

FISHERMAN: Mr. Charles Dumont,  
#222 Oppenheimer Lodge,  
450 East Cordova Street,  
Vancouver, B. C.

David Stevenson - Researcher

- Began fishing on Lesser Slave Lake in northern Alberta.
- Used small open boats and also ice fished.
- The nets were set, anchored on the bottom, they don't drift like they do here.
- They didn't have their own fishing areas then, but they do now, you can only fish in certain zones now.
- He has a brother who fished there, who is retired now and living in Edmonton.
- Caught white fish, found in the inland lakes, its shipped all over, to New York and Chicago even.
- The pickerel is fished next, then the Jack-fish, which is a big fish, can be up to five feet long, on Lake Athabasca, they used a gillnet to catch them.
- The other commercial fish is called suckers.
- Most of the fishermen were Metis Indian fishermen, as well as White fishermen.
- Prices were not high, barely make a living from them.
- Menzies was the buyer and also McGinnis who bought for Booth Fisheries.
- McGinnis eventually went to United Fishermen, operating on Lake Athabasca.
- There was no fish canneries, they were all shipped fresh and frozen in refrigerated railway cars.
- Fishing was not like here in B. C., you moved to the deeper part of the lake as the weather got warmer.
- There were no special fishing grounds attached to groups of people.
- There were fishing regulations, about fishing in season and quotas.
- Pickerel was in the spring, white fish in the fall.
- There was a big fleet on the Lake.
- They fished the lake out by using herring nets, of course they killed everything.
- Times were tough and there wasn't much money for fish.
- He went out with his granny in a small boat with a net that she made and caught as many fish as they needed; there were lots of fish.
- The fish buyer became a millionaire so he must have been getting something out of it.

- Also the fish got wormy, they brought fish spawn from other lakes and hatched it in the hatchery and brought the fish back.
- The fishermen were not organized, but everyone pretty well worked together.
- They were getting only 5¢/pound for fish.
- Of course everything was low during the 1930's.
- He was in Vancouver during the Depression, all the working people were poor and out of work.
- There were three or four box car-loads of men travelling east and west looking for work; the police were always pushing them on.
- There was squatters shacks on False Creek and down the creek at Keefer Street and they were harassed by the police---they were mostly fishermen and poor folks.
- When he came to Vancouver in 1940 he went to work for Evans and Coleman (?) and there was a lot of work then.
- He met a friend and went fishing for dog fish, which was fished for its liver to provide vitamins for the war.
- The price for dog fish was very low. He fished for one summer and then they found synthetic vitamins and the dog fish fishing ended.
- He fished soup-fish (?) which is a small shark about 4 or 5 feet long up in the Hecate Straits, about a can a day, they used the liver of the fish.
- Canadian Fish bought it.
- He stopped work in 1960 when his back gave way.
- He lived in Steveston behind the present hotel.
- All those shacks are gone now; there were houses built on stilts over the water.
- There was almost a year round work; the women worked in the cannery and the children were left pretty much to themselves.
- Times were tough then.
- There was a Chinese contractor, Stan Young, who hired about 25 men who unloaded salmon from the packers.
- The company houses were poor but the rent was cheap, \$5.00/month.
- The Japanese had been evacuated during the war and when they returned after the war they had a rough reception in Steveston.
- The furniture and belongings of the Japanese were auctioned off while they were away.

At one time there was seven saloons in Steveston, they were all gone in

- the 1940's except the Steveston and it didn't have a beer parlour.
- They had a heck of time getting a license, because the companies opposed the fishermen drinking.
- Everything was rationed during the war, you were allowed a case of beer and a bottle of whisky a week.
- The Steveston got its license when he was working in the net loft.
- There was lots of boot-legging then, Chinese boot leggers.
- They made a little bit of everything: whisky and beer.
- Work in the net loft is practically a year round job.
- There's a big gang of people (10) who work regularly in the net loft most of the year.
- The union came in after the war, without much opposition to the war.
- Tom Parkin was an organizer and so was Homer Stevens.
- The Native Brotherhood and the U.F.A.W.U. got along fairly well.
- He knows Indian people from all over who came to work in the canneries in Steveston.
- Discusses canneries in operation during the 1940's.
- He worked in the net loft until the 50's and gillnetted in the sockeye season, up at the Skeena and then he stayed fishing steady.
- The old boats had no stand up cabins, you could only take little naps anyway so you didn't take your clothes off much.
- He used a Easthope engine and they were good dependable engines.
- Discusses how the smaller, poorer boats had difficulty staying in the fleet.
- He fished all the way up to Portland Canal.
- Fishing is hard work and you have to work hard to make the money.
- Discusses the use of nylon nets.
- All the old linen nets used to be cleaned in the blue-stone solution or put your net in a good tidal rip.
- Nylon nets are easier to keep clean.
- Used to be all dairy farming around Steveston; now its all built up lost all that farm.