeah. I got it in Thunder Bay. I was discharged in Goderich, and then--. You see, what I did, I was going to give up sailing, and then I quit. They wanted an electrician down there, and so I had to get off in Goderich, see? But I didn't quit sailing, see? So I just, when I come home, I went to [inaudible]. Then I found out that they're going to raise the pension, so I sailed a couple months more. Before, I got \$85 a month on pension. Now I get \$248, I think it is.

**[1:00:47]**

NP: So it was worth--.

HH: Which is why I sailed again.

NP: So when did you finish completely? You started in '54 and you ended in--?

HH: '83.

NP: '83.

HH: '83. Actually, I call it sailing, yeah. I quit sailing, but I worked for Western Engineering on the boat, like for Paterson.

NP: Doing the drydock or repairs for them?

HH: Repairs. Repairs, like on boats, actually, you see. So I have 30 years. According to them, I would only have 29 point something, but then when I worked for Western Engineering there, it was 30.

NP: So you worked for Paterson for a long time.

HH: Yeah. I worked for Paterson only. Nobody else.



NP: So what do you know about the Paterson company?

HH: Paterson company were fair and square. Paterson could have \$2 million maybe more, but the cook, the chief, and the captains, they got all the liquor and the booze, and they got all the cigarettes and the bill. It got so bad that the shore chief here for Paterson told them they're going to put something else. They always put it just in pipe, pipe, pipe.

NP: Oh, put--.

HH: When they order, they've got to put the cigarettes someplace, so they order so and so many pipes.

NP: So that was--? I'm not quite sure what you're saying. This was something done under the carpet?

HH: Yeah.

NP: And so they were taking advantage of the company?

HH: Cigarettes and the booze.

NP: So the staff was taking advantage of the company?

HH: Mmhmm.

NP: Hm.

HH: Sure. They know. Everybody know that.

NP: Everybody being whom?

HH: Everybody. The suppliers, all the suppliers. Yeah. The grocery suppliers. In the winter, [inaudible], that's where we picked up our groceries. So if we're upbound with a light ship, so that means quite a few feet up, so the deckhands, they're throw the heaving line down there. They'd tied up potatoes or something, and then one time, he pulled it over and *click*. There was a basket with about four or five bottles of whiskey for the cook. Oh, the cook come running and say, "Oh, I paid for them. I paid for them." No.

NP: And I'm assuming that happened with all of the crews with all of the ships.

HH: Oh, all of them. That's not only the Paterson. On every ship.

NP: Yeah. Hm! So did you work--. Which Patersons did you work under then?

HH: No, the Paterson, just Paterson.

NP: John?

HH: The steam liner, there was an office there and whoever was in there. On the first trip, there was the Senator with us on the *Paterson*, yeah, and the son John. Don?

NP: There was John and Don. There was two of them.

HH: Was it both of them at that time, the first trip on the *Paterson*? They got off in the Soo. Yeah, got off in the Soo.

NP: That must have been wonderful being on a new ship.

HH: Yeah, it was. It wasn't bad. Wasn't bad. I had to get used to it.

NP: Were you always on the *Paterson*?

**[1:05:01]**

HH: Yeah. I was on the *Paterson* and then the *Senator*.

NP: And from an electrician's point of view, was there much difference between the two of them?

HH: Well, I liked the *Paterson* better. It was made in Port Arthur, and it was made good. The other one was made in Collingwood. They had drilled holes through the cable. There was a switch cable, and they drilled a hole through there and tacked it from the other side. I don't know, whatever it was. Stuff like that. On the tests, it should show, but I don't know how they tested.

NP: What time--? How much later--? Which was built sooner, the *Paterson* or the *Senator*?

HH: The *Paterson* was built first.

NP: Was built first. So it's not a question of things improved. They actually got a bit worse?

HH: Well, yeah, but the other one was built in Collingwood, and they made a piss-poor job. [Laughing] Like on the *Paterson*, they show you right--. I show you. I have a picture of the *Paterson* when it was launched. I can't find it. And then here is a picture when it goes to the scrapyard.

NP: Oh!

HH: Yeah. I'd seen it go.

NP: Did you?

HH: Yeah.

NP: Where was that?

HH: Here.

NP: Here?

HH: Yeah. I'd seen it when they towed it away.

NP: Oh, that must have been sad.

HH: Sad, yeah. It's part of your life.

NP: That's right. Were there others from the crew that watched that too?

HH: No, no.

NP: You just sort of lonely watching? Where were you watching from?

HH: From the tugboat. Yeah. Tugboat towed it over.

NP: And how did you know it was going to be towed away? Who told you?

HH: Well, I worked for Western Engineering at the time.

NP: Yeah. Sort of how I feel when they say they're going to take another elevator down.

HH: Yeah. Elevator, that's--. The elevator in Chicago is big. Holy smoke! In Thunder Bay it's nothing when you see that one in Chicago. They have lots of storage all over the place. That's the other thing about--. When I left Thunder Bay, we filled outside our drinking water tanks with drinking water right out of Lake Superior. There was no chlorine or anything they put it in there. Now, they've got all the things. But the crew, like--. The government wrote that if you throw something over the side, you get fined \$500. The one who gives the order, \$5,000 and so on. But now a boat, they had the oil. Like, there's always slush down in the bilge nowadays. When they hose down and all this, clean up, it's always--. And they throw it over the side.

So I told whoever's on the--. The firemen. I said, "Don't throw it over the side." [inaudible] I said, "You'll get fined if you throw it over the side." Yeah. So next day, they put the trunks up to go over the side full with oil and dirty things. So I said, "Don't do it." Next morning, it was gone. So you can imagine every boat. Port Colbourne was, what do you call it, honey wagon. Honey wagon.

NP: Yes, the honey wagon for the sewage that you created on the ship.

HH: Yeah. In Port Colbourne, a lot of aid, it was there waiting for every ship to take in. No. We never stopped there once. They dumped it out in the lake. Now, imagine how many boats are out in the lake, and each one dumped out the water.

**[1:10:06]**

NP: And they never got fined, as far as you knew?

HH: No. We were lucky. In Eisenhower Lock, I think it was Eisenhower Lock—the American lock—we get in there, and they lost the oil, lube oil. They lost that oil. I don't know how many gallons, right in the lock.

NP: How does that happen?

HH: Well, somehow, I don't know how that happened that day, but it could happen. By the pump, something wrong, yeah. But it got in the bilge, but the if the bilge is full, she's automatic. She goes over the side. She went right in the lock. Lucky never get fined.

NP: Yeah. No, you don't like to hear things like that. It's one thing if there's no laws and people are doing it. It's quite different if they know there's the law, and they're breaking it anyway.

HH: We was anchored in Lanoraie

NP: In where?

HH: Lanoraie. That's below Quebec. Maybe 30, 40 kilometres below Quebec, Montreal. We was waiting to unload. That's in the summertime sometimes. You know, the boats going down, they have a load in there, but there is no room in the elevator. Well, we wait for a boat to take the load. Anyway, so we was down there for four weeks. Every-- Like on nights you were sitting out there, you know, shoot the shit. There was no work. The engine wasn't running. So anyway, there I was sitting, and Monday morning, you count the safes going down the river. I tell you, that's Montreal. They're dumping safes down the sewer.

The first trip we had was to Buffalo, to the electric elevator. First trip to Port McNicoll, and then to Buffalo up the creek. They pull you up there, you could say, all the way up there in mud. Pull the boat up. Two trucks pull you up.

NP: Sorry, what pulls you up?

HH: Two tow trucks.

NP: Oh.

HH: Two trucks. Two, yeah, in the mud. Then you can see all the way along the boat the brown stuff. Along there, there are chemical factories. I tell you, they had a discharge all kinds of colours—blue, green—coming out of there. Nobody did nothing. Yeah. Now, we went to Chicago, same thing in the start of '54. Went up. You could see ducks, dead ducks, and everything in the

water. But then at the end, in the last trip, the last year I went up there, big [inaudible] Clear! The water is so clear. The guys were fishing on the sides. Nice clean water.

NP: So things can improve if somebody takes the leadership?

HH: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

NP: Yeah. So when you think back—so you had, well, 30 years if you look at the Western Engineering piece—what was your biggest challenge, do you think?

HH: For what?

NP: Well, just in your work. What did you find most challenging? Was it an issue that you came up with or was it just--?

HH: No, I think the challenge was most--. I could most likely make engineer. I grinded the valve in the layup. In the layup, the boat got overhauled practically. I had in the layup cleaned the generators, changed the bearings, and that's it. So my time maybe was two weeks, but we was there four weeks. So I have two weeks. So I [inaudible]t, I grinded the valves here, and I turbined the boilers, like everything. I done everything. I could most likely make engineer's ticket. If I want to, I could pass, yeah. But I was satisfied with my job.

**[1:15:20]**

My job was easy for me. I mean, it was easy. If they called me down there, you didn't have days or hours have to be done right away. If the pump didn't work, you just put on the second one, but you have no more spare or anything left, so then you had to fix that one right away.

NP: So it was a good pace?

HH: Yeah. Well, I liked it. Steamboat is a good life, but if you're married, I think, after a couple of years--.

NP: So when did you get married?

HH: I got married before I sailed. I got married in '53.

NP: And so you would be away from home on average how long per trip?

HH: If you make the trip right there and back, it's 16 days, but then you might go to Duluth or Toledo or Chicago or every corn--. See, Toledo is a corn port. Lots of corn come out of there.

NP: Lots of corn?

HH: Yeah. So if there is a load of corn, we'd not come up here.

NP: And so that was a bit challenging to just keep your family life together?

HH: I kept ship in the wintertime. That's Midland. The boats are laid up there in the wintertime with storage, and they take that from there down during the winter down to Halifax. If the boats are there the whole winter, and the ice—you see this ice—then you have to cut the boat out. And that's part of it cut out. So I'm down there. My wife and even the kids down there. It was a good life. Heated everything there.

NP: So you were on the ship?

HH: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

NP: Oh!

HH: It was a good life. Then you have to use all the groceries up, what's left.

NP: Okay, so that keeps your cost down.

HH: [Laughs] Yeah. One time--. After you shut it off, I'll tell you another story. [Laughs] Anyway, it's a good life.

NP: So did your family live here?

HH: Yeah.

NP: And they would go for the--.

HH: No. My wife, in the wintertime when I was in Midland—Midland or Goderich, Port McNicoll, Sarnia, or in Port Colbourne—then my wife come and stay there for three months.

NP: While the children were young?

HH: Yeah. Like before they went to school.

NP: Right. Because then once you're in school, you have to set up some place.

HH: Oh, yeah.

NP: What were the major changes that you saw over your 30 years?

HH: Well, the education. Yeah. It's quite a bit. You have to remember--. I don't know if you--. Banks, Hal Banks?

NP: Oh, yes, Hal Banks? Oh, yes. I've heard of him. He's pretty famous.

HH: Yeah. I have the book here. I have to find it. I looked for it for the notice hearing. Banks had all the money in his name. Every building for the union was in his name, and when he left, there was no more pension after that. The pension was gone. Yeah. He had the SIU [Seafarers' International Union] had a newspaper, and still have. One guy ripped that newspaper up by the note for some reason, whatever. It was an old paper. "DNS—Do Not Ship" [inaudible]

**[1:20:22]**

NP: Why is that?

HH: Just why he ripped that union paper. Oh, yeah.

NP: So he couldn't get a job?



HH: No, that's it. If you're DNS in that time, it was the only union. So that's why they have made many--. They made many like that.

NP: No?

HH: No, lots of [inaudible]

NP: Okay.

HH: And then the other union, Upper Lakes. The Upper Lakes want something, and the SIU say no, and so the crew voted against the SIU. So from that day, Upper Lakes was scab. See, every time one of the Upper Lakes boats went by there, everybody's standing, "Hey, scabs! Scabs!" I didn't, but they did.

NP: So there were two unions representing the--?

HH: No. One union. The other one didn't have no union, yet they started the union of their own after.

NP: So pretty dirty business. **[Audio pauses]** I certainly don't know much about Hal Banks other than the fact that he was a very dangerous person.

HH: Dirty, dirty. But in a union meeting, you couldn't say nothing. In the union meeting--. Like for instance, say he wants a raise. He say, "I want a raise." And one stood up and said, "I second the motion." Then we'd vote, and boy, there was an understanding. The ones beside Banks, one of them--.

NP: Like bodyguards?

HH: Yeah, yeah. Look around and you see them, slowly all hands go up.

NP: So was there a large contingent of that union here in Thunder Bay?

HH: Yeah. We had a union hall here.

NP: Yeah. And you could still feel the pressure here?

HH: Yeah. It doesn't matter where you were. You couldn't say nothing in the union hall.

NP: And when did that change?

HH: Well, it changes after the notice hearing. The government had the hearing about Banks. That's in there.

NP: And then that ended it? Yeah.

HH: It was a difference. The second in command, he got in president, Gralewicz. He was president. I think he retired not so long ago.

NP: So was it much different?

HH: It was a little bit different. All union halls and property and this got in the name--.

NP: Of the union?

HH: Yeah. But you see, we paid for it. Every month, so much building fund.

NP: Hm. That would be pretty challenging. So changes were--. Or a change in education, the fact that the crews that were coming on had better training?

HH: Now, yeah. SIU started some--. Like when you sail now, you have to get in the wintertime, go to school and improve. Like if you want to be a watchman, before you were a deckhand and you were a watchman. You have to go to school. If you want to be a wheelsman, you have to prove again.

NP: And that was happening at your time?

HH: Yeah.

NP: Yeah. So we talked about the changes. We talked about challenges. You had some great stories. What are you most proud of? When you look back on those 30 years, what brings you most pride in the work that you did?

HH: Well, sailed through the years and only on two ships. See, if I would be really no good, I wouldn't last that long on a boat. The chief on the *Senator*, first the chief chose along for Owen Sound, and then Gordon—oh, what's his name now—the second engineer, he was in Owen Sound too. The chief took over the *Senator* after it spilled, and the second engineer, he took over the *Paterson*. Now, I could go with the *Paterson*, with the new one—with the *Senator*—but I hang around with the second engineer.

[1:25:58]

NP: You stayed with the fellow you worked with the best, you thought?

HH: Yeah. They called the electrician from Collingwood, and somehow, he got involved with the cook's wife. So the cook, everybody know, and the cook, I guess he found out and jump overboard. Killed himself. Yeah. Oh, there was quite a few love affairs on the boat. You see the cook, the second cook, or porter, young deckhand from Newfoundland the whole summer. No place to go. A couple marriages.

One thing, [laughs] we was in Lanoraie. The second cook, who was a woman, and the first mate, he was like engaged, and she was Catholic, and he wasn't Catholic. So she went to church on Sunday, I guess, and you have to go out by boat. Like we have a boat that will take you there. He come back, and he say, "You have to stand through the whole time at the church." I said, "Why, is there no seats?" He said, "No, there's lots of seats, but they're all in somebody's name." And he say, "You cannot sit down without his permission. You cannot sit down."

NP: That's what the priest said to him? Or that's what he thought?

HH: That's what they told him.

NP: So did they get married?

HH: I don't know. I don't know if they got married. No, but the religious part, and the boat taking them, we had a couple times one of them—what do you call them—priests going around from boat to boat, camp to camp, a couple times. But I don't think he made a living there. The guys were not interested.

NP: The Mission to Seafarers, what kind of work did they do?

HH: Well, they're not bad. They're good. In Montreal, it was good. You would go in there, and they had everything in there. See, in Montreal, they have all them foreign ships come in, and them guys couldn't afford to go out with the prices they charged in Montreal. See, in Montreal, if you get change, like we say you sit in the bar and change \$10, and the bill was only \$6, and you have all of the change there. When he come back, with the \$4 still there, he take it. Oh, yeah.

NP: So what did the Mission to Seafarers--? We interviewed them, but we interviewed, obviously, from their point of view. So from a sailor's point of view, which you were, what kind of services did they provide?

HH: They provide, first thing, the time. Like most of them can't afford to go on shore. They all don't want to go onshore, so the only place you can stay and watch the television, drink a cup of coffee. There was always some woman—not sex or anything—some woman you could talk to. For a sailor, a woman is something. I could tell you a story, but I don't know if it will be good for there or not. [Laughs] Okay, I'll tell it. Erase it! [Laughing]

**[1:30:28]**

My son, yeah, he was 16, and he was out of school on holiday, and he say he wants to sail. So I say, "Okay." I talked to the mate and the captain. "Bring him on." So he have to come fly to Montreal. In Montreal they could--. So he got a job, and he was operating the winches like right away. He make good money. So one day, we went to Cleveland. We had a trip to Cleveland. He wants to go out and see the nightlife. There was four more deckhands, all French. So he wanted to come, so I say, "Okay." That was on a Sunday. There was a burlesque show. Nothing really strict, but that wasn't open on Sunday.

NP: That was what?

HH: That was not open on Sunday.

NP: Oh, right.

HH: So now what to do? So the taxi driver was black, so he said, "I'll take you someplace." So we said, "Yes." So he took us to this bar. Yeah. There was booths, you know, like two can sit in there. Two there. Sit there, and there was just nobody there. Just a bartender, black. So about five minutes later, the girls come. The girls, they are sitting. All them French girls, they're young, good looking girls come in there. It took about maybe 15 minutes, "Come on, let's go." So I said to them guys, I said, "You leave your wallet here. You ask her and say, 'How much?'" I think it was \$20. I said to him, "Give her the \$20, leave your wallet here, your watch, and everything." She said, "You don't trust me? You don't trust us?" I say, "I trust you, but I don't trust the guy behind the

door.”

Okay, they went. My son was sitting beside me, and he'd never had a girl before either. So along come the girl, and she say, “How about him? How about you?” she says to him. My son say, “I have no money.” She say, “Can he borrow some of your money?” “You say that to my father.” [Laughs] Oh she say, “Are you one of them?” Left. Then after she left, I said to him, I say, “Look, I don't care. I would let you go, but I bet you them two will come back cursing.” Ten minutes later, “Tabarnak! Tabarnak! Them Frenchies!” I said, “Didn't I tell you? What happened?” They said, “They took us in one room. They didn't even take their clothes off.” I said, “See. That's it now. Learn something.”

NP: It's good you were there for him to learn something before he made mistakes.

HH: Well, yeah. I told my son. I said, “My son, look. I could let you go. It wouldn't make any difference to me, but what would you have?” I say, “If you really want to get a girl, you wait until you get--.”

NP: So was disease an issue on the ship?

HH: [Laughs] Yeah. We had one from Owen Sound. I can't remember his name. Went to Cleveland. We went to Cleveland. He missed the boat. We had the next trip to Cleveland, picked him up. Then we had another trip to Cleveland, he missed the boat again. He had the disease when we picked him up the first time there, so he had to get operated then.

**[1:35:36]**

NP: And he had to get his medication or whatever.

HH: Yeah. Then the second time, again. He got it twice in Cleveland, and the doctor told him, he said, “You'll never get any kids.”

NP: Aw. So when you get on the ship, does anybody tell you about those kinds of things? Or you just had to rely on conversation around the dinner table?

HH: Well, yeah. Yeah. But now, I think you have some education now.

NP: Yeah. Because sailing, for people like me that don't know much about it, it's always had the reputation of being a pretty rough-

HH: Oh, no.

NP: No?

HH: No. That's a mistake. A sailor, like now especially, when the boats--. They unload the boat in four hours with ore, or grain, and back home or down there, six hours. Yeah. They unload it again. So the guys went to shore, drink a beer, and look at the girls, and then when you come back, you talk about the girls. You sit beside but--.

NP: Yeah. And they got TVs after a while, and with changes in--.

HH: But the dope part, the dope. That's it. We went to Baie Comeau. Baie Comeau is a nice town. It's really nice. We had four new deckhands, four young ones.

NP: Four what?

HH: Deckhands. We had four deckhands, new, young ones. They had never been to Baie Comeau. About one half hour later, they come to the bar where we were. They all had dope. So it didn't take them long to find somebody to sell the dope.

NP: They must have been looking. [Laughing]

HH: That's one thing I never went. Never, ever the dope.

NP: Yes, and I think that is something that someone has mentioned in a previous interview is that where alcohol might not be a problem, drugs can be.

HH: Alcohol wasn't a problem. We had the rule no alcohol or beer on the boat. There was alcohol there, but that was limit. Like maybe a bottle, the odd one who got drunk, but very, very odd.

NP: Not like the elevators where drinking was a real problem.

HH: [Laughs] Yeah, but I remember in the elevators there, the guys were sitting there in the boot there drinking. Then by loading, the first mate was loading the boat. Oh, yeah.

NP: That changed over time, though.

HH: Yeah.

NP: So all in all, a good career.

HH: Yeah. Well, it was good. I can't complain.

NP: Yeah.

HH: No, I have a good time. I made it a good time. I get along with anybody. That's why--. We have here another German guy here, and he had a farm here. He sold that farm for \$300,000. He thinks \$300,000 is a lot, but \$300,000 is nothing, then you have to split and make five. The kids work day and night just like he did. So that guy there, it doesn't matter what, it's always him there. Him. "I got the farm. I did--." I'm not that way. He never give anything. He could give an old cow to the Salvation Army. No. He would sell the cow for \$200 or whatever and save the \$200. Well, I give \$200 a year for Salvation Army with costs and all this. That's what we do every year. My wife writes the cheques, yeah. But he don't. But he's still--.

**[1:40:26]**

NP: Different choices, right? Different choices. So I look forward to having a second interview about your prisoner of war--.

HH: Well, that's another story. When I was prisoner of war, I got captured in Belgium. I went from Belgium to--.

NP: And when would that have been? Belgium, what year?

HH: 1944.

NP: Oh, right near the end of the war. Maybe my dad's--. Maybe the LSR captured you.

HH: [Laughing] Anyway, then we went from there, we went to France, from France to England, from England to New York to Medicine Hat. I was Medicine Hat for six months, then in the bush.

NP: Yeah. Well, that will be another story. Anything that I didn't ask you that I should have? Something you wanted to say that you haven't had a chance to say?

HH: No, I didn't. No. The elevator--. What elevator are you [inaudible]

NP: What we're looking at?

HH: Yeah.

NP: Well, we were looking at UGG M at one point, but now it's been bought, and it's going to be demolished, we understand. We like Pool 2 north of the Marina, but it's currently owned by a lumber company, so we don't know. So that's where we're stuck. We can't find a place because the ownership has changed. I don't know if you've watched at all.

HH: I know the elevator, the guy who bought it didn't he want to make something out of it?

NP: No.

HH: I thought--.

NP: That might have been one of them, but not Pool 2. Pool 2 is the one just at the end of--.

HH: I know Pool 2.

NP: Yeah.

HH: I got two loads out of Pool 2 in my--.

NP: Oh, did you?

HH: Yeah. The thing was too low for us.

NP: Yes. They had to back in to get--.



HH: Yeah.

NP: Well, you would have gone down the river a lot too, down the Kam River.

HH: Yeah.

NP: That was a bit of a challenge.

HH: You see, in that time, there was two elevators past Paterson.

NP: Right, at the turning basin.

HH: Yeah, yeah.

NP: Yeah. You remember those?

HH: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it's them two.

NP: So anything about those elevators on the river that comes to mind from being on a ship? What did you have to watch for?

HH: No, actually, all them elevators were good. I mean, Paterson's was good. I kept ship in Elevator 5 one winter.

NP: You kept what?

HH: Ship.

NP: What does that mean?

HH: Watchman for the winter. In the wintertime when the boats are tied up, yeah. They have a ship keeper there.

NP: And what would a ship keeper do?

HH: Well, look after the boat.

NP: Did anything happen to the boat or--?

HH: Oh, anything could happen. I mean, the power goes off, if the power goes off. You see, that's what I didn't tell you. The boat laid up in the wintertime. Cold, no steam, no heat, nothing. It's cold. So it would freeze, the valves, all them big valves. They all have a discharge going out, so all them valves have to be filled with sea caulk filler. That's what do you call a--. This is oil. It's dark. You have to heat that one, and then make it a liquid, and then you pump that one in. So that keeps the thing from freezing. And the boat was cold in the winter. No heat.

NP: So did you just go down every day and do your rounds or--?

HH: Yeah, you make rounds, yeah. Make a round. You go in there, then you look in the valve. You'd see--. If a valve is frozen, you can see the frost over it, you see. That you have to check. If there is the water move up, it might suck that sea caulk filler out. Sucks it out, and there might be nothing left. Them valves are not really closed or something like that. Oh, yeah. But it was good. I liked ship keeping.

**[1:45:24]**

NP: So how many boats would you--? What was the most--?

HH: One boat. You had one boat at a time. Yeah. Outside up here in the Western Engineering dock, you might have two, three at the same time, but down there, you had mostly one.

NP: Yes, I've seen pictures of that, so it's great to have you say something about it.

HH: Okay. Now, the pictures. Now we can look at the pictures.

NP: Okay. Now, I have--. We're at 1:45, and I think we have 1:58. So we have a little over 10 minutes, and I won't shut it off because we can talk about the pictures.

HH: That's most likely--. [Laughs]

NP: Ah, yes. Here we have loading grain. The spout.

HH: Here is the *Senator of Canada*. You can keep all them. Yeah, you take.

NP: Okay, this is at the shipyards here, right?

HH: Yeah, yeah.

NP: I can see Pool 3. No, UGG in the background.

HH: No, that's Grain Growers. This one here.

NP: Grain Growers.

HH: Grain Growers, yeah.

NP: Yeah, so that's where you took on your first load, right?

HH: That one here, I have the original for that one.

NP: Okay. So this is the one where you said you were between there and where?

HH: That's Port Huron, and that's the beginning of Detroit River. I cross there with the **Ambassador bridge** [inaudible].

NP: Okay.

HH: [1:47:02 --] But I get you all them here.

NP: All the postcards of the places, your ports of call.

HH: Yeah. Now, that's one here.

NP: Here we have a tugboat.

HH: Yeah, tugboats.

NP: And where is this? Oh, that's here.

HH: Here. Yeah, here. They're all here.

NP: Yeah.

HH: That's all here. That's an ore dock down there.

NP: The little tugboats. I always find them so interesting.

HH: Pool 6.

NP: Pool 6. Where were you when it was exploded?

HH: I was here.

NP: Were you watching?

HH: Okay, see that one here is Pointe Noire. That's by Seven Islands. Seven Islands is on the other side of the bay, and that's on the beginning of the bay. That's bringing the ore from Labrador. See that's ore there?

NP: Ah. So this is Sept-Iles.

HH: That's Pointe Noire.

NP: Pointe Noire.

HH: That's a picture of the new *Paterson*, there when it was coming the first time to Thunder Bay.

NP: So this is docked alongside beside the--.

HH: Paterson.

NP: Beside the elevator.

HH: No, that's beside Paterson office there.

NP: Oh, just the office. Okay. The elevator was already gone?

HH: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

NP: Yeah.

HH: Here is Humberstone. That's Humberstone. That's Robin Hood Mill in Humberstone.

NP: Oh. Where is Humberstone? Port Colbourne?

HH: Yeah. That's Humberstone. That's part of Port Colbourne now.

NP: Oh, okay.

HH: This is--.

NP: Oh, tugs. More tugs.

HH: That's the Seaway there. Eisenhower Lock.

NP: You mentioned that earlier.

HH: See--.

NP: Now what was the lock that--. Or where were you when you were talking about how you had to take the ship's wheel?

HH: Oh, that's just coming up from up there.

NP: Just coming up to this lock?

HH: Yeah, coming up to the Seaway. Not here.

NP: Oh, a boom. So where's this?

HH: Oh, that's here. Here out in the lake.

NP: From here?

HH: Yeah. Going from Nipigon, I guess, out on there. They got--. That's Collingwood.

NP: Okay.

HH: Here is Paterson Elevator.

NP: It was a lovely elevator, wasn't it? Oh, this is a nice one. It's got the storage annex too.

**[1:50:08]**

HH: Here's Port McNicoll. On that side here see there's a passenger ship. I think that's one of them there.

NP: One of those ones that you mentioned seeing?

HH: See there? There's the elevator, and there's the passenger ship.

NP: So what do you think is the prettiest port that you went to?

HH: The Canadian or the American?

NP: Well, let's do Canadian and then tell me American.

HH: Actually, I would say that one here. This is Port Alfred. That's a nice port.

NP: That's a nice port?

HH: Up the Saguenay River.

NP: Ah, okay. And they have logs there? They don't have grain there, do they? I don't think they have--.

HH: No, no grain. That's a papermill, and then there is an aluminum plant. Here, that one here, that's something.

NP: The *Rosalee D.*

HH: No, that's--. Yeah. That here was a bumboat. Do you know what a bumboat is?

NP: No.

HH: It's a supply boat for the guys on the boat. It comes along, you buy your cigarettes and stuff. That was it. But then even into other business, and they give that. That's the bumboat.

NP: Now, why do they call it a bumboat, do you know?

HH: I don't know.

NP: It's not a very attractive name.

HH: Well. [Laughing] But that's the one in there, and you got your cigarettes or chocolate bar or whatever.

NP: So it's not a package--. What do they call it? Packet? Did they also call it packet boat?

HH: No. After that, they had the passenger--. They took out the pilots after. Yeah. Here, that's Duluth.

NP: What's Duluth like as a port?

HH: It's not bad.

NP: Sort of like Thunder Bay?

HH: Yes, that one is the Soo.

NP: What do other people think of the port of Thunder Bay?

HH: Oh, they like Thunder Bay. All them sailors like it. Here's Sault Ste. Marie Lock.

NP: Yes, I've been there. Was that lock open when you started, the Canadian lock?

HH: We wouldn't go in.

NP: So you were too big?

HH: Yeah. They tried it with the *Paterson* to get in there, but there was no space. They couldn't--.

NP: No space for error. You would have been scraping the sides.

HH: Yes. That one here is Port [inaudible]. I don't know how I got that one. That's not--.

NP: You have not been here?

HH: No.

NP: I'll give you that one then because I only want the ones you've been to.

HH: Okay. Here is Port Cartier.

NP: Ah, yes.

HH: You see, Port Cartier there is one side. Here is grain. That's most likely a Russian boat.



NP: A Russian boat there on the--.

HH: Yeah. They're loading. They're loading. And here is iron ore.

NP: Okay.

HH: Port Cartier.

NP: Yes, I've heard of it. Looks cold there. So that Russian boat is the one that's loading grain?

HH: Yeah, a big one. Here is now the Soo Locks.

NP: When we were there maybe five years ago, there was a boat coming. I don't know what ship it was, but we were close enough, and I asked the--. Oh.

**End of interview.**