

Albert Olson

Interviewed March 4, 1972.

At home 374 Georgia St., Richmond

Born Port Essington, Skeena River, August 1900 - father Cannery Manager ABC Packing Company - owned Phoenix Cannery, Steveston and two others, moved 1908 Canoe Pass for public, high school - started Ewen Cannery, Lion Island 1917 in summer holidays - 1945 Imperial Cannery, Richmond until quit 1966 because of arthritis.

- at Lion Island 15 years - married Helen Barker - August 6, 1932 - 4 children, Arthur chasing herring, Newfoundland; Barbara, Steveston; Carol (Mrs. Ed. Sonel) fisherman in Brighthouse - no electricity - water piped in under river from Lulu Island - \$50.00 a month (during depression) - sawed logs floating in river - Lion Is. 5 acres, dyked under cultivation Japanese grew strawberries, beans - looked after 20 Jan. 10 white fishermen - watchman, caretaker, Steveston for nets etc. - rowed across slough 75 yards from Lion Island to end No. 3 Road - anecdote wife rowing kids over slough thick fog to school, oarlock slipped into main river - old Bill Ford looked after twins alone in house returned home when fog lifted, frosty, then decided move to Steveston - water at freshet not ready - kids all learned to swim in Fraser River - had indoor plumbing - only saw 1 deer - when cannery active 200 people - ducks, pheasant - drove into New Westminster 2 - 3 times weekly for food, meat and post office - bread, paper delivered to wharf at Lulu Island across - Rudy Grauer delivered groceries to Ewen's wharf - Alec Ewen's nephew Livingston rented land for years - McDonald Bros. left Sea Is. when airport moved in - lived on farm there, till after we left 1945 - Bob MacDonald and wife still living No. 6 Rd. off Westminster Hwy. - Alec Ewen started scow - house 1880 - 1885 built Ewen Cannery on Lion Is. - it ran until 1930 depression when it closed - I stayed on another 15 years as watchman - 1917 to 1966 Olson was 49 yrs. straight with B.C.

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Packers - was bookkeeper tallyman, grader, cold storage - father originally went to cannery at Westham Island (fished 1895 on Fraser River) 1930 when Ewen's closed crossed river to Ben Rowe's Cannery 10-15 years - Red Spring salmon from Fraser best eating fish, then sockeye - 40 years ago dead salmon in thousands along Fraser, canneries wouldn't take humpbacks - to get Coho - no one wanted White spring - pollution - rats, flies, seagulls cleaned up most - fishermen lived in scow houses, out houses over end of Fraser, ran sewage into the Fraser for 100 years - was easy life catch fish when wanted sell a few but prices not good - Steveston at age 12, Brighthouse Race Track going - 1/2 doz. canneries 50 years ago - 3 hotels, more in 1900, saloons, plank roads Moncton St. - hard surface 25 years ago - 1917 fire cleaned out 3 - 4 canneries stopped at Imperial Cannery - brick building owned by Dr. Herworth left standing - drug store there - flu epidemic used only onions and liquor - prohibition needed doctors prescription for liquor - everyone drank moonshine - raided on Lion Is. looking for still - Japanese made hundreds gallons sak gallon for \$2.00, bottle for 35¢ - most fishermen got into scowhouse, moved down to Cottonwood below Ewen Cannery, sat there middle June - Sept. sockeye run on - beer cheap - mosquito larvae on top of water - average fisherman didn't drink water .

Flood 1937 Lion Island dyke broke - water on floor of house - water stayed for weeks till freshet over - 1948 flood, Lulu Is. well prepared - Lion Is. to-day overgrown with trees, no land cultivated - gas station caretaker now on Lion Is. - 2 buildings; tore down main cannery when Olson was there - new cannery used as net loft, storage - couple live there, woman rows to work mainland.

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Old days Indian labor brought in 1917, 1920 for cannery 7-8 white men, Chinese dressed fish, Indians from West Coast Vancouver Is. up to Chilliwack - accommodations for 100 Indians - 1 China house held 100 Chinamen - anecdote Alec Ewen to dump Chinese workers - forming B.C. Packers 1901-1902 going on ever since.

Book: The Salmon People.

TAPE 6 - SIDE 2R