

Researcher: David Stevenson

Tape 64; 1 (3 $\frac{3}{4}$  speed)

Interviewed: February 27, 1976

Mr. Isaac Nelson,

10390 Main Street,  
Delta, B. C.

- Story about his neighbour who was rich, who, when he went to work his wife would call out "Don't forget the roast!", his grand-daughter would yell out to him "Don't forget to bring home a hump-back, grand-dad!"
- His father came from Norway by the government in 1896 to settle in Squamish and then they went to Wharnock, a Scandonavian Community.
- He was born in a boat.
- Began rowing boats at an early age in skiffs, 24 foot long.
- Skiffs were flat-bottomed and supplied by the canneries.
- He started at the age of seven rowing out in the Gulf.
- With a sail, down with the tide, back with the wind.
- Built his own boat in 1909; a 32 foot skiff...because he was too young to get a cannery boat.
- His father died when he was one year old and he lived unhappily with a step-father.
- Used his skiff for a year and then he bought a round bottom boat with a two cycle Easthope.
- Fished sockeye, springs (fall fish); 20¢ a piece for sockeye in those days.
- Afterwards when he grew up he became a buyer for the companies.
- Bought his own packer; ran company boats up the coast.
- Then he was net boss for Nelson Brothers.
- Net boss gets the gear ready for the fisherman and keeps it that way during the season.
- He had lots of experience as a boy because you couldn't buy nets made up, all you could buy was the twine and they used to sit and knit nets all winter and the children pulled the needles.
- He had eleven children, the oldest was lost in the war.
- Picture of his wife at Nelson Bros. camp at Dawsons Landing, Rivers Inlet; daughter of Jake Lehman, a pioneer family.
- He was in the carpentry business and he built a couple of sawmills; one was the Wharnock on the Fraser River.
- No relief in those days, if you wanted to eat you had to work.

- Learned to be a carpenter from his step-father and he filed saws for the Shell Oil when they put their plant in there.
- Lots of canneries on the Fraser at one time but the mechanization has all done away with it.
- The Indians up the coast lost their jobs, they made millionaires out of the cannery men.
- He worked at Arndale on the <sup>Nass R.</sup>~~Skeena~~ as carpenter and net boss.
- Cannery machinery is described: Iron Chink did away with hundreds of workers.
- He rebuilt a boat that his father bought for \$10.00.
- The Lee boys started building round-bottom boats and his job was to blow the dust away from the saw, that's how he learned about boats.
- Got crippled in his knee with a kick from one of the Lee brothers; they're all dead now so it don't make any difference anyway.
- He packed fish for B. C. Packers, Nelson Bros. and he also worked as a net boss.
- He got along well with the Indian fishermen.
- There were lots in those days but there's not many left now.
- There were off-years (poor catches) in the early years because of spring floods.
- 1913 was a good year.
- Discussion of the Westminster fire in 1898. He actually saw the fire; just a ferry in those days, no bridge.
- He never had trouble getting work during the 30's.
- Married three times.
- Story about grand-father Iverson and a bike that was rented then broken.
- "Dad and motors never worked but he knew people".
- Mr. Nelson (is not a fiddler, he fiddles at it) plays a tune on his fiddle; he is self taught.
- Mr. Iverson and Mr. Nelson used to play for local dances.