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Interview Feb. 22, 1972

Frank Babuin, chainmaker, 6304 Marine, Burnaby.

Age 75. Born Udine, northern Italy.....arrived at age 16 New Westminster to join brother (1912).....first job as water boy, cutting brush, digging ditches for municipality at \$1 a day..... Spanish fishermen hired him to fish aboard skiff Steveston to Bellingham, paid \$2.50 for 2 week trip.....saw blood on walls at Steveston pool room from earlier pro fights.....worked in Rolling Mill (Steelworks) Bridgeport as chainmaker.....watched Mill burn during First World War while in Marpole pool room drinking 2 % beer.....no firemen to fight fire.....men out in shares.....built new Rolling Mill at Granville Island, under Granville Bridge.....Babuín took record making 57 boom chains a day earning \$15-\$20 daily.....won gold watch for 31 years work at Mill.....wife Olive also worked in steel mill..... earlier Mr. Roreson asked \$40,000 for land to rebuilt Bridgeport steel mill but workers only offered \$22,000 so didn't build same site.....Roreson landlord of Babuín's "shack" for which he made own improvements and wanted to pay \$7 monthly rent.....was charged \$1/8 for water by Roreson.....

.....in 1913 land cheap, no market.....farmers sold potatoes 25 cents a sack.....Babuín offered potatoes for piece of chain he made for harrow.....grew loganberries, made \$400 first year, then went broke, took too much sugar to make wine.....belonged to Gun Club.....went hunting with Chief Weddell.....used to bag 5-6 pheasants on Woodward's Island, gave to friends McElyn, Blair.....

Frank Babuin

.....wife Olive Witham came to Bridgeport , 1909, with parents and family from Lancashire.....recalls walking into Brighthouse to collect family's 13 cows.....no houses on the way.....married Frank Merch 1922, their 50th wedding anniversary next month.

.....They have 6 children: eldest, Louie at Squamish; Ernest, a foreman on Fraser Bridge construction; Freddie, salesman Pacific Milk; Albert, contractor at Burnaby; Frankie operates boat towing logs; daughter Mrs. Delores Spaese, Surrey.

.....other recollections: both liked "friendly" people at Richmond where they lived until 15 years ago.....all their sons played lacrosse in Richmond.....Babuin liked training boys 8-9 years in team sport..... in 1923 Babuin played trombone in all Italian band, Vancouver

.....at start of First World War tried to join up in Vancouver but too young (16) and "not Canadian".....had no money....slept in CN box cars dodging police searching.....worked two weeks at Industrial Boys School, Marine Drive, 10 hours a day cleaning up property for \$20.

.....recalls steak was 15 cents during War.....built fence to enclose buffaloes, Stanley Park.....cut ice for McCleery and Western, near Imperial Cannery when river froze.....piled it up on Sea Island stacked with straw.....also worked for Grauer building farm fence, two on job, finished in one week....paid \$175.