

FISHERMAN: Mr. & Mrs. K. Huovinen,
943 Finn Road,
Richmond, B. C.

David Stevenson - Researcher

- Both Inez and Kaarlo have their own gillnetters.
- Began living in Vancouver area 1928, fished on the Skeena River, came to Finn Slough area in 1930.
- Bought \$125.00 boat, put model T-Ford motor in the boat.
- Fished for crabs off Point Grey.
- Kept his boat at Kitsilano, lost all his gear and had to buy a cheap net for \$10.00.
- His younger brother had a sailboat and fished in Rivers Inlet.
- Ford motors were good, used little gas, had once shipped to Steveston from Vancouver for \$2.00, he had three or four, used them for parts.
- Came from Finland in 1924.
- Worked at logging in Port Arthur, Ontario, first; then worked on the railway, then worked on the prairies harvesting, then logged when he first came here.
- Talks of the depression and squatters shacks, made out of boxes at False Creek, the police used to throw the people out, but they kept coming back because there was no place to go, people had to steal to eat.
- Fish prices were low: 30¢ a fish at Rivers Inlet, 25¢ in the Fraser, when a big run of sockeye came in, the price dropped to 10¢, once the humpbacks were only 1¢ a piece.
- One year he made \$60.00, he bought a truck load of food; today \$60.00 buys only a small amount....he bought the truck load of food, flour and dried food, lived like a millionaire.
- Friend of his killed himself at Rivers Inlet and he got his belongings among which was a sack of flour, unfortunately, the worms got it because it was too damp.
- There were so many fish in the river, you could walk across on their backs on slack tide...."I don't lie too much".
- 1932 River was too low, lots of fish died at Hell's Gate.

- Fishing was five days a week day and night, now, sometimes only 12 hours or 1 or 2 days a week.
- Today the gear is too efficient, sonars, depth finders.
- Inez started fishing in 1951 on her own.
- Kaarlo had 2 boats, and he wanted to sell one, so she took it over with her son.
- So he put a high-speed motor in her boat and she caught as much as the men "Fish, you know, don't know who's in the boat, you see, as long as your net is right in the water".
- She's picked up her experience by herself and by learning from her mistakes.
- He learned by watching the old-timers and learning the tides.
- Talks of strike at Rivers Inlet 1936 - 1932: 1936 fished only one week, 1932 a cash buyer bought the fish and broke the strike, they both lost.
- Strikes, 1936 good union organization helped.
- 1945 Union included cannery workers as well.
- He fished for the Phoenix Cannery on the Fraser, names Sunbury, Phoenix, Nelson Bros., B. C. Packers, Great West, Canadian Fish, Todd's Co., and McEwen Cannery.
- There was a co-op cannery in Ladner.
- There once was a large Finnish communities there, only remaining originals are the Jacobsons'.
- He lived in a fishermen's shack on Finn Slough where Crown Zellerback is now, *for 16 years*
- A dyke was built and slough was dredged.
- At one time 25 or 30 fishermen lived at present Crown Zellerback site, Finn Slough at one time had 40 or so Finnish people living there.
- They had a good reputation with the company and made loans without a receipt even.
- Shacks were comfortable in the summer time.
- Shacks were open to the high tides, but sheltered from the wind.
- Today the large freighters are so fast they cause damage with their wash, in the old days freighters were slow.
- Moved to their present house in 1947.
- The Japanese fish buyer trusted them but they liked to keep them in debt.

- When the war came the Japanese lost their boats, houses to the government, Japanese were considered part of the enemy but the Finnlander was also part of the enemy (Finland fought against Allies) yet they treated the Finns differently.
- Story of a Japanese-Canadian who had a White wife (English) who was a ^{catcher} veteran of World War I, who was attacked by White roughnecks and nearly killed, Kaarlo invited him to live at Finn Slough where he could live peacefully.
- Nobody bothered him, everybody was working for the war, he had citizenship paper and he was allowed to fish: "Taki was his name, his son changed his name to Goodwin".
- The Japanese bargained for fish prices as a group and often took the lower price, took 5¢ a piece less, made it difficult to improve fish prices.
- Mr. Huovinen tried to learn Japanese in order to speak to them but he was never very successful.
- The Finnish Communities that existed in Finn Road area is gone now, they are spread out over the province especially at Sointulo.
- It was language problems that kept people in their separate groups.
- Sometimes people get into trouble in the river, no matter what the nationality, Whites will often pass you by if they see you in trouble.
- Now all the nets are nylon, describes the "fibreglass net" (mono-filament) and they were banned because of the union worrying about conservation and had the net banned.
- Now they fish outside of Vancouver Island with modern equipment: depth sounders, beam finder, radar, radio, phones, and so on.
- A Finnlander started the power drum from Sointulo before the war.
- He explains how the drum was adapted to fit his boat.
- Freighter traffic is a problem in the river now, sometimes you lose your net they come so fast.
- The channel in front of Crown Zellerback was deepened, they took the quick sand.
- Mrs. Huovinen fishes mostly in the river "to make ends meet", operates the boat mostly by herself.

- Complains of the "Junk" in the river especially during the spring flood.
- The Rock Jetty on both sides of the jetty hold the dyke soil in place.
- The water that comes up from Canoe Pass used to have fish, now there is no fish there because there is no current, water is dead, near the bird sanctuary.
- Mr. Huovinen joined the union in Finland at 17: longshoreman, then the I.W.W., then I.W.A. and then several fishermen's unions, now he is with U.F.A.W.U.
- Without the union, prices would be small.
- Mr. George Miller spent most of his life organizing the union to improve the life of the fishermen.
- Mr. Huovinen helped him, took him up the coast to Rivers Inlet to help organize the union, he had no food, just what the fishermen feed him.
- The companies hired bullies or scabs to help break the strikes, scabs are funny animals (comments on scabs not clear).
- Canada has a good living because everyone works.
- In the future there will probably be fewer independent fishermen, just huge company fleets, maybe in 10 years you won't see anymore gillnetters.
- Sports fishermen cause late openings for commercial fishermen.
- Openings used to be in February, then it was moved to March and now April, many sports fishermen come here from the U.S. and fish for nothing.
- American fishermen get more than their share of the Fraser River catch----Americans get the cream.
- Sports fishermen get more than commercial fishermen, they took 250,000 salmon to 225,000 fish.
- Prices are higher today but you have less fish so its harder to make a living at it.
- Oscar Niemi lived on the present Crown Zellerback site, it was said that Oscar knows all the stumps and snags in the river from New West. to the mouth of the river.
- Jacobsons were among the first ones here, boats used to be tied up in Woodward's Slough but since the dyke was built, it is no longer used.

- They claim that their part of the island is in a sheltered weather spot, less wind and rain.
- Every so often eagles come around, and seagulls hover on the up draft of wind.
- The problem now is that the land is going under for housing.
- Used to all kinds of wild life in the area, until the timber went down
- Used to be 5 or 6,000 people when he first came now there are 800,000 people, all over was nice farm land.
- She worked at the Goose Bay Cannery in Rivers Inlet for Canada Fish Co.
- Big difference now in cannery work, used to be lots of people, Chinese and Indians, now a days lots of machines and very few people.
- She used to get 35¢ an hour, \$35.00 for the whole summer.
- There used to be lots of canneries now there's only a few and not enough work for them.
- The buy-back program is discussed and criticized.
- They used to fish all the way from Mission down, everyone had their own area, then they moved out into the Gulf.
- Very few boats stay in the river now, the boats are too expensive, they must go further afield.
- Used to fish springs, as well as coho but there aren't many of them anymore.