

**Narrator:** Bill Skrepichuk (BS)

**Company Affiliations:** N/A

**Interview Date:** 14 April 2015

**Interviewer:** Nancy Perozzo (NP)

**Recorder:** Nancy Perozzo (NP)

**Transcriber:** Sarah Lorenowich (SL)

**Summary:** Retired professional engineer and local historian Bill Skrepichuk discusses his interest in Thunder Bay’s local history between 1882 and 1885. He begins by describing what life was like for residents of the Lakehead during this period, providing demographic information, and explaining the early government railway construction project that was necessary before elevator construction at the Lakehead could begin. He provides year-by-year information of the CPR Syndicate’s priorities for the construction after they gained control of the railway in 1882, like moving construction materials on the line in 1882, upgrading the old line and building King Elevator in 1883, adding coal docks and Elevator A to Fort William in 1884, and improving the elevators and dredging in 1885. Skrepichuk discusses the importance of creating a Canadian system of moving materials, commodities, and people, of which Thunder Bay played a major role in connecting the east and west. Other topics discussed include clarifying the early shipments of grain out of Port Arthur and Fort William in this period, the development of the canals and locks through the Great Lakes, and the CPR’s monopoly on grain elevator construction in the Lakehead in the 1880s and ‘90s. At the end of the interview, Skrepichuk reads directly from several historical newspaper articles, which were some of his sources for his historical research. Article topics include the first train from Winnipeg to Thunder Bay, a CPR Syndicate delegation choosing the Lakehead terminus, early reports of grain shipments on schooners and steamers, Prairie crop reports, and opinion pieces on Thunder Bay’s terminal elevators.

**Keywords:** Thunder Bay, ON—History; Local history; Fort William history; Port Arthur history; Canadian Pacific Railway; Railway construction; Grain elevators—design and construction; King Elevator (Pool 2); CPR Elevator A; CPR Elevator B; CPR Elevator C; CPR Elevator E; Terminal grain elevators—Thunder Bay; William Van Horne; CPR Syndicate; Grain transportation—rail; Grain transportation—ships; Coal docks; Hudson’s Bay Company; Dredging; Steamers; Schooners; Canallers; Lakers; Welland Canal; Great Lakes trade; Passenger ships; Passenger trains; Bulk carriers; *Erin*; *Sligo*; *Algoma*; *Quebec*; *Acadia*; *S. S. Athabasca*

Time, Speaker, Narrative

NP: It is April 14, 2015, and this interview is taking place in Thunder Bay, Ontario—the Fort William side. And I would like the interviewee or, as we call them, the narrator, for today to introduce himself and just tell us how he got interested in the whole area of the early grain trade in Thunder Bay.

BS: Okay. My name is Bill Skrepichuk, and some have argued that I'm a dilettante or amateur area historian with a passion for storytelling. I'm sure there are other scholars who have broached this topic or could broach the topic that I'm going to tell you about better than I, however, I have put things together, I've composed the history of our area in a very tight fashion, given the resources that I've got, and I plan to do a very narrow historical timeframe of the transportation industry and the vessels or boats and the grain industry. So trains, boats, and grain are one way of looking at it. All of this is in aid of improving the history of the area and visibility for the people who hear this, as well as I do this for my grandkids, et cetera. Today specifically, April 14<sup>th</sup>, I'm doing it in honour of a Jesuit priest. His name was Father William Maurice, who died on April 14, 2008, six years ago at 92. Phenomenal sharp mind, and he influenced my appreciation for chronology and the area history of Thunder Bay absolutely, and it's changed my engineering perspectives—of which I have a large history—into engineering and history. So this is the benefit and a tribute to him as well as to the collections that I've made.

NP: Now, before you get into that, as you said, narrowly focused but very in depth--. 1882 to 1885 is what you're going to focus on?

BS: Correct.

NP: Did you have any family in the grain industry?

BS: My father was a sheet metal worker for 35 years with the Day Company and with Northland Machinery and a variety of other things. So the history of the grain elevators has always been a little bit in the blood. Myself, none directly, but his history and his work ethic and his work scope, I guess you could say, always influenced me. It was scarce resources, an uneducated immigrant, to come and to become a journeyman sheet metal, and to tell the stories of mechanical repairs in these elevators, in these downspouts where he had to crawl inside of these pipes over and up in the air up to 50 to 100 feet with a dollie on the inside to hold for riveting. These are real stories, and he always commented to me, "If you're afraid, you won't go." And there were many young kids in his employ or in his work that he advised that way while the old vets, like himself, would have no problem going and doing this type of work. Putting the majority of the cyclones on the top of our elevators were put in with his assistance and other things like that. So sheet metal--. And when I look at those elevators now, they're more than just monuments of cement. I can appreciate the mechanical elements in there quite well.

NP: So you are an engineer by training?

BS: Yes. Yes.

NP: Okay.

BS: I've had many different varieties of engineering. As a matter of fact, the last position I held was with Red Rock Mill. I was engineering superintendent there. The mill is gone now, but I was involved with the lion's share of the capital investments there. Almost a quarter of a billion dollars worth of work that I was personally in charge of over 20 plus years. So mechanics of industry are very well known to me, and that's why, I guess, I feel I can feather in some of the work campaigns that have gone through our area probably as well as anybody with the background I have.

NP: Great. Now, we always like to ask people what their first personal experience was with an elevator. Did your dad take you into an elevator?

**[0:05:05]**

BS: Ah, thank you very much for asking that because--.

NP: Oh, before you do that, what was your dad's name?

BS: My father's name was Peter Skrepichuk, and he passed away in 2005 at the ripe age of 95 with a sharp mind right to the end. His historical stories he wouldn't share easily, but once you got him going, they were rich and honest. So he was that way.

NP: And so, your first experience?

BS: Ah! This is very interesting because I believe I must have been about 6 years old, and we used to have an elevator—now recently just demolished on the island, the Mission Island—and some of the neighbour kids and myself, they invited me to come on a little journey. We actually climbed in through the bottom of the workhouse and up an access ladder to the top of this cement elevator and were completely scared or feared as we walked out onto the top of these cylinders and had a phenomenal view of Thunder Bay's Fort William side and the industry there. That was a very rich and memorable experience. I can still remember climbing and being both afraid and excited at the same time through the dark.

NP: What were you climbing, stairs?

BS: No. We were climbing a ladder, an access ladder to the top of these silos. So we climbed probably 75-80 foot of pinned ladder to the top and then skated out over the top of these six cylinders—there were six bins—and basically on our bellies. We crawled to the edge and looked down to enhance the fear level and the excitement level too. We never did mention that to my dad that we climbed that until way, way later in life. Every time we used to row by those elevators, I always could remember that back to the time when I was 6 years old.

NP: [Laughs]

BS: So that's a connection. However, you don't want me talking too much about this, but when I worked out west for H. A. Simons in Vancouver in 1981—1980/'81—United Grain Growers [UGG], we did a replacement of a boot and a leg and a conveying system to what they called a Buhler system out there at the time. The grain dust smell in my nose was very interesting. I appreciated it, as a matter of fact. And I would suggest that was about, oh, about an eight-month assignment we had out there, so you learned quite a bit about it and about the early history of the mechanics of these elevators and how there were very few drawings, and most of it was best practice in equipment supply by manufacturers, installation by millwrights who used just straight best practice techniques. So the industry came up through somewhat artisan approach to problem solving and mechanical workings that was somewhat even before grain dust was being controlled by cyclones, et cetera.

NP: Great.

BS: Okay?

NP: So why your interest in the period 1882 to 1885? What--?

BS: Okay. So what I'd like to do with this—and that's a nice segue into it—is to describe the condition here in the mid 1880s at the Lakehead, the human condition. What I plan to do is I'll describe this, then I'll quickly animate chronology—'82, '83, '84, '85, which was a tremendous building period in our area at the Lakehead—then I will take each year apart as best I can and give you information related to how I came up in my materials. Here we go. This bumps into the fact that most of my work has been done with the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway]—not CNR [Canadian National Railway] but CPR—construction through the area, and I've just kind of collaterally bumped into the construction elements both from the first spike driven at the town plot going west, and all of the work going west to meet up the line coming back from Selkirk. That was the first construction not by CPR, but by the government, then the takeover from 1882 to '83 going from Prince Arthur's Landing to Nipigon.

**[0:10:12]**

But my main work started with the CPR construction from the Nipigon Bridge across to the Pic River across the north shore, of which we have phenomenal construction not written material but visual material. I have unpacked that as best as anybody, I believe, right now, and I've continued to give lectures on this work—the Nipigon River bridge, Jackfish has coal terminal construction elements there, various bridges, the construction, the stone related to the abutments, the piers. All of that work is in my camp, and it ties together, again, the Lake Superior elements, the vessels, and supplying materials, as well as what was happening all in the area and how many thousands of workers were in the area here too. So that was one of my things.

NP: Can I ask you—you may intend to cover this anyway—but there was an early article in the *Globe and Mail* about the first spike, I believe even before the time period you're talking about.

BS: Yeah, 1875. June 1<sup>st</sup>, as a matter of fact. Yes.

NP: So how does that fit into this whole thing?

BS: It won't because it was more political than anything, so I tried to stay away from the political elements more to the constructability elements, things like that. That's more of my engineering mind. I'm not-- I can value how politics entered into everything that happened here and the human elements and various things like that. That's probably better done by others. I don't want to tangle myself in that. I'm more in the mechanical bits and pieces, the details, and you'll see how I put my thoughts together, how I've unpacked this particular history.

NP: Okay. So just to finish off that piece—I appreciate what you're saying—would it be legitimate to say that that initial spike, first spike, was it actually physically-- Was any track laid as a result of it?

BS: It was ceremonial at first. Obviously, you have to think about the ways and means, the material handling. How and what? Where did the steel come from? How did the vessels-- Could they get over the bar? Where was the dock? All of those things contributed to it being-- Was it as if there was 1,000 men around gathered and ready to go at a shotgun start like a dogsled race? No. The answer is no because there was all of the dirty politics that had to happen first. The thing about the Neebing Hotel and the government falling, all the bits and pieces. So these were major projects, and it was the right size-- The driving forces. I'm more interested in the driving force of why it happened, and what was happening is the grain from the west, they called it the northwest at the time—it was only Selkirk Settlement basically—was skating around Ontario and going through Duluth and Minneapolis.

NP: Okay. I'm going to stop you here, and the only reason I'm going to do that is I know that you've set up a certain methodology in how you want to approach this, and I'm just asking for some background information. I think if we get into the grain, we're probably running a bit out of order of what you wanted to do. So you were talking about the 1882 period and what it looked like in the region at that time.

BS: Yes.

NP: So maybe if you continued there.

BS: Okay. So we'll back up to that so we don't get sidetracked too far. We're going to talk about here, first of all, the human condition at the Lakehead. Again, this is before gas and TV and before people had cars. They'd sit around a fire and heal their scars. These are old lines from a song that I know, but the idea was that it was pretty rugged at the Lakehead. The population at Prince Arthur's Landing at the time was in the hundreds, the low hundreds. Same on the Fort William side. Location in Prince Arthur's Landing was clustered around the docks by and large. In Fort William, you could argue the town plot was the main--. That's where the first spike was driven. They also had the Mission, which was quite active, and this is what the Jesuits and Father Maurice's stories came from through me. I'm just here to relay them, of course. And then the coming in and establishing their plot and their lots, and how they were farming on the islands—Mission and McKellar Islands, of course. Docks at the time: Prince Arthur's Landing, the government dock and the Marks dock and the CPR elevator. But again, it runs through a period there. And in Fort William side it was the Town Plot. You've got to watch these years because the years were very active. Things were happening very quickly.

**[0:15:17]**

Transportation in the area was by water and horses. Elevators. Obviously in 1883—I'll talk later—the King Elevator the CPR constructed and the Elevator A in 1884, of course, on the Kam River. Power was by wood and steam plants. There was no electrification, et cetera. Communications. Telegraph became a really important communication tool during this era where it was nothing and then it became something. This was how intelligence was passed along for construction and organizing materials and, obviously, letter post, but it was very slow. Various ethnicities I could get into and various other elements too, but we'll go on and on and best described probably by other historians of that era.

NP: Actually, I wouldn't mind a little piece on ethnicities.

BS: [Laughs] But neither would I, but I'm actually not prepared a lot. However, there was somewhat segregation. I'll start on the Town Plot. There was a big—given the names that were there—big emphasis on--. And again, you're going through a very active era, so we're not talking about the contractors that came in that were from a large pool, some of the contractors. But by and large, in the Town Plot Fort William side, at the Mission, the Native--. I guess they would have been called a variety of things. The original was the Chippewas that had moved from the Grand Portage area that came there. There were various other Crees that came in and out. Again, others know more than I about that. At the Landing, there was the English were significant. A little bit of Irish, little bit of Scotch, but these, again, were bonded by language. A little bit of French, but they stuck together very, very much as immigrants, all do in various communities. Prince Arthur's Landing had, again, the English, based on the names like Marks, et cetera, and Irish were a little bit, possibly more prominent there, et cetera, but not large numbers. Again, cloistered. This era happens to be just after the Silver Islet demise. Silver Islet being in the early '70s roughly to about the end of the '70s and languishing after that. So that's some ethnicity comments I can make. I can unpack it more when I get more detail.

NP: Fine. So total population in a general sense?

BS: In the hundreds, resident. That way I don't want to say--. It was not the thousands for sure. I mean, we were, at some point, supposedly to be--. We equalled the population of Chicago in many ways back in the 1850s, et cetera. Obviously, Chicago ended up different than us, and Duluth, of course. Again, two ports that we emulated. There's a Chicago influence in the Fort William side, and I'll bring that in at a later time.

NP: Okay.

BS: But in the hundreds is what we ended up being. The Mission was quite vibrant. I suspect that there was at least plus 100 there. At the Town Plot, probably 100 to 200 possibly. McKellars were a small group. In Prince Arthur's Landing as things were getting going, you're ramping up in populations now because of the influence of the railway coming, the influence of more vessel traffic, more construction. All of those things were factors in population.

NP: So the impetus then to actually start putting down that steel railway. So what--?

BS: Oh, okay. So, well, there's not--. Again, to do this well, your mind has to reside in the 1880s. You have to get an 1880s mind, and I mean you have to abandon everything you see around you, and you have to just think about it. Now, there's romantics that you can do. There's images that we have, and I have the luxury of going through these images, so my mind can easily go there, and it can go through the vessels that are in the area, et cetera. And again, the change from 1882 when the last spike, actually, was driven--. In June of '82, the last spike was driven—first spike being 1875 in town plot, and the last spike 1882—at Feist Lake, that

is of the leg from the Town Plot over to Manitoba. The first train on July 8, 1882, arrived at Prince Arthur's Landing from the west. Newspaper articles will animate later. Then it goes 1883. This is when the first grain would have come through, primarily in bags, and it was in the fall. The fall. Remember, you have to grow it before you harvest it, and then you have to transport it, and then it's got to get here, and it's got to be handled, and the vessels have got to be here to do it. So all that mechanics was not well set up. But then they talk about the *Erin* being the first vessel with grain, bulk grain, over the hull.

**[0:20:52]**

1884. We'll unpack that a little bit more, and there was a leftover in the spring of grain in the King Elevator, Port Arthur side. Fort William had not built out yet. They were just building it. So there was a spring drain out of the grain in '84, and then there was a rush in the fall to beat the weather, but it was late. I'll go through the newspaper articles that animate that. In 1885, now, in winter, actually, it was earlier. It was quite a dirty fall, and there were a lot of catastrophes out on the lake at that time. 1885, now, the *Sligo* had wintered here. It was part of the Graham fleet, and she was my--. A three-masted schooner. A very strong history that I have a lot of knowledge of her, and she took the first grain out of the Elevator A, CPR Elevator A, Fort William, Kaministiquia River, May 28, 1885. So that is a very fast chronology vertically. Now some other elements that I'll use for animating my history horizontally now is--.

NP: Before you go onto that--. So if I've got this correct, we have the first spike of some sort in 1875, but it was almost a false start, and things didn't really get going until later, and we won't say when later was. The last spike, 1882, at Feist Lake. So were they, at the same time, building from Winnipeg towards here?

BS: No. That was the last spike. That was the completion, and I have that history, but we shouldn't talk about it here because it gets really tangled quick. I have that history. The last spike was Feist Lake near Vermillion Bay, and it was the connection from--. Once that last spike was driven, then the first train from the west could have come in July the 8<sup>th</sup>.

NP: Yes, but it didn't--.

BS: So that allowed the track to be run, but it was by no means proven, and that's--.

NP: But they were, at the same time--. I mean, Vermillion Bay is a couple of hundred miles from Winnipeg, so they were building something from Winnipeg.

BS: Oh, well, you're trying to get me into talking about that, and I won't get drawn in too deep. In 1875, the first spike from here, really, they didn't get going until '76 and '77. They were actually completed. There was a variety in the contracts. We'll talk about that. I'd appreciate if we talk about that later.

NP: Okay.

BS: However, at the same time, coming around from the west side going up through Duluth and through the railroad up to the Pembina and up the barge route up to Selkirk, all of that stuff is true, and Omar Lavallée has written well about that. That's how the material is coming around and coming back from the west to the east. So the connection was coming. We had the advantage because we didn't have to double or triple handle materials coming through Town Plot, and then quickly after, Prince Arthur's Landing and Marks built a railroad across to the Town Plot. That's why the CNR railroad is so straight when you cross it here by the Kentucky Fried Chicken place. That straight line is not an accident. That was the connection from the Town Plot across. Marks was looking for money on that.

Now, all of that is true, and that's how the material got forward and the constructability went from one end to the other. That's all different compared to how it happened on the north shore. On the north shore, there was a section every mile. There was contractors, and that's why it was built so fast. This one took seven years to get across, and that's why it's '75 to '82. Materials were coming up the Red River, coming back, and being forwarded that way, and therefore the rails, all their iron, all the various things like that--. Dynamite had to be fabricated out in the--. So the plants were there. They had a lot of muskeg issues. They had a lot of rock issues coming that way. We did too, but not--. They seemed to complain more about that connection because they really had scarcer resources, harder to get to, more expensive resources to come this way. Ours were less.

**[0:25:20]**

NP: Okay. But I still don't have the answer to my question, I don't think, unless I'm just not listening well. We put a spike in here and started working towards Feist Lake.

BS: It ended in Feist Lake, yeah.

NP: Feist Lake. And then something came out of Winnipeg.

BS: Selkirk, Manitoba.

NP: Out of Selkirk to join up to put the last spike in.

BS: Yeah, yeah.

NP: Had they started that eastward Canadian route at the same time or earlier than we had started the heading west route?

BS: Yes. No. The answer was yes to your first part.

NP: Yeah. Okay.

BS: 1875.

NP: And no to the other.

BS: And no to the other. 1875, money changed hands. The job was done, contracts issued. You can see them in the sessional papers.

NP: Okay. Materials, then, that were used to build our line to Feist Lake came by lake?

BS: Everything came by lake.

NP: Okay.

BS: Whether it came--. And think of this way. Remember 1880. I told you to put your mind in 1880.

NP: Yeah.

BS: It's coming by sailing vessels, et cetera, et cetera. I can show you an image here that would solve all your problems. That had to come into the Town Plot or to the government dock, offload, handled, from this end. So they had to build from one end. They couldn't build intermediates. There was no intermediate spots. They often had to forward the material in the wintertime when the marshes and swamps were cold and frozen so that all that constructability was there. But again, it's only a--. In a way, that's why I wanted to start in 1882 so we could avoid all that shenanigan and all of the other issues related to that because in 1882 in the spring, that's when the government flipped it to the Syndicate, Van Horne and company, and said, "Go! We've done this, but we don't

know anything else. We don't know how to run it. We don't know how to operate. We don't know how to maintain it." It was incomplete, and there was all sorts of issues around that that are somewhat behind what I want to give you related to the grain because all that had to happen, for sure, before the grain happened. All that had to happen before the elevators were constructed, and all of that had to happen with people on the ground and with vessels that were bringing the material here from all over the place. So it became very exciting in this era, and that's kind of the excitement I hope to deliver here as part--.

NP: Okay. This is clearing up some stuff, so I'm finished with that now. So you can continue. [Laughs]

BS: Very good. Okay. On and on we go. So this vertical chronology now will translate to a horizontal chronology, and here is how we will do it when I--. Here's how we will do it. We're going to start in 1882 just to avoid all that muck that we wanted to get mired in.

NP: Yes. [Laughs]

BS: So I'm going to, first of all, talk about the CPR's priorities list from 1882 to 1885, and they had a big list. Van Horne was definitely capable. Shaughnessy was his main man, and I've got a lot of his papers, his diary notes, et cetera. But 1882, they had a lot on their plate. 1882, the government transferred the line to the CPR. The line was completed between Winnipeg and Prince Arthur's Landing. At the same time in the fall, they began the road from Prince Arthur's Landing north to Nipigon, which is 67 miles. Other issues confounding at the same time were the forwarding of construction materials from both the Town Plot and Prince Arthur's Landing west because the construction materials still had to go on that new completed line to facilitate the build out from Winnipeg west to the mountains. So all of that material line, if it could avoid going through Duluth and going up through that vector, now became really important and became in the camp of the CPR, and they could charge extra for the freights, et cetera.

Passenger service from Prince Arthur's Landing west had to be established. It had not previously been possible, of course. And again, there was the operation of the telegraph line from Prince Arthur's Landing west, previously not there. So therefore, it had been used for construction, but now, all of a sudden, they had the ability to know things. They didn't have to have--. The wires carried information. It's strange for us sitting in 2015 to have to understand that, but those were really important points.

**[0:30:11]**

NP: Could I ask a question here, then, too? [Laughs]

BS: Go ahead.

NP: The telegraph line--.

BS: Yes.

NP: Did it develop in conjunction with the rails or--.

BS: Absolutely.

NP: Did it go in advance of them?

BS: Well, the rails were somewhat the finale because you had to, first of all, grub out. You had to, first of all, have your survey, then you had to grub, make good a bed to be able to put steel down, obviously, and have all the materials, et cetera. Poles were constructed, yes. There was some sweetheart deals given on the telegraph line, et cetera, that, again, the sessional papers address. But the actual execution of that was key. Now you had to set up stations where you could get information, get certain intelligence. And then there were the newspapers that were also hungry for that type of information too. So really all of that started to gradually wake up through the completion of that rail. That's an important point because now information--. You'll find richer pictures that are developed in both ends in the *Winnipeg Free Press* as well as in our newspapers. The opportunity of information was there, and sometimes that's important, especially if there's politics involved in what you want to print in your newspaper. So best said left that way. But in any case, the telegraph was terrifically important, and it plays a role in all of the CPR construction all the way through. It's not just to order your Amazon books online. This stuff was really necessary for Canadian history, to be sure. [Laughs] Again, weave that in.

Okay. 1883. They began--. They were still having to improve the line from Prince Arthur's Landing to Winnipeg because of the inferior construction, because of materials used, things like that, going through swamps. A lot of the trestles had not been ballasted. Most of them had not been, so they were strictly on poles. There was all sorts of things. Passenger service on the railway west was, again, still being optimized. Pullman cars. They had a variety of cars that were being--. But they couldn't deliver them unless they came up through the States. The Pullman Company in Chicago, obviously, would have delivered up there, but there was rail ability of these cars, but by and large, they were starting to have to flood the tracks with--. Not flood. But engines were important. Fuel was important. All that kind of stuff. However, I digress a bit on about 1883. Completion of the road from Prince Arthur's Landing east to Nipigon was at hand by November of that year, and that was an important stride for a couple of reasons because it was important to know that that is how Van Horne wanted to run his railroad. He wanted to use not the Sanford Flemming model of going above Lake Nipigon. He wanted to use the along-Lake-Superior route, and again, there's a lot of politics involved in that

part, but the beginning of that road from Nipigon east to the Pic River and then from Pic to Missinaibi all started to play out in that era of 1883. There was some terrific advances and some terrific failures we won't talk about here because it's not grain related.

Construction of the CPR Elevator and dock at Prince Arthur's landing was commissioned because of--. The decision was made that they needed something in Port Arthur. But even though Port Arthur is on a hill, it looks like there's deep water there. There isn't, and they had to go out quite a ways into the lake to find deep enough water that could be found. And again, there was no breakwall involved here at the time. So that King Elevator was put in because the CPR wanted to--. They knew they had a lot of material coming. They needed to have a dock, and they needed to have the government dock also, and they wanted to stay away from private docks like Marks' dock and things. And then in 1883, at the culmination of all of this in the fall, there was a test shipment of grain from the west, both bagged and some bulk. So that's when the first grain started to really be a factor.

**[0:35:11]**

Previous to that, grain had been coming around on vessels, and we have this in our newspapers here about vessels loaded with X-number amount of grain or X-amount of flour coming out of Duluth. The vessel traffic came from Duluth up to Prince Arthur's Landing and then out back to the Soo Locks. So they had a loop going. They would bring passengers up, and the passengers would either get off in Duluth--. And therefore, passengers to the west could get out into the Prairies through Duluth primarily, and then they would pick up passengers there and come around to Prince Arthur's Landing, and then--. So it was like a triangle course they made across Lake Superior. Very important part of the whole story about grain and materials and transportation because we were at the west end of the lake, and there wasn't much activity. There was no need for vessels to come here until the construction happened.

NP: Now, one question that came up in my mind from your early comments about the CPR wanted to build infrastructure at the Landing because they wanted to avoid private docks. Why would they avoid private docks?

BS: Because they had to pay. At the government dock, they didn't have to. The government was put in there, and this is where that interplay--. And again, it becomes more of the politics of the area that others would either correct anything that I say probably, or whatever. It doesn't really matter to me because I'm talking about the physical reality of when, and I work through images to be able to tell me things and talk to me about levels of completion, dredging, vessels, what the vessels were, et cetera. And newspaper articles. So that's where all of my knowledge comes from. It's not that I'm dreaming it up. It--.

NP: [Laughs] It's a good story you're coming up with here.

BS: The story is rich, and it should be told. It should have been told before well and somewhat maybe with a mechanical passion as opposed to a political and a human passion. However, again, I digress. 1884 continued with the CPR rail construction here. Now, forwarding of construction materials from Prince Arthur's Landing west and east was at play through the docks in Port Arthur. Very, very active. Volumes and volumes of rails. Thousands of rails coming up, and materials, and iron, and various things that were needed for elements of construction. It became a very busy port for food, bringing in live cattle. They seemed to keep better than refrigeration since it hadn't been invented. So the live cattle and all the other things. Now the port starts to come alive. More vessels and schooners. This is the dying era of the schooners, the three-masted schooners, centre board boats that didn't need large, deep ports to come in. This plays into the grain story, et cetera, very, very well. As well as other things happening, other commodities.

The road was continued in earnest. Five to six thousand men employed on the lines going east from Nipigon to Pic and from Pic to Missinaibi, which is north of Wawa. That was our key play, and we have lots of information on that. Passenger service, railway passenger service, again, continuing and increasing. Now it becomes very well known you can get to the west. Then continued with that is the grain. I'll leave the grain until last here right now. Construction of Elevator A began in the middle, began in the summer of that, and that's kind of important. Actually, in spring of '84. So that's an important point. And on the Kam River, Fort William. And remember that the Kam River had not been significantly dredged at this point. We'll talk about dredging later. Now we have—I'll leave grain to the last—coal. A coal dock was established because this becomes fuel for the steam engines. They were wood burning, but coal was starting to become really important, eastern coal coming in by boat into a CPR wharf at Prince Arthur's Landing. Again, that's at the King Elevator at the end. There was also one at Walsh's dock at the end of the O'Brien dock, if I'm not mistaken. That was another one of the coal depots, but that kind of fell out of favour quickly.

**[0:40:12]**

On the Kam River, there was a coal dock required too. Now, there's an interplay here that I should-- I've departed from what I wanted to do here, but I will pick up on it. On the Kam River, the coal dock was established and Elevator A, and to it, we had a line that previously had been the—I forget the name of it—but it was going from Prince Arthur's Landing directly to Town Plot. That now started to become-- CPR wanted their own line. To punch into the Elevator, they had to bring a line along the river. And this is from the sessional papers here talking about the deviation of a line from the old Town Plot, Kaministiquia, to Fort William. This letter now was written August 21, 1885, which is after the date, but it talks about "The rail line from the old Town plot on the Kaministiquia River by a new route along the river to Fort William, which was the Hudson's Bay Company Fort William." And there was a sweetheart deal given between CPR and Hudson's Bay Company, and that's why the line came along the river, and then that's where Elevator A was built.

The coal dock bunted up almost right up to the stone house on the Hudson's Bay Company property, and then the line was continued along here. "The greater portion of this new line has already been constructed," is what it says here. However, the line then was constructed over to Prince Arthur's Landing, and that started to become the track, the main track of the CPR. That's when the CPR started to come through Prince Arthur's Landing, around--. There was a large swamp there that was avoided, and that's why the CPR line, if you drive along Fort William Road, you'll see it right beside you. That is the one and only line of the CPR. The rest of it is CNR in the swamp area. Now that's the mainline, comes through around by the river and then along the river, et cetera, et cetera. That becomes, now, the main CPR trail. Sessional papers here, again, August '85, the writings on that. In '84 now, where did we leave off here? In '84--.

NP: You were mentioning the Elevator A started and the coal dock.

BS: Elevator A and the coal, yes. That's right. There was construction of the road, Town Plot to Hudson's Bay Company fort was completed. It was very--. You'll see in the images that it's very spartan but very functional, and that's what they wanted to do. Dredging of the Kam River had not been completed to any extent. There had previously been a few efforts. Peter McKellar, obviously, the one that promoted it. They did some very rugged channeling at the bar, at the Kam River. Some argued it was four feet, some argued eight feet—a variety of things. The Port Arthur papers really maligned this thing saying this would never work, and a whole bunch of issues arose from that. However, there was a tender given out in 1884 for the first breaking of the bar down to 14 feet, a channel, to be done there, as well as some improvements around the Elevator A. And obviously, piles were driven to accommodate—wooden piles—to accommodate the Elevator A construction. You can see that in the images, et cetera. So that's the Elevator A story.

NP: Before you go on from there, I had seen a picture—in fact, it was in the *Whalen*, the hold of the *Whalen*—of the Hudson's Bay fort. And the Hudson's Bay--. Or one of the buildings. It could have been the stone house that you were talking about. There were workers standing in front of it, and the caption said, "Hudson's Bay Company workers and CPR elevator workers work to dismantle the Hudson's Bay building."

BS: Mmhmm.

NP: Have you seen—in your searches—have you seen the agreement between CPR and Hudson's Bay for dismantling?

BS: No. I have not.

**[0:45:00]**

NP: Or for actually having the land that was originally fort land?

BS: No, but I believe it was in the world of 1882, probably 1882-'83. I'll show you the newspaper articles here later on.

NP: Okay.

BS: But you can see this image here. This is a very early, early image. This image would have been taken in 1885, which you see here, and that's why you see the coal dock established. The reason it's a picture taken high is because the Elevator A was standing. You'll notice on this thing, it's very rugged out in front. There's only a single track here. One, two cranes hauling, and you'll see schooners here unloading coal, and the smokestack right there is from the old stone fort. There's a reverse angle shot that you won't see, but all of this are the old fort buildings out there, and all of this—if we can get in tight enough—you can see some roof lines here from the old fort, and this is some old fort stuff here. This was a range that was put in for the entrance to the Kam River. By this time—and again, we're jumping ahead, and I wish I could not—this is the Graham Sawmill on this side here.

Let me see what other ones here. This is too late already. But just to reemphasize this thing about dredging, I will show you an image here of the dredging at Elevator--. This one here that shows the--. Unfortunately, when you're recording sound, you can't see it, but you'll notice here very important points. Those are two dredges that are working in front of Elevator A. This is the one and only here, and that's because there's nothing else. You can see bush all around, bush behind, but this is Elevator A. Still some level of constructability on the down spouts, and dredges sat there. This is an image taken 1885. I put those barges. Those barges came from Barkers, a company called Barkers. You might remember a name Barkers Island in Superior. Barker had dredges, and they were already dredging down in the Duluth area, so this is part of the dredging story that we allowed ourselves to have because the dredges had to come from some place, and they didn't come up ours. There was no Seaway, no Canadian locks even at this time, so everything was going through the American locks.

NP: Now, just from the standpoint of the coal docks in relation to the fort, was Elevator A the most easterly--.

BS: A. A.

NP: A, the most easterly of those four elevators that were built?

BS: Okay. I will show you an image here that hopefully will inform you better. This now is my image right here. This image here will inform your knowledge to a point. Not very well.

NP: [Laughs]

BS: This is a later image. Let me get the best image here, if I can, for you to see. First of all, this is an era here where this is Elevator A. This is Elevator C. This is some freight sheds here, and Elevator B is actually in front of it. I'll show you.

NP: Yeah.

BS: Again, this is Elevator B, so now we have here Elevator A, C, and B, and in between is E. That was meant to confuse. [Laughs] In other words, there's A. I'll show again. A, C, that's B, and E will fit in between, and D is in the corner. You know where that is. This is the construction of those elevators.

NP: Okay. So the answer to my question is no, that Elevator C was closer to the east or to the mouth of the river.

BS: To my knowledge, what I see here, yes. And as you can see here, for example, there's quite a bit of room here to develop another elevator going to the river. The Empire Elevator would have been out there.

NP: Okay. Great. Where are those pictures of construction from?

BS: Oh, this?

NP: The early ones that actually show the workers and the--.

BS: Oh, I'm unaware of those. What are you talking--?

NP: Oh, what are the source of the photos?

BS: Oh, we'll talk about that later.

NP: Okay. Good.

BS: Yeah. Okay. So in any case, yeah, maybe this one here might--. Actually, here is an interesting promotion. This was a promo. Again, a later date. I think this came, actually, from James Whalen, and as you can see here, knowing what you know, this is the

Kam River, the McKellar River. This was probably in 1912, but again, here, this is C, this is A, this is E, this is B, and this is D, and this is the Empire out here. There was a variety of these types of images. I'm sure you've seen them. So.

**[0:50:07]**

NP: The map that Bill is referring to there is one of the maps of the harbour showing the various structures along the harbour.

BS: And it's the basin of the Kam River. The Port Arthur side images are shown--. No, not there. The Port Arthur side images are shown through the breakwall or the breakwater layouts, which I have, and they're not germane to this argument right now. Okay. So back to 1884. [Laughs] And in 1884, I will expand here a little bit more, even though I've skated too fast through '83. But in 1884, I'm going to read you a little bit of preamble, and it's from *Van Horne's Road*, Omar Lavallée's work, and this happens to be page 126. It says--. It follows here Omar's words, "In many ways, the year 1884 was a repetition of the predecessors as far as the Lake Superior section was concerned. New embankments, which had been constructed to replace faulty trestles, gave trouble through settlement, and the track through swamps and muskeg undulated under the weight of the trains almost as alarmingly as it did in 1883. For the most part, increased traffic was responsible for this situation. The beginning of the grain traffic, which would in time give the Winnipeg-Lakehead route the highest railway traffic density in Canada, came in 1884, concurrently with the establishment of company steamer service on Lake Huron and Lake Superior. The handling of grain was the result of the construction by the company in 1884 of two grain terminals at the Lakehead. One constructed at Port Arthur had a capacity of 320,000 bushels, while the second elevator built in Fort William had a capacity of 1 million bushels. These were operated in conjunction with the privately owned elevators in communities along the line built in 1883 and '84 that ranged in capacity between 20,000 and 50,000 bushels." These would have been in the Prairies.

"The familiar chronic problem of grain movement first asserted themselves that year," 1884. "A car shortage occurred, necessitating the rebuild of flatcars into boxcars to handle grain. Cars were used for storage of grain at Lakehead when the elevators were full and ships were not removing it quick enough, and weekly crop reports became a familiar feature of the inward correspondence line on general superintendent Egan's desk." Quote from Van Horne. Or, sorry, from Omar Lavallée.

NP: Could have been written last year about grain ships. [Laughs]

BS: Some would argue. And so, in other words, the old comes new. So having said that in 1884, there was quite a show going on. And I'll go through this quickly, and then I'll--. I know it may sound a little repetitive here, but we'll do it anyway. The grain began to flow, and it began to transport here in 1884. There was vessels that you'll hear the names through even in--. I'm just trying to get this correct. In 1880--. Sorry. The grain trimmers notes, we've already gone past them in 1883. I'll have to reread them, and you

can edit them in later. But there'll be vessels in 1884 that you'll hear names like--. For example, I'll just read very quickly, the highlights. May the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1884, the *Acadia* took the first grain out. Obviously, May the 12<sup>th</sup> was early. Break-up was early. They took 20,000 bushels consigned to Montreal. That boat had wintered here, so therefore it did not have to fight ice to get here. So that was the first grain out, and it came out of the King Elevator in 1884 of the year. So again--. And May the 21<sup>st</sup>, the city of Owen Sound took grain for Collingwood. I'll skate quickly now here again. In May the 25<sup>th</sup>, the *Shickluna* took grain to Montreal. There was a great purchase done in 1884 by a group in Montreal. I think it was the Ogilvie Company and something else—I could be wrong, the details will show—for I think it was 1 million bushels or something like it. It was the best that they could to get the grain to Montreal so it could be milled, et cetera. This is not for--. This is for domestic use.

**[0:55:27]**

Then I have also my schooner *Sligo* on June 9<sup>th</sup> taking 10,000 to Midland, 10,000 bushels to Midland. Then I have the *Acadia* again come on a return trip on June the 11<sup>th</sup>. *Acadia* takes grain, and the schooner *Niagara* taking grain. On June the 12<sup>th</sup>, I have city of Owen Sound and the *Acadia*. The *Acadia* departed, and the city of Owen Sound also took grain out. Then the schooner *Morwood*, they took grain to Midland in 1884. Then the *Argile*, which was a steamer, a Graham Line steamer, took grain to Goderich on June the 16<sup>th</sup> of 1884. June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the *Shickluna* propeller took grain to Montreal. This was the leftover grain from the '83 harvest that I'm talking about here. And then there was a dry period. And so, there was a report that there was going to be great grain coming, and there was going to be all sorts of things if the vessels were available, and this was reports in the October the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Then on November the 3<sup>rd</sup>, there was talk about this great grain coming, and nothing was happening, and navigation was getting close to being closed. So it was here on November the 10<sup>th</sup>, the *Prussia*, which was a propeller—and actually, the image is a very famous image sitting at the King Elevator—took grain for, I think, for Goderich. Then the fleet really kicked in here. The *Athabasca*, which was a CPR, November the 15<sup>th</sup>. These were the big passenger, the Clyde-built steamers. They started to kick in with 20,000 bushels. The reason they couldn't have taken grain in the springtime was because the Owen Sound elevator was not ready to receive it. These boats deadheaded between Owen Sound and Prince Arthur's Landing. So they could bring passengers and freight this way, and the plan was to bring—if there was no passengers—bring a hell of a lot of grain going back the other way. So it was a good philosophy, except the elevator hadn't been finished in Owen Sound. So in the fall, it was, so they really scrambled in the fall of '84. Again, here, I've got November the 17<sup>th</sup>, the *Algoma*, which later became the tremendous catastrophe on Isle Royal. On the day of the last spike in '85, she started taking grain down to Owen Sound. The *Myles* also too grain. Then the *Alberta*, which was another one of the Clyde-built CPR boats, took grain. Then, again, the *Prussia* on November the 22<sup>nd</sup> took grain. Then the *Algoma* again.

The *Algoma*, there's a very famous image, and I'll show you this so you can get this. Take a look at this. You've seen this image before. That was the image on November the 20<sup>th</sup> as the *Algoma* crossed the lake, and it was just bound with ice. I mean, it just looks awful, but it's true. She had to turn around, dump her passengers and her freight, and scoot back to pick up grain at the King Elevator, which is here—now, this isn't her—at the King Elevator to get back to Owen Sound. There was a tremendous storm on the lake that allowed this. So the reason I say all these things is because there was a physicality to all of this, which was really important. You're getting it through my storylines. She was the last boat of that year. She cleared in November the 26<sup>th</sup> for Owen Sound, and that was it. That was the end. No more grain shipped. CPR had already had some catastrophes before with ships going down in Lake Superior at that time of year, so that was it for the year. Now, the Elevator A was ready, but the bar hadn't been broken enough, and a whole bunch of other problems still resulted.

NP: Now, before you move on, maybe this is as good a time as any in here to talk about the 1883 shipping.

BS: Okay, yes. Yes, I'll get to it.

NP: Because that's where there's a lot of--.

**[1:00:05]**

BS: Of potential misinformation over the collections.

NP: Yes, exactly.

BS: Correct. And even the grain trimmers, I must admit, as knowledgeable as they were, and they should have records, but the records are thin.

NP: Well, for those early days, I can imagine.

BS: For those early days. So I will read from a script here from Dwight Winters. Thunder Bay Grain Trimmers Ltd. gave me a copy of this a number of years ago. It says here. And it says it's their words, and I'll correct the dates where--. And I'll let you know when I do it.

NP: Okay.

BS: “The first recorded grain sent east from here was on a ship called *Quebec* on or about October the 1<sup>st</sup>,” which was really the 3<sup>rd</sup>, “’83. The wheat came here via the CPR, and there were two rail cars full. It was shipped out bagged. The wheat was termed excellent and came from near Brandon, Manitoba.” So it’s a little further west than Selkirk. “On the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1883, the *United Empire* took bagged wheat and flour out of Thunder Bay.” Now, I’ll show you the two images here. This is the image of the *Quebec*. Now, it’s not at the elevator, but that’s what the *Quebec* looked like. Okay. It was a propeller boat, and she was very familiar to our port. And the *United Empire*, there’s many, many images of her at our port, but there’s the *United Empire*, and that happens to be at the government dock. This is, again, a very famous image. Okay.

NP: Now, the first shipment that goes out on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, I think you corrected, went out from--?

BS: Okay, let’s see what the newspaper article suggested here. This is October the 3<sup>rd</sup>. So this is--. And I’ll zoom in, and you could even read it if people get sick and tired of listening to my voice here. Okay. Here we have it here. This is October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the *Daily Sentinel*. This says, “The first shipment of wheat over the CPR and the lakes to the east was made by the *Quebec* Sunday on which—something—two-car loads were shipped. One car is awaiting a Montreal steamer, and two other carloads arrive last night. It came from Brandon and is an excellent quality of wheat.” So obviously, these fellows had captured some of this article.

NP: But it didn’t say where it was shipped to, whether it was Fort William or Port Arthur.

BS: In this case, no. Well, this is all out of Port Arthur.

NP: Okay.

BS: Yeah, because Elevator A had not been completed in ’83, and that’s--. So this is why chronology is really important. That’s why I’ve tried to narrow it—’83, Port Arthur had the elevator. Nothing in Fort William. Still hadn’t even started construction. ’84, then there was the big show, and the elevator was operational in ’84, the King Elevator. And they just started in the spring on the Kam River, and they actually completed it that year too. Let’s go back to ’83, and I’ll show you, again, a number of things related to that article. “On October the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1883, the first boatload of grain is believed to be the cargo of the *Erin*. She loaded at Port Arthur at the Marks dock,” not the elevator, “and possibly a few others. The captain was Captain J. Clifford. The load was put on by pushcart. She is believed to have taken 10,000 or 11,000 bushels of wheat, most of it in bulk, but some on the top bagged. The *Erin* was,” and the number were wrong, but these are the right numbers, “139-foot vessel of 335-tonne gross tonnage that had been built in the St. Catherines Shickluna yards in 1881.” I’ve edited that last information for correctness. Another comment about the *Erin*, and you have images of the *Erin* in that coloured image that you’ve got. So that *Erin* was a very important boat in the area here.

Continuing on with the details of that load, here we have from the newspaper, the *Daily Sentinel*, October 27<sup>th</sup>. We have here, “The cargo, which is at present being loaded for the firm of J. & J. George, millers and general merchants of Port Elgin, Ontario. This is the first cargo of Manitoba grain shipped by the lake route and consists of about 11,000 bushels is being shipped in the steamer *Erin*, a vessel chartered for the purposes by Messrs. Rothbottom [sp?] and Winans, commissioned merchants of this town.” And they were important in the Port Arthur area for many, many things. “It is satisfactory indeed to see that the CPR is determined to make this new route a success and to see with what energy the traffic arrangements are being conducted.” So that describes that load a little better for you, and that all related to grain of the--. Yeah, this--. The first article the day earlier. “The first cargo of wheat loaded at this port is being placed onboard the *Erin*.” That’s all that was said.

**[1:05:52]**

In Walpole Roland’s discussion—and I hope I’ve got his paper here—he talks about how the grain was forwarded over the gunnels, and this was--. Walpole Roland was a civil engineer of the area, very famous, and he talked in terms of that cargo being pushed in pushcarts over the gunnels into the *Erin*. The *Erin*, again, as you know, is a steamer, and this is her image here. So again, I suspect that that’s all the grain that was available because I know that she could have carried more, more than the 11,000, based on bushels. And that might be an important point now that I’ve got here volumes. And if you’ll just bear with me one minute. The vessel is typical, and I will talk shortly here about my schooner the *Sligo*. She would have carried about 10,000 bushels, and here’s some numbers. “A bushel of grain roughly weighed 52 pounds per bushel, and therefore, converting 10,000 bushels, it was about 260 plus/minus tons. But volumetrically, one bushel of grain occupies about 0.78 cubic feet, so 10,000 bushels would have occupied about 7,800 cubic feet.” Only important about the size of the boat, *Sligo* was 140 feet long, 12-foot beam, 10-foot depth, and if you gave her about a 60 percent fillage, you could have about 10,000 cubic feet. So the number 10,000 to 11,000 sounds about right for these schooner vessels. Therefore, that’s volumetrically how much of the grain they would have taken.

NP: So in summary then, when was the first shipment out of the Kam River, but not through an elevator? Was there ever any? Or the first shipment of grain went through an elevator?

BS: That’s a bone of contention that I can’t help you out with just yet. The grain trimmers don’t talk about that. The grain trimmer people don’t talk about it. There was a warehouse, they said, but I don’t know where it was. In my images, I only see Elevator A. It would have only been bagged, if anything, and I know there’s a level of confusion about where it was trundled over the gunnels, and the newspapers at best can be believed. They get the date right from time to time and sometimes there’s politics in what they say. What I trust is Walpole Roland’s story. Being an engineer and wanting to get things as right as possible, his story was that it was loaded at the Marks dock over the gunnels, and therefore, wheelbarrowed in. That, as far as--. And the grain trimmers seem to

support that argument, as well as they talk about bags being put on top, because they had extra material. So that's kind of a story that I believe is important. And as accurate as can be, the Fort William story is a little more cloudy, except that Elevator A story is not cloudy.

**[1:09:44]**

But let me just quickly finish off here about the trimming crew for--. [Laughs] Again, this is the grain trimmers talking about this. I will read just straight from their information. "Seven men trimmed the first shipment of bulk grain from an elevator in Fort William," and this will add confusion I don't want to, and that was to the *Sligo* in '85, on May 28, '85. "The load went out from CPR Elevator A," and I know it went out on May 28, 1885. "The ship taking the cargo was the schooner *Sligo*. The trimming crew were Richard Heider, Robert Stein, Herman Keen, Don Macvey, Thomas Seeley, Jack Holloran, and James Davidson. Don Macvey had been in charge of the first load of bulk grain from a Port Arthur elevator. That 20,000-bushel load had gone out of the King Elevator on the vessel *Acadia* with Captain Malcolmson." Stop. That was said by the grain trimmers. They gave names. They did some other things. Their date was wrong for *Sligo*. They had '84. It wasn't '84. It was '85. But their names are bonafide. I don't know if you've heard that story before or not. Okay. In any case, do-do-do-do-, what else have I got here? Yeah. I think that's the grain trimmer, and that's the grain trimmers' story. Go ahead.

**[Audio pauses]**

NP: We've taken a bit of a pause, a tea break, and now Bill would like to continue with the final piece of the 1885 story.

BS: So after '84, there was a lot of potential activity that was in the grain side, as I related. It was related to the fact that there was a scramble of boats in November trying to get as much grain out of here as possible. And again, in the confounding of the construction of CPR other priorities, it was confounding because there was a priority. Grain meant money in freight values, et cetera. So there was a real value in all of that, but--. So winter had it's own thing to do on Lake Superior, and it always does. So in 1885, we had a significant winter. It started with a brutal fall, so after November, those last boats—the *Algoma* in the end of November—then there was a big freeze up. Tremendously cold winter. Whole bunch of efforts being ongoing for the CPR. This is the chronology in '85. Again, in '85, there was ongoing with the CPR through the winter—nasty winter—forwarding the construction materials from Prince Arthur's Landing west. Then there was the finishing of the construction of the road east, providing a line from Nipigon, culminating in the last spike, which happened on May the 16<sup>th</sup>. I will say 16<sup>th</sup>, 1885, and there's a lot of information around that.

Then there was ongoing improving of the grain terminals—the King Elevator in Prince Arthur’s Landing as well as the A Elevator. Grain was continued into Elevator A during that winter for sure because by the time spring hit, the Elevator A had grain, and it was full. That’s in the Kam River. The issue around the dredging that came up for tender in ’84 came out in ’85, and I’m not sure if a dredge had been brought in at the end of the year or not. However, in early ’85, there was dredging of the Kam River, breaking of the bar down to 14 feet and along by Elevator A, which meant that larger vessels could access Elevator A once the ice had cleared. But again, significant winter is an issue. Other things ongoing too is the expansion of the coal dock in the Kam River and then the passenger ships issues continued from Owen Sound to Prince Arthur’s Landing as spring breakup continued. I will try to end at the summer of 1885 with my discussion this time. Just a point to that passenger ship ongoing for CPR. The *Algoma*, which was one of the Clyde-built passenger ships—pride of the fleet, all the rest of that stuff—this is the vessel that met its demise on Isle Royale on November the 9<sup>th</sup>, the day the last spike was driven out in BC. She piled up in catastrophic fashion on Isle Royale with significant loss to the CPR at the time.

**[1:15:40]**

Okay. 1885. One of the big things in 1885 is that the CPR was running out of money, and they weren’t paying their bills, and the coincident of the second North-West Rebellion was at hand in the March timeframe. Because we are here at April the 14<sup>th</sup> in 2015, 130 years ago, there were troops passing on the north shore to the tune of 2,700 troops, armaments, horses, all of the material coming from the east. This group was the first army, you could argue, or marshalling of army for the CPR for Canada, and it was going on an unproven track, and the troops actually had to walk three places on the ice across the north shore to facilitate this. This was a game changer for the CPR. Money was coming from the government to facilitate this. The Riel Rebellion facilitated the CPR completion, and again, it was between April the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> when the troops did all of this activity. There’s very famous images of this all the way through.

So with all of that confusion that was going on, actually, construction had to stop while all this was happening on the north shore. It also stopped any other traffic on the CPR going east and west because this took priority for the whole complete month of April. Grain would have been put on the back burner for sure, but grain had probably come in, in possibly December of the year before as well as January, February, and March of the year 1885. So Elevator A as well as the King Elevator in Port Arthur would have been full with grain and possibly boxcars waiting. I’m not sure. However, the key of 1885 was that on May 28, 1885, the schooner *Sligo* took the first load of grain out of Elevator A. And again, this was the grain trimmers’ story that I read off previously about the group that trimmed the grain. It was a bulk load on the *Sligo*. She was not full when she came out because the bar had still not been completely broken, and so she had to slide over to the King Elevator to finish off, and she was then towed. And that grain was on consignment down to Goderich, if I’m not mistaken. So she was tagged as the first vessel bringing bulk grain out of the Kaministiquia River, CPR, in 1885, May 28<sup>th</sup>. That more or less is my chronology story of the interference or the priorities of the

CPR together with the completion of the line, completion and starting of the grain stories, et cetera. At this point, I have quite a few newspaper articles that I'll read, but we can do that after stopping, and I will put those into your records for you because I've got them accumulated here.

NP: Okay. Now, I'm wondering if you could answer some questions. Is this maybe beyond what you've been looking at? But we've talked a lot about the grain getting here, and we've talked about the ships leaving the port. Could you just say something about the development of the canal system? How did that coordinate with the railway, or was it for its own purposes well in place?

**[1:19:53]**

BS: All of these things are very important in the development of this era, and this is why I've kept my era so small, '82 to '85. Lake Superior was an asset to Canada, and the Great Lakes together was an asset to Canada for sure, and it was also an asset to the United States. The traffic on the Great Lakes was extremely busy in many ways. There was only the United States lock, the Sault Ste. Marie lock in Michigan. It was built and completed in 1855, and it received the traffic of all of the Canadian and American side. The construction of the CPR could not have proceeded as it did without the vessel traffic on Lake Superior. Period. The support of the ports—Duluth initially—and all of the extra costs for any Canadian construction would have been borne there. That would have gone around all of the difficulty of the Ontario section. That would have gone up through the Red River--. Around from Duluth through the railroads, they were already established there in the 1870s, and up and through the Red River, up into Winnipeg. And a lot of the material that came back for construction was there, forwarded up through that route and then also going west.

Once 1882 was hit, and the railroad was complete, forwarding the material from the Prince Arthur's Landing—and to a point, the Town Plot—proceeded, and that was a cost savings. It was also a Canadian-built solution, so therefore, the materials preferred to go that way going west—less expense and all of the issues around that. Coming back--. As well as passengers. Populating the west was an important function. It was not the main function, even though during construction, a fair amount of passengers that did go were going through Duluth that didn't have to go that way anymore and could come through the Canadian side. They were groups that were populating the west. Various campaigns started to become established. People knew that this was happening, and groups from Iceland, from Norway, Norwegians, a few ethnic Slav groups came through, English and Irish. There was French. There was groups that came through in somewhat small waves at first, but that was possible, and that was part of what Van Horne wanted the initial passenger system to be valuable as a Canadian building exercise.

Grain traffic backwards was following models that were being constructed in Duluth as well as in Chicago and Milwaukee to a point, but that allowed for grain that was going around that way to come back through Canada once the railway was established. So

there was a conflict in priorities after 1882 completion. Even though the line was not substantial, it had to be still proven. '83, '84, '85 started to ramp up that opportunity with not only facilities that were getting built, people that were able to run the facilities, and availability of excess grain that was being grown and confusion whether they'd mill the flour out west or have spots where they could mill it east. All that stuff was being established through this period, and it was very--. It was a period of flux where nothing was 100 percent sure, but activity counted. The rails were trying to support this thing, as well as being under construction. For sure not 100 percent operating, passing tracks weren't in, and trestles weren't--. All of that had to happen. Ballasting sections and telegraphing and all the rest of that stuff. Roundhouses, fuel and water, all the operational issues were at hand and still in the infant stages. So it was a very rugged time. Wear and tear on equipment, wear and tear on track was exceptional. And grain was trying to make its way through here because they knew that they didn't want to go through the American side if at all possible. They wanted to prove a Canadian route, get the vessels operational.

The vessels that brought materials up here oftentimes could take a load back. The vessel named the *Acacia*, those were--. For example, the *Shickluna*, *Sligo*, *Argyle*, *Morwood*, these schooners—*Niagara* is a schooner—these vessels had already brought this material this way and then were an opportunity for a backhaul. This was a significant opportunity. The early coal fleets did not take that opportunity. They were dedicated out of Ohio. There would have been gangs of consorted schooners pulled up by a steamer. They would have brought up anywhere from 3 to 4 to 5,000 tons collectively, depending on how many consorts they had, up to the docks. Maybe not that much. Maybe 1 to 2,000. So the coal was somewhat different in this era, but it was important as a fuel.

**[1:25:53]**

BS: Yeah. So from the perspective of commodities, grain as a commodity was important. There was no grain inspectors here until the--. I'll read from the newspaper articles I've collected when the grain inspectors were started. I think it was '85. Weighing was tricky. There was no real weights and measures exercise here. So all of the--. And people who could trim other than just--. People had to be trained. So the skilled labour force was low, zero to none, because a lot of them were out constructing the railroads. And so, there was an era here where there was insufficient human resources to run the things, as well as many things affected the early grain movement here through the Lakehead. However, CPR was dedicated to making this system work, had to make this system work. As opposed to having large elevators out in Winnipeg that would intercept and then push through, they just said, "No. We want the hospital style of elevators constructed here," so that if there was any potential drying, et cetera, they could do it here and best service the grain needs out through Fort William and Port Arthur. But it became increasingly Fort William once the dredging in the 1885s was underway and taking place. That really set the tone for the Kam River as being the major focus of the CPR grain trade.

Then the construction of the elevators. After A there was C. I guess it was an annex that was reconverted and made into an elevator. Then there was B Elevator, and then if I'm not mistaken it was D Elevator, and finally E Elevator. *[Note: some confusion here concerning dates. NP]* But nevertheless, all of those elevators were constructed, and there was by and large wood except for D. There was catastrophes and various things like that. After the early 1900s, other elevator companies really started to kick in with the Empire Elevator and Northwest and other things. And then after the CNR and the Grand Trunk got together and were designated an area at the Lakehead, that's when the other elevator pools started to become a factor in Intercity as well as, I think, for sure out towards Searle Elevator and Grand Trunk Elevator. Once the swing bridge was across at the Kam River, all of those things became factors, but that was only in the 1900s. Before that, CPR ruled.

NP: You started your answer with the canal system, and you had, I think, before you moved up to Duluth, you were talking about how the only locks at the Soo were the US locks. So when did the Canadian locks go in?

BS: Canadian lock was 1895, if I'm not mistaken. Just let me look in my locks history here.

NP: And why would they have found it necessary?

BS: Well, because, again--.

NP: Rather than just continue to use the American locks?

BS: The American locks was a--. There was money involved freighting through the American side. Again, it was autonomy. I mean, historically, the American locks were famous for the first Riel Rebellion, holding Wellesley's crew up and making them walk around there in 1870. They were still burning from that, I'm sure, but nevertheless, the ways and means of getting that Soo Lock in there wasn't really at hand. John A. Macdonald wanted to make a 14-foot system all the way through, out to the ocean. He realized that that was a big deal. The Welland Canal had four rebuilds done, and they started--. Where's my chronology of the Welland Canal here? I think I have it done well. Standby. I wish I had it in a single page. Maybe I do. *[Audio pauses]* Really milk me here. *[Laughing]* Of course you do.

**[1:30:48]**

NP: Okay?

BS: Okay. So the Welland Canal was constructed as a response to the Erie Barge Canal that was going through New York state. The Erie barge canal, for example, started in 1817. It was completed in 1825 at a cost of \$7.1 million at the time. The length was 363, number of locks was 83, and that would have got them up to Buffalo. This would have been the way to the ocean, to saltwater. As a matter of fact, that's the way the rails came up from the ocean to build the CPR, et cetera. That's the Erie Barge Canal through New York. The Welland Canal started in 1829 as a response to that, but the first canal had 40 locks, and it was very cumbersome. A whole bunch of other issues got tangled up with it. Let me see here. The second build of the Welland Canal happened in 1845, and it had 27 locks. It was down to 9.5 feet, 2.9 metres. Vessel lengths 140 feet, and the tonnage of those vessels was about 750 tons based on that depth that was there. The third rebuild of the Welland Canal dropped it to 26 locks, but in 1881, the depths were 12 feet, which was 3.65 metres. Vessel length 255 feet, and now the tonnage could go up to 3,000 tons carried in that lock. Eventually in 1887, depths were revised to 14 feet, 4.2 metres, and again, tonnage going up.

So John A Macdonald's goal in the 1890s was that the canal system, the St. Lawrence and Welland system, should be all through at a depth of 12 feet or 3.6 metres, lengths 270 feet or 81 metres, and width 45 feet or 13.5 metres. The Sault Ste. Marie lock Canada opened in 1895, and it was at a depth of 14 feet or 4.3 metres. Having said that, vessels then larger than the schooners, the three-masted schooners—canallers, they called them—could start to ply up these waters and bring grain loads from Port Arthur and/or Fort William to places like Collingwood, to Midland, to Goderich. By and large if they hit the railway systems interconnected down and heading down if they were going to the ocean, they had to go to Montreal, if I'm not mistaken. I think Quebec City. I could be wrong on that. But by and large, it was the upper lakes. Going through the Welland Canal system, they would have to be sized for it, and that would get them down through and past Kingston. I'll read some notes here later where the vessel, I think it was *Acacia*, the one that took a load in 1883, had to be-- I think it took 20,000 bushels. I could be wrong on that. It had to offload 3,000 bushels at Kingston to lighter it to get down the canal system and out through Montreal. Kingston was a big port for us of transshipping also for grain as well as other things at the time. So that's the Welland Canal system, the early Welland Canal system, that was important in what size of vessels could access—as well as Sault Ste. Marie locks—could access our grain handling systems here.

NP: Some Canadian companies built grain elevators in Buffalo.

BS: Mmhmm.

[1:35:07]

NP: Now, I assume that has something to do with the way the ships were moving. Why would they build in Buffalo rather than--?

BS: Buffalo was a phenomenal port for all sorts of commodities, and that was the American way to the saltwater. That Erie Barge Canal was the first major civil engineering accomplishment in North America. By the way, it's a free system now, and I've been through it on sailboat. But aside from that, the Erie Barge Canal allowed commodities to be transported by barges pulled in the early era by oxen before the era of steam and other things like that. There would have been power barges. It carried the locks right from Troy on the Hudson River above Albany all the way up to Buffalo. All sorts of commodities came through there, whether it was coal or wheat or hay or grain or iron rails, et cetera. In our case, it was iron rails that came up from there. Tonnages were small, but the transshipping in Buffalo was absolutely phenomenal, larger than any other port in the Great Lakes system for a long period of time.

NP: So at what point would people stop delivering through--. I guess just going back to my earlier question which was why would Canadian interests be building elevators in Buffalo?

BS: I'd like to know the era of that because I suspect it was in the 1800s and the 1900s. Or sorry, 1880s and 1890s, and it for sure would have stopped with the completion of the Welland Canal. The Welland Canal would have--. Probably the third building of the Welland Canal allowed them to carry those larger tonnages. Once it was completed and depths were increased to 14 feet in 1889, then the driving force to do that would have been low. Those elevators still could have been sold off as assets to American concerns, and therefore, they would have had another terminal for them, but they still continued that Erie Barge Canal for quite a period of time. It became less and less important because tonnages had to be low to go through that lock system.

NP: It would be interesting because I think some of them were actually built and owned up until at least the 1920s. So.

BS: Hm! Well, there might have been some issues around maybe reciprocity and other things. I don't know why that dynamic would have evolved. That probably got tangled up with large companies' philosophies and for sure where were the terminals available? For sure having it in Buffalo forced them into the tonnage limitations of the Erie Barge Canal, and if they could put up with that and the double handling and all those other issues, the--. I'm just trying to read my notes here quickly. There was various enlargements in the Erie Barge Canal, but once, I think, they completed work after 1860s—'62 here—there probably wasn't much additional trade. It still was a necessary route for the American side if they wanted to get out to saltwater if east from Chicago to bring it east, but the value that Chicago had was they could look both east as well as they could look south because of the Illinois sanitation system, they call it, out to the Illinois River and down to Mississippi.

Mississippi was a big deal for them, and that allowed commodities to be transshipped at significantly lower rates. And so, the dynamic of the Great Lakes always--. Our history and the American history are intertwined very, very tightly. We don't see it enough nowadays. After the Civil War, they really blossomed in their infrastructure and coal handling. We have the coal handling

systems for the CPR and for the grain elevators and anybody else going west came out of the Ohio basin, and that's it. They supplied the fuel for the Great Lakes. All of the cities, all of the towns, all of the transportation, all the infrastructure was coal from the Ohio basin. That meant that they did not have to go through any locks to access the upper Great Lakes, except the Soo Lock into the Lake Superior basin, and that was our story.

**[1:40:46]**

NP: I'm just going to put it on pause for a moment while we discuss how to deal with the last pieces. [Audio pauses] Okay, are you ready to go? We're back now for our readings—not scriptures, but much more interesting. Well, I guess, it depends on your frame of mind. Anyway, I'm going to have Bill introduce the source of the information, just some general comments about the early newspapers, and then we'll be looking at short items from those early newspapers that provide the foundation for his earlier comments.

BS: So the newspaper articles I've harvested here over the last couple of years related to the *Weekly Herald* or the *Daily Sentinel* or the *Weekly Sentinel* for whatever the times were. These are Port Arthur newspapers written somewhat from their perspective. It's a good thing we have them because, again, we'd have precious little information. But we will go through a series of them. We'll start in 1882, and this will be the background for all of our work that we've talked about today here. So reading here from the July 8, 1882, *Weekly Herald*. It says, "The first train through here will be tonight. The first through-train from Winnipeg to Prince Arthur's Landing left here at 9:00 AM with honourable Mackenzie Bowell," Bowell, I guess, "and honourable Mr. Cairn, and about 20 other passengers from Winnipeg, Toronto, and other cities. The first train is composed of first-class passenger coach, ullmen, and freight cars." I think it means pullmen. "This is the first train heading from the west to the east and Prince Arthur's Landing." Okay. Stop and go or? **[Audio pauses]** I think I can leave it at that.

NP: Okay?

BS: Yeah. The next article is from the *Weekly Herald*, August the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1882. It talks about the CPR group coming through on the first train, or the first train trip. The title is "The Syndicate: First Trip of CPR Magnates over the Thunder Bay Branch." It says, "The first train arrived at 4:00 this morning." It goes on to say, "Today has been, in a sense, somewhat of a red-letter day in the history of Prince Arthur's Landing, it being the occasion of the first visit of a number of the Canadian Pacific magnates to the shores of Thunder Bay. Shortly after 4:00 AM, a special train composed of a pullman and a dining car belonging to St. Paul Manitoba Railroad, the official car of the CPR and two boxcars arrived in town conveying President Stephen, Chief Engineer Van Horne, and Mr. Angus of the CPR Company, Sanford Flemming of the HB Company and J.J. Macdonald of Section B and Thomas Marks of Section A. The hour being early, all the gentlemen except Mr. Marks, who was in charge of the train assisted by

Conductor Wilson, remained on board the sleeper until near 7:00 when they were met by a number of townsmen and delegates and Fort Williamites, headed by W. H. Carpenter, John Macintyre, and G. A. Graham. The tug *Three Friends* was placed at the disposal of the railway officials. At about 9:00, the party including a number of old residents of this section, among them we noticed Thomas Marks, Judge Laird, D. F. Burk, W. B. Smellie and R. R. McClellan, William Bell, George Clavet, and W. G. Strath, R. Vigers, W. F. Davidson, N. K. Strait, and F. T. Graft of the *Herald*, and others started down the bay to inspect Current River, after which the little steamer was headed for the Kaministiquia. Reaching which, a short stoppage was made at the old Hudson's Bay Company, the party being received by Mr. Richards and the firing of a canon."

**[1:45:44]**

**[Audio pauses]**

Yeah. Okay. Okay. Go ahead? "Returning to the boat, a champagne lunch was partaken of and soon the party landed at the Town Plot dock, where a group of citizens of our sister village awaited their arrival. A short inspection of the plot satisfied the visitors, and, the train being in waiting, most of the gentlemen returned to town by it, while a balance including reinforcement of the Town Plotters came over by tug and were met by a number of our prominent citizens who had a short consultation with the officials who, owing to the limited time of their disposal in consequence of urgent business matters, were compelled to take the train from [to?] Winnipeg at 2:00 were unable to prolong their stay. A hardy shaking of hands followed, and as the train was moving off, the citizens of both villages united in giving three cheers and a tiger for the syndicate, and in a few minutes, the special from Winnipeg was lost to our gaze. In conclusion, we may say that from remarks made by members of the Syndicate, it is quite apparent that the long-vexed terminus question is about to be definitely settled, and we may soon be in a position to announce the results, which it is hoped will be satisfactory." Okay?

**[Audio pauses]**

NP: Okay.

BS: You can read it if you want.

NP: I'm just going to say something here. While we were off tape, I was just having a discussion with Bill about the significance of the last article that he wrote [Note: read SL]. And although it didn't provide evidence, we were discussing that one of the reasons for the trip of the officials of CPR was to determine where the terminus would be, and they were looking at both the waterfront in what is the landing and the Kam River. At the time—and Bill, you correct me if I'm wrong—at the time, there was a CPR presence

on the Town Plot, which many of us refer to as Westfort, but that all it was was a staging area, the beginning of the railway, but it was not a terminus because a terminus was something far greater. A terminus included the station, all kinds of roundhouses, other kinds of facilities that would--. Even just the warehousing. Correct?

BS: This is correct. As well as the other emphasis is on water and fuel. All the coal docks that eventually were to be established and along--. And also because they had the steamship lines running between Owen Sound and the Lakehead, they needed a spot where the vessels could dock, passengers could be taken off, freight could be taken off. Passengers could then board the train and continue their trip on going out west. All of these things were looked at, and even though the timing was in 1882 was young, they still had visions and talked about all of this being in their grand scheme. So they looked at--. The terminus location was in dispute for quite a few years—'82, '83, '84—but as the dredging of the Kam and the construction into the Kam River became more apparent. Therefore they moved away from anything related to the Port Arthur site and continued improving and adding assets into the Kam River site.

**[1:50:34]**

NP: Was there a decision on the terminus, an official decision, or when they built the station, that was the indicator?

BS: No. The station came later because the station actually moved four times, the CPR station. I'm sure there was an official boardroom decision sometime, but remember, during that era of '82 to '83, it was a construction--. It was like any major, major project in any country. It was absolutely execution. Trying to get things done, trying to make things go, as well as planning a certain amount ahead, making sure you didn't have to backtrack too many times.

NP: All right. Onward.

BS: So we have here--. Again, now we're reading in the 1883 newspapers, and again, we continue. This happens to be in the *Daily Sentinel*, and I'll let the interviewer read the cryptic notes here that describe the grain handling industry. We're again, still focusing on grain here.

NP: And did we have a date on this? 1883--.

BS: Yeah, 1883, October the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

NP: Okay.

BS: This relates to the first grain shipped by the CPR via the vessel *Quebec*.

NP: “The first shipment of wheat over the CPR and the lakes to the east was made by the *Quebec* on Sunday on which to it two carloads were shipped. One carload is awaiting a Montreal steamer, and two other carloads arrived last night. It came from Brandon and is an excellent quality of wheat.”

BS: This relates to the second grain shipment out, and this again is now October 17<sup>th</sup>, two weeks later. It goes on to say, again from the *Daily Sentinel*, “The *United Empire* arrived this morning from Duluth with a fair list of passengers, and 1,070 tons of wheat and six carloads of flour already onboard. Several carloads of wheat and flour were taken on here, and a fair number took passage on her from Winnipeg and other places this afternoon for the east.” [Audio pauses] ’83 wasn’t--.

NP: Okay. Hold it.

BS: One of the key elements of that clip was the fact that Duluth had already loaded partial onto the *United Empire* and also passengers, so some of the grain from the west—our Canadian grain—was sneaking or slipping around through Duluth, or it had previously been, and as you can see now, there is an ability to pick up an additional load on the Canadian side at the-- It wasn’t at the elevator. It was at the Marks dock. So this was bagged grain and flour. These are key elements because this is the early, early era of the grain shipments out of the Port Arthur elevator and out of the Lakehead altogether. Now, we also have, from the *Sentinel* again, October 27<sup>th</sup>. So ten days later, 1883. I have here, “The first cargo of wheat loaded at this port is being placed aboard the *Erin*.” Other information will follow here. Again, continuing on on the second page of this paper I have a description here. “The cargo, which is at present being loaded, is from the firm of J. & J. George, millers and general merchants of Port Elgin, Ontario. This is the first cargo of Manitoba grain shipped by the lake route and consists of about 11,000 bushels. It is being shipped by the steamer *Erin*, a vessel chartered by Messrs. Rothbottom and Winnans, commissioned merchants of this town. It is satisfactory indeed to see the CPR is determined to make this new route a success and to see with what energy the traffic arrangements are being conducted.”

[1:55:23]

Further to that, we have this description of that particular loading of the grain by an A. L. Russel, who was a survey engineer of the town. And his comments are bedded in a brief from W. F. Langworthy, November the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1934, giving a presentation to the Shuniah Club of Port Arthur. Near the end of the article, it says here, “From a paper prepared many years ago by the late A. L. Russell of Port Arthur, civil engineer and surveyor, entitled ‘Brief History of Port Arthur Harbour,’ and after speaking of

construction of the docks, it proceeded as follows. ‘This was followed by the large Marks dock, and from this dock in 1883, the steamer *Erin* took on 10,000 bushels of wheat, the pioneer shipment of wheat from the west. She was loaded by means of pushcarts.’” [Audio pauses] Standard of execution here.

NP: This article is in the *Weekly Herald*.

BS: Yeah. And if we may, now we are into 1884, and these are the key articles or some of the articles that have been produced or collected for this presentation. Please.

NP: This one is taken from the *Winnipeg Sun*, and it’s entitled “The Proposed Elevator.” “The members of the Board of Trade, who are agitating for the erection of a grain elevator in Winnipeg, deserve the warmest praise for the enterprise they are displaying. But while the scheme looks well on paper, it is useless to deny that there are grave difficulties in the way of its successful accomplishment. The farmers’ object, of course, is to have his grain placed onboard the ship for the minimum rate. Supposing the Winnipeg elevator was built and in operation next fall, why should the western settler send his wheat to it when he could save money by sending it direct to Port Arthur? The Canadian Pacific Railway has already completed a 250,000-bushel elevator, and this spring they will begin the construction of one with the capacity of 1 million bushels. Warehouse receipts will be issued for the grain stored there so that, in that respect at least, Winnipeg would not offer superior inducements. Elevators cost money, and the capitalists who erect the Winnipeg elevator will doubtless expect some return for their investment in the shape of elevator and storage charges.

“In addition to this, the Canadian Pacific Railway will charge about 1.5 cent per bushel for running their cars to the elevator to be unloaded, running them back again to take the grain out, and so forth. This is the ordinary charge on all roads. To this 1.5 cent, add the elevator charges, and it will be found that at least 3 or 4 cents per bushel would be taken off the price before the grain reached Port Arthur. Why should the farmer pay that toll? The elevator would pay those who built it and would, in the manner described, put money into the Canadian Pacific Railway treasury, but there is no sound reason why the settler should stop and pay tribute at a halfway house when he can reach his destination just as readily without doing so. Moreover, if Winnipeg has an elevator, why not other points west? If the farmer can be persuaded to drop 3 or 4 cents a bushel at Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, and Broadview will be unmindful of their interests if they do not try to wheedle him into running the gauntlet of their elevators also.

“One of the standing grievances of the farmers at Dakota and Minnesota is that they are treated unfairly by the elevator men at inland points in the matter of grading dockage for dirt, et cetera. And though it is quite certain that the Winnipeg merchants who propose erecting an elevator here would give the settlers the fairest of fair play, the fact remains that direct shipment to Lake Superior elevators would be the cheapest and that it is a prime consideration. An elevator would be an excellent thing for

Winnipeg, but unless you can show the farmer that it will pay him to use it, it had better remain unbuilt.” Just to add something to that as we sit here 100 and some years later, the elevators on the Prairies are now doing just that.

**[2:00:34]**

BS: Now, on May the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1884, we have another interesting article from the *Daily Sentinel*. It says here, “The steamer *Acadia*, which laid up here for the winter, sailed for Montreal on Saturday night. She took on 20,000 bushels of grain from the elevator and is the first boat to leave the port with a cargo of grain from the west. The *United Empire* may be expected from Duluth during the night.” Now, this is important because the grain would have—from 1883—would have still been accumulating, and this is a spring shipment. So again, this is grain that had accumulated from the 1883 crop. Coming up again, we have here on May the 21<sup>st</sup> of 1884, a note from the *Daily Sentinel* again. “The steamer *City of Owen Sound* came in this afternoon from Collingwood. She called at all the north shore ports. She had a load of 400 tons of general merchandise, 90 head of horses and cattle, and 150 passengers. She will take in a cargo of grain from the elevator tomorrow for shipment to Collingwood.”

And a note on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, “The propeller *Acadia*, the first boat to receive a cargo of grain from Port Arthur Elevator, unloaded 3,000 bushels of grain at Kingston and proceeded for Montreal on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May.” So you can get an idea of timing of shipment through the American lock, down the lakes, through the Welland Canal, and to Kingston where there were grain elevators for offloading, lightering I guess you could say for the continuation.

NP: Okay. Now, on May 21<sup>st</sup>--.

BS: The *City of Owen Sound*.

NP: The *City of Owen Sound*, and then on May 24<sup>th</sup>, the *Acadia*.

BS: The *Acadia*. Only a report that she was at Kingston offloading 3,000 of her 20,000 bushels so that she could continue down the--. I guess at the time it was a 9-foot system down to Montreal. The 3,000 bushels were just too heavy for the St. Lawrence locks at that time. There would have been only a few. It would have been at Iroquois, at Cornwall, and Beauharnois.

NP: Now, I guess I’m a little confused here because if the *Acadia* was the first to take on grain from the elevator--.

BS: Yes. On May the 12<sup>th</sup>.

NP: On May the 12<sup>th</sup>. So that was the *Acadia*.

BS: Yeah.

NP: Okay. I see what you say about the time it takes to get through. Okay.

BS: So from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>, she ended up transporting, and then our report was from the 24<sup>th</sup>, but it was related to the 19<sup>th</sup>.

NP: Mmhmm.

BS: Okay. Now we have another one here, May the 25<sup>th</sup> of 1884, and we have here, “The steamer *Shickluna* of the Western Express Lines arrived today at noon from Montreal.” So she was dedicated. “She had a full cargo of general merchandise. She will take on a load of grain for Ogilvie & Company of Montreal.” So Ogilvie was a large purchaser of western grain.

NP: And that’s S-H-I-C-K-L-U-N-A?

BS: *Shickluna*, yes.

NP: Okay.

BS: Now we have here from June the 9<sup>th</sup> of 1884, and it is in the *Winnipeg Daily Free Press* in this case. It talks about our *Shickluna* departing. “The schooner *Shickluna* departed for Midland with grain from Port Arthur.” And again, that’s June the 9<sup>th</sup> 1884, and it would have come from the King Elevator. Here I have here June the 11<sup>th</sup> from, again, the *Daily Sentinel*, and we have, “The propeller *Acadia* loaded 25,000 bushels of grain at the elevator today and cleared this afternoon for Montreal.” So this is her second trip deadheading to Montreal. So she was definitely heavily employed by the group and for destination to Montreal and that particular merchant.

[2:05:58]

NP: And that was *Sentinel* again?

BS: The *Daily Sentinel*, yeah, June 11<sup>th</sup>. And also in that paper, we have here, “The schooner *Niagara* loaded 19,000 bushels of oats at the elevator and sailed for Midland this forenoon. The cargo is for Messrs. A. W. Ogilvie & Company of Montreal.” So it’s

now a load of oats, not wheat. Again, it's newspaper information, and it may have been wheat instead of oats. Now we have on June the 12<sup>th</sup>, we have here—again from the *Daily Sentinel*—we have a note about. “The steamer *Owen Sound* arrived this morning from Collingwood and north shore ports. She brought 120 passenger, 150 tons of general merchandise. She is loading cargo of oats consigned to Toronto and will sail tonight.” So again, it may be oats and it may be Toronto, but it's definitely *City of Owen Sound*. Then we have here, “The propeller *Acadia* was delayed at the elevator yesterday and did not leave until 5:00 this morning. She had onboard the largest consignment of oats and wheat to leave this port this season, namely 35,000 bushels. She also had 25 passengers.”

NP: Were most of the ships that carried wheat also passenger boats?

BS: Any of the propellers were. The schooners tended to be dedicated. Here's a schooner from the next day, June the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1884. “The schooner *Morwood*—illegible—loading her lumber this afternoon. She will take on a cargo of oats for Midland and sail in the morning.” So in this case, the *Morwood* was a three-masted schooner, a canaller, and she was definitely involved in the construction of the CPR on the north shore, and we have her with the oats for Midland. So there must have been quite a pile of oats coming through that elevator in the--. That would have been the '83 crop out of Manitoba. And on June the 16<sup>th</sup>—again attesting to the volume of grain that was being pushed in the springtime—we have here--. What is it? It's the *Argyle*. “The steamer *Argyle* will load with wheat at the elevator tomorrow morning for Goderich.” Again, a different port, but again on Lake Huron and all above the Welland Canal. I have here on June the 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1884, I think this may be one of the last, “The *Shickluna* cleared 7:00 last night with a full load of grain and 15 passengers for Montreal.” So again, passengers would have paid a fare, which would have been hard to resist, along with the commodity. Then we have here a comment about the crop in--. Just--. **[Audio pauses]** So this is the *Daily Sentinel*, and you can--. Okay. Again, we have a bit of a comment, a general description here about the state of grain affairs dated June 24, 1884.

**[2:10:20]**

NP: The title of this is “James Beatty Interviewed in Minneapolis.” “While in Minneapolis, Mr. Beatty of the Sarnia Line of steamers was interviewed by an unintelligible reporter. He said, ‘We are running four steamers between Duluth and Sarnia this year and are the only Canadian company doing business on that route. Our steamers are the *United Empire*, *Quebec*, *Ontario*, and *Sovereign*. At Duluth, we receive freight from all the northwestern roads, and at Sarnia, we connect with the Canadian Pacific and the transportation lines of all points of the east and Europe. The freighting business this season has been large. In fact, in excess of that of last year. Passenger business, however, has been only fair and rather below that of the previous season at this date. Shipments from Duluth and Minnesota and Dakota grain by the water route have been very large, and the return trips have been made excellent ones by the shipment over our line of large amounts of heavy freight.’

“The Canadian Pacific steamers: He replied to the statement sometime since published to the effect that the steamers built in Europe for the Canadian Pacific lake trade drew too much water to enter ports for which they were constructed. Mr. Beatty said the statement was evidently a mistake, as they had entered Port Arthur and Owen Sound so far without difficulty.”

“Canadian crops: “The crop prospects in the Dominion were pronounced excellent in the northern sections of Canada and Ontario. They had been injured by frost, but the general outlook was good. The only thing to complain of was that the season had been a little dry. At present, the farmers of that country consider the harvest would be abundant.”

“Manitoba crops: He had just returned from Manitoba. The crop prospect of that territory was far better than any heretofore known. Grain was far advanced, the growth thrifty and hearty, while along the road from Winnipeg to St. Paul, the wheat fields proclaimed an unexampled harvest in the near future. He had never seen as good a prospect throughout the north and northwest at this season of the year. The good prospect was in no sense confined to a locality but was general over the entire territory described.”

BS: That seems to be the major articles from the springtime as I’ve collected, and now we go to the fall time when all of this beautiful harvest was to be destined and collected and become a great asset to all of us handling it here. We have here from--. Now, we have October the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1884, and there’s really--. The essence is that there’s no grain yet from the west. Okay. “Grain freights from Duluth are higher than they have been for some time. 8.5 cents was paid to Montreal last week, and 4.5 cents to Buffalo with the probability of much lighter prices soon.” Another part of the article says, “No new grain from the west has yet arrived, and the CPR steamships still continue their eastward trips light. Our western friends should at least send enough along for ballast.”

NP: [Laughs]

BS: October the 6<sup>th</sup>, we have some comments again while they’re still waiting for grain. We have here the “664,000 bushels of wheat were shipped from Duluth between September the 28<sup>th</sup> and October the 4<sup>th</sup>.” Again, it says here--.

**[Audio pauses]**

NP: Okay. You can start with the second one.

BS: “Freights from Duluth are quoted on wheat to Buffalo at 3.5 cents, and for Kingston, 6.5, and Montreal, 8.5. No grain has yet been shipped from this port this fall. We are anxiously awaiting for it.”

[2:15:02]

NP: Just a question. Would that grain have been Canadian grain?

BS: Absolutely. That's the whole--. The whole point is that the western grain harvest was at hand, but nothing had happened as of-- . And we're still here, and we're at October the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1884, *Daily Sentinel*. We have notes here, "Of course some grain was shipped last season by way of Port Arthur, but the bulk lots were handled in the crudest possible manner, and what was shipped in bags was not gigantically successful. The CPR Elevator has a storage capacity of 300,000 bushels, and it can receive and ship 50,000 bushels per day. This would make its total capacity between now and November the 20<sup>th</sup>, which will probably be the date of departure of the last boat for the east, in round numbers 2 million bushels. And supposing the CPR steamers to make between those dates five trips each or 15 trips in all and that each boat takes out 40,000 bushels, this will give them a capacity of 600,000 bushels and leave 1.4 million to be carried by outside crafts, both sail and steamers. Averaging the outside boats at 20,000 bushels each, it will take 70 vessels and steamers one trip each to carry this amount to market. Seventy vessels to load grain from this port between now and the close of the season should make matters very profitable and lively for the tonnage coming here, and it also should attract a large number of vessels which do not regularly trade here. Of course, all these figures are based upon the assumption that the Northwest will have ready for export between now and November the 20<sup>th</sup> the amount of grain necessary to test the elevator to its fullest capacity. There should be, certainly, no doubt about our western friends having that amount of their boasted 5 to 6 million surplus ready for export then." This is a lot of bravado in this. [Laughs]

NP: So what do you think is happening here?

BS: I think there is no grain that has flowed yet, and this is the pro forma statement by the newspaper suggesting that all of this can happen if the world was perfect and nothing else was in its way.

NP: And why do you think that it was flowing through Duluth and not through Thunder Bay?

BS: I don't believe any of this grain was flowing through Duluth. I don't believe it had been harvested or transported in any kind of a fashion. If Duluth was receiving any of this grain, you would have been noting it in the shipping reports of vessels coming back from Duluth partially loaded and around. This grain is the proforma grain of that monster crop that they talked about, and it wasn't happening until the end as we will see here shortly.

NP: Okay.

BS: However, we continue here. Again, this is November the 3<sup>rd</sup> now. Freeze up is coming by the end of this month potentially here. It's got--. Maybe possibly you would like to read this section here about the big crop to come, but it's going to come late?

NP: "Northwest Wheat Shipments." "From a statement recently published on the authority of the Canadian Pacific official,' remarks the *Winnipeg Sun*, 'it would appear that there will be a very considerable quantity of the wheat export of this country, which they will not be able to convey to Port Arthur before the close of navigation. This will afford the railroads to the south this winter the last opportunity they are likely to enjoy for a long time to come of handling any large share of the grain business of this country as by next year the Canadian Pacific line will be in operation between Winnipeg and Montreal. That the Port Arthur route will not get as large a share this year as might have been expected is mainly owing to the late harvest and to the fact that the farmers were compelled in most cases to delay their threshing. The *Toronto Mail* thinks that our farmers are holding back in the expectation of getting better prices in the spring. This may be true in a few instances, but we do not think it has very general application. The fact of the matter is that nearly all our farmers have incurred obligations which necessitate their selling at the earliest possible moment, even if they are not patriotic enough to recognize the interest which the business community has in prompt circulation of the cash received from the sale of wheat.'"

[2:20:25]

BS: This, in my opinion, is a pretty rich article. Already, you can see the potential staging and holding back for price differentials, et cetera, et cetera. So the play is at hand, and obviously the American railroads, as they say, are probably in their sunset era for Canadian grain. However, by the time we get—and this is in the *Sentinel* now, *Daily Sentinel*—to November the 10<sup>th</sup>, all of a sudden, things have happened, and we have now a note saying that "The *Prussia* is loading wheat for Ogilvie's in Goderich at 4.5 cents." So something has happened, and the grain has come, and all of a sudden, there will be a scramble now that will try to beat the freeze up in the lakes. And this is again not in the Kam River. This is all out on the King Elevator here.

Now we have November the 15<sup>th</sup>, 1884, *Daily Sentinel*. "*S. S. Athabasca* at 5:00 PM yesterday for Owen Sound, 20,000 bushels of wheat and 25 cars of flour and merchandise. The *Athabasca* took out the largest load of freight yet and a splendid passenger list to boot." On November the 17<sup>th</sup>, we have now the *Myles* and the *Algoma* engaged in the grain transfer in a rapid sense. So we have here, "The *Myles* is loading wheat for Goderich," and then we have here, "The *Algoma*, *United Empire*, and *Campana*, three of the fine boats as sailed the lakes and three different completed lines are laying at the Syndicate's wharf yesterday."

NP: Now what is the Syndicate's wharf?

BS: The Syndicate's wharf is the CPR wharf. The Syndicate is the CPR's wharf, which is the King Elevator.

NP: Okay.

BS: Next we have here the *Alberta* and November the 20<sup>th</sup>. So we have, “The steamship *Alberta* at 11:00 AM today for Owen Sound, 22,000 bushels of wheat, 15 cars of flour, and 100 passengers.” And here we get the first reports of the storms that are coming at the end of November here. We have here November the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We have the *Prussia*, which previously had loaded that early fall grain. “After the steamer *Prussia* had left her dock and proceeded a few miles from the shore yesterday, her cargo shifted in some manner, listing her over very much on the starboard side. As she looked to be in a very critical condition, the Butcher’s Boy ran out to see her, but aid was not necessary for after righting her cargo, she trimmed and proceeded on her way.” Again, the *Prussia* is a steamer. November 24<sup>th</sup>, *Daily Sentinel*, 1884. We have here, “The *S. S. Athabasca* from Owen Sound at 11:00 AM today, 20,000 bushels of wheat and 60 passengers loaded.” We have here, “The propeller *Sovereign* at 10:00 AM today for Sarnia, 15,000 bushels of wheat for Ogilvie’s in Goderich.” We have “The steam barge *Isaac May* for Goderich at noon yesterday, 24,000 bushels of wheat for Ogilvie’s.” A significant urgency in all of this activity.

[2:25:07]

“The *Algoma* Arrival.” This is an important note. The *Algoma* was one of the Clyde-built CPR ships who later met her demise on the day of the last spike in 1885. Here she is. “The *Algoma* came in at 4:00 this afternoon presenting a handsome appearance though suggesting a terrific weather outside. She is a sight for the photographer,” of which we actually have an image of this boat. “The vessel is completely covered with ice and frost, and the seas having made determined though unveiled efforts to engulf her in her embrace. She left the Soo Saturday afternoon and made the vicinity of Passage Island early yesterday morning, but the fog was so dense that the entrance to the bay was too dangerous to be risked. It was impossible to see a boat length ahead. From then until noon today, the time was spent crushing back and forth between the lake and the land in hope that the fog had lifted sufficiently to enable the island and rocks outside to be passed in safety. About noon today, Passage Island was passed. The *Athabasca* could not be seen, though the vessel couldn’t have passed far.” Again, attesting to the weather conditions of the time in November.

Now we have the *Algoma* loading grain, and this again is on the *Sentinel*, Wednesday, November 26, 1884. “The *Algoma* will load 30,000 bushels of wheat and 15 carloads of flour and will probably leave tonight for the east. Thirty cars of flour and merchandise from Winnipeg today will be shipped by fast freight east. This steamer will probably load to 14 feet—the *Alberta*—this steamer will probably load at 14 feet all that is now safe to go through the Soo River--.” Very confused article here.

NP: [Laughs] Yeah.

BS: Very confused. But it attests to the scramble for loading, and how the grain was to be shipped by fast freight even though construction was still at hand on the CPR and trying to get the last shipments in before freeze up. Already, they had encountered one significant storm for the year. That wraps up the 1884 articles from the newspaper. We have a few from 1885, and we will hold off at mid-year 1885 for this particular episode. **[Audio pauses]**

We move now to the 1885 era. We will end about midyear on this with this session. This was a very seminal part in Canadian history too. In 1885, we have not only the completion of the CPR railway across the north shore as well as out west. The north shore was Lake Superior was May 16<sup>th</sup>, '85, and out west in BC at Lockellachie—or Craigellachie, I should say—it was November, I think, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1885. But there was troop movements on the railway. The second Riel Rebellion, April the 4<sup>th</sup> until April the 21<sup>st</sup> going across the north shore and through the system, confounding all---. A significant amount of the traffic was co-opted by the Canadian government at the discretion of Van Horne to do this. It was monetarily efficient for him to do all of this stuff. The winter was extremely heavy, which allowed the troops to walk over the ice in many places on Lake Superior, actually, three places—two 20-mile sections and one 10-mile section—attesting to the fact of a late break up for grain shipments through the port of Port Arthur or Fort William.

**[2:30:05]**

However, this was a very important point here on May the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1885, in the *Daily Sentinel*, we have, “The schooner *Sligo*,” which was a Graham Line schooner, she was the schooner---. She sat in Thunder Bay for 15 years, operated out of Port Arthur and Fort William. She took the first load of grain out of Kam River Elevator A. Here we have the report, *Daily Sentinel*, Wednesday, May 27, 1885. “Schooner *Sligo* is loading with wheat for Goderich.” Second report, *Daily Sentinel*, May 28, 1885. “The schooner *Sligo* in tow of the tug *Three Friends* had the honour of bringing away the first load of grain from the Fort William elevator this afternoon. She has been loading on more grain at the Port Arthur elevator, and leaves for Goderich this evening, the *Three Friends* accompanying her out into the lake. And in May 29, 1885, we have here in the *Weekly Sentinel*---. We have here, “The schooner *Sligo* is loaded with wheat for Goderich.” It also has “The schooner *Midland Rover*,” which was from the Marks Line, “brought up 4,000 barrels of salt from Goderich for Ogilvie’s Mills Company in Winnipeg.” Not applicable. You can strike that last one. And here we have a---. Just stop it.

**[Audio pauses]**

NP: *Sentinel* again?

BS: Yeah. *Daily Sentinel*. I can just introduce it, and you can read it then.

NP: Okay.

BS: So we have here the final article in this suite of information. June the 5<sup>th</sup>, 1885. It's somewhat of a grain forecast or grain summary. Please.

NP: "The report of the Canadian Commissioner of Internal Revenue shows that last year's receipts from tolls on the Welland Canal decreased \$33,632 as compared with 1883. Grain passing through canals from the ports west of Port Colborne to Montreal in 1884 shows a decrease of 44,600 tons as compared with 1883, and 190,600 tons as compared with 18-0. "Up freight from Montreal from ports west of Port Colborne show 37,100 tons in 1881, but 9,425 tons in 1884. Owing to heavy purchases of grain in the Northwest by Montreal buyers last winter, it is believed the season of 1885 will show a more favourable state of affairs." Now, perhaps you'd make the comment about--. You commented earlier that there was a disruption because the troops were coming through to quell the Riel Rebellion, and now what's happening to interfere with the grain shipments again on the other side of the rebellion?"

BS: Exactly. The era of the winter and the spring of 1885 were significant seminal points in the Canadian history when the CPR was used to convey troops because the winter had been so heavy. There was no possibility to go by water. The troops were not going to go through the United States, per the Canadian government. They had to go, and Van Horne said that he could get them there. They actually did do his job to do that while interrupting construction of the CPR and completion of it, of course, but as a result of the activity along the CPR, it took seven days to complete the troop movement of any of the squadrons that went through from Montreal to Winnipeg. There was 2,700 troops and armaments and various things like that. It started in April the 4<sup>th</sup> and ended April 20<sup>th</sup> approximately, and that was going out towards the west. The Rebellion did not last long, of course, and as a result of that, the troops were already starting to begin to return as early as June and for sure into July and August of 1885. This occupied not only the railroad system, but also the steamer systems between Prince Arthur's Landing and Owen Sound, as testified by a myriad of images and photographs in both places.

**[2:35:30]**

This, obviously, interrupted in a significant fashion the shipment of grain and anything else forwarding back and forth, including certain materials for final construction of the CPR, which obviously finished off in November of 1885. So major event in Canadian history, major impact. The area of Thunder Bay was actually quite critical for this transshipment of troops, et cetera. Again, the grain industry did suffer initially. However, by the end of 1885 and ongoing and ongoing, there was nothing but increase in opportunity for CPR in the grain handling. The importance of Port Arthur and the growing importance of the Fort William facilities on the Kam River.

NP: And that brings to an end, did you say, our first installment? [Laughs]

BS: Well, you have a very intense installment here, and we tried to keep it as narrow and focused as possible. Very difficult in this exercise, very meaningful exercise. Again, most of this grain work is not my first focus. I have too many other focuses, but it all relates to the CPR construction, attesting to its tremendous importance of nation building. Again, 1867 was Confederation. This CPR storyline was from 1875 to 1885. There was a lot of financial elements here that weren't covered—who the financiers were, where the money come from, who was promoting grain, who was promoting rail, who was promoting other things. Timber was not really an issue at this point. There's other elements on Lake Superior, and the elements of the canals, the depths of the canal system, the elements of the vessels, the schooners, the era of the three-master schooner, the canal boats here. Very, very important play in our area. And then the ongoing opportunities of the port for coal handling. There's the coal handling going west and all the way along the line. This was the fuel that kept the transportation system and all of the other steam plants anywhere in the Great Lakes fuelled. So there's more episodes to follow related to this. Grain is one small part of it. So to be continued.

NP: Thank you very much. It has been very informative. My head is spinning. One last thing I want to ask is for anybody listening to this interview—hello 100 years out—the photographs because you mentioned several photographs. How will people who are interested in looking at the photographs, what will we set up for them?

BS: The image pools that I've had the opportunity to do the work with are very rich, and they speak the volumes that allow me to do the continued hunting in the newspaper articles and others. These images don't lie. They're very honest, and every time anybody sees these images, you come to them with a fresh mind, and you allow yourself to enter into them, and you will see something different every time you see these images—a hundred percent. These images will come out in time in these collections. By themselves, they're rich. Put in a suite, they're richer. And put in a chronological suite, they are the richest package of legacy that we have. We will continue this discussion about the images of our area at a later date and we will--.

NP: And I am interested in the images that we've referred to or you referred to in the article because they're sometimes, as you said, the narration means not very much in the absence of the picture. So offline, we'll talk about getting photographs married to narration. Thanks again.

**[2:40:12]**

BS: Thank you very much.

NP: I appreciate your time and all the work you've done in preparing for this.

**End of interview.**