

Eugene Grezmiel

Interviewed March 27, 1972.

845 Steveston Highway

- here since 1927 May.
- left Germany 1919 after World War I - coal trimmer out of Hamburg on Red Sea, wonderful education - in Java, Phillipines, Hong Kong, Shanghai,
- strikes there in Java - Garden of Eden but climate too hot - back 2 years electrical engineering in Berlin.
- in 1927 decided to settle in coastal B.C.
- wife arrived within few days with parents, family from Switzerland - came from Paris - spoke 11 different languages between them - washed cars \$7.00 week on Main and 7th met Walter Hoskins (now owner Pumps and Home Food Cannery) washing dishes Vancouver Hotel.
- wanted settle so rented 2 room house at Woodward's Station, corner William Rd. and Railroad - for 3 weeks planted potatoes for Ernie Harwood for 30¢ hr. but valued at 40¢ hr. so good.
- 4 weeks after landed got job machine shop Steveston, corner of Sockeye Hotel (present Steveston Hotel) -prohibition era - bootlegging flourished -recalls old stairway of bootleg drinking - worked with Norman Marshall 26 - 28 men - primitive machine shop - installing gas engines in seine boats, boat equipment - made \$65 - \$70 wk. a lot of money - worked 12 - 14 hours a day and raised 2,200 baby chicks bought for \$212 in little garage - got 1100 laying hens.
- all laid off except Marshall and self - then hired back - off and on again - praises Norman Marshall - bootleg running - equipped bootleg boats with big engines. - on own electric re-wiring - wired hundreds houses on Island - power plants - bought first Canadian car T Model ford truck 1/2 ton for \$15, paid off at \$5.00 per month from Jan in Steveston.
- rented radio store 1929 Steveston - sold \$72,000 worth radios in 4½ months just knocked on doors - #3 Rd. between River and Brighthouse only 18 - 20 houses - sold 17 radios No. 3 Road alone - one to late George Skinner, Manager Canadian Fishing Cannery, Bausch radio \$325. joke about screen grid -at night started silent picture show 1929 Steveston twice a week, Moncton St. (building still there) - kids brought birds let loose, spot lighted - showed imported Jap pictures - ate cracked eggs from chickens -talking machines began -cost \$10,000 - \$11,000 built own sound head in Ben Rose's machine shop (and Syd Watts) out of scrap iron, used old R.C.A speaker, built pre-amplifier and it worked - lots of music, little

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speech - 1930 built Marpole Theatre, Mr. Tait Sr. financed, money short, set back - Hungry Thirties start : diversified - first experience in hand saw built foot bench - began tearing down old fish canneries - sold lumber - loaded in scows - peddled lumber at \$5, \$6, \$7, a thousand - many Richmond barns built from old fish canneries - Gordon Nelson, Manager Canadian Fish says map showing all canneries in 1900 almanac at Library. Canneries Greczmiel tore down: Ewen Cannery, Lion Is. - old house still in middle of island - story Chinamen's house. Deas Island Cannery - moved 3 houses to Richmond - could have bought Is. for \$500 and \$4000 mortgage now worth \$1 million - 40 years later - Mr. Fisher - land reclaimed by Mr. Neilson - borders Canoe Pass, many canneries there - Scotch Canadian Cannery, Burrard Cannery, Atlas Cannery, Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Cold Storage, Steveston, Brunswick Cannery, Harlock C Cannery, Dinsmore Cannery, Terra Nova Cannery, Reduction Plant, Williams Island - Greczmiel did not dismantle the 7 - 8 canneries Middle Arm. -Canneries flourished 1894 - gone 1910 Why? all Canneries made own cans -30 inch cutters, crimpers, hundreds soldering irons with wooden handle -chinese worked - metal clippings thrown on dyke, bank - he loaded 2 scows bundled 20 - 25 ton each, took to Britannia Mines - used in settling tanks - turned to reclaimed copper - borrowed Jap scows drivers full of fish - 1934 end of No. 5 Rd. solid wall fish (Humpbacks) sold 2¢ a piece.

-1886 or 1888: 1 million pounds British money invested on Williams Island in 4 story building equipped to reduce dog fish -
 1932 or 1934 Mrs. Jardine (nanaimo) and Manager ran plant - smell.
 -few years later got electricity working for \$200 only needed tape, globes -old time generator there - cannery burned 1938 - sold the junk.
 -1931 Imperial Cannery canned fish with coal oil lanterns - previous to Bob Goss - offered \$50 - had Fritz Henworth as apprentice - spent \$17 in globes, tape - in 3 days electrified -at firsthouse - 1050 No. 3 Rd. removed old han d dyke away.
 -upcoast electrified ^{Quathmiski?} Kordiaki Cove (opposite Campbell River, Namu, Alert Bay - Fished: 11 days, made \$1100 - Dave Jureit was his Captain (left farm to orphanage) - incident re net caught in anchor - fished outside the lightship in Gulf, in Columbia River fishboat.

- started building 1938, 1939 -dream of having a big factory, whistle blowing, train go in
- 1934 built Delta Glucose Refinery - making glucose out of potato, starch
- not enough potatoes grown here so switched to wheat - believes he's only person in N. America to make crystal glucose out of wheat,
- War: couldn't get enough flour - so built own mill, Delta Flour Mills Ltd. 1945 - started as 35 ton per day, then 50 ton, then 75 ton, sold 10,000 ton first shipload flour (had to fill) rose to 90 ton per day, 110 ton, 150 ton, 210 ton -over 4,100 bags of flour a day - 8 years an export mill - after W.W. II hundreds mills built in Korea, Tainai, Japan, Hong Kong, Philippine - Greczmiel exported wheat milled at destination - Africa, India ground by hand - also milled into flour - closed.
- 1963 Russians arrived, bought total crop, all flour in Canada - flew to Ottawa, got \$5 million flour order "biggest single order by one individual" took 11 days, borrowed money from loan sharks, mortgaged everything - 2 ships collided in harbor; 3,200 tons wheat wet - got 3-4 dryers B.C. Packers, reduction plant dryer Phoenix Cannery 2 dryers Canadian Fishing Company - brought in scowloads - dried 3,200 ton in 7 days - slept 35 hrs. - made \$22,000.
- closed mill again - 2 years after opened up for 1 cargo from Ceylon - hard job - grain business.
- 1959 built 100 houses - market slumped - diversification - started dredging company, one of 3 in B.C. Centennial Dredging and Sand Ltd. others Dillingham, Septere - hydraulic dredge costs over \$1/2 million -used midship section Jonquieriere rebuilding his dredge after sinking.
- built harbors - Comox ferry basin for provincial government - McMillan Bloedel Port Albernie treatment plant - pump lines in for effluent - Workmen's Compensation Board - marinas - boatways - 20 employees all earn between 14,000 and \$20,000 yearly average wage \$8 an hour, Union 115.
- deep sea mining is maturing - lots of research - world dredging convention in New Orleans.
- dredging around the world: diamonds, tin, ore mining, molyde num - food from sea - Japan - artificial farming oyster and fish at Lumby
- now kelp industry successful plants Norway, Ireland - bacteria is the producer of food - protein, acids.

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Mr. E.H. Greczmiel

-recycling - human waste 1 1/2 lbs. per day - bleach taken out of newspaper, saw Tacoma plant - would prefer start sugar refinery from cane 2.6¢ per lb. sell for 6 - 8 cents pound -

-bought 40 acres land 1944, Steveston Hwy. No. 3 Rd., developed and sold land: family - daughter Mrs. Joan Plummer, son Eugene H. Greczmiel, Developer of Laurelwood subdivision, Maple Lane, West Wind.

Greczmiel developed Sherman Park - built 100 houses - silent partner since 1957 - brochure recommended as guideline for future subdivision - holding 14 lots value \$170,000 pay death duties - Jack Wells also good builder - his son better - behind his house was slough, sail boats came at high tide loaded hay, pigs, 1890-1900 - sailed to Westminster market - Indians used to own his land - in 1800's whole island under water - ditches were inside original dykes - draglines used material floating in ditches to build dykes - in 1927 old Chinese collected fragments of gold by pilings around Canneries.

TAPE 13 - SIDES 1 and 2.