

Interviewed: March 4, 1976

Mr. Kal Kaisla,
4530 River Road,
Delta, B. C.

- Born on Malcolm Island, Sointula in 1904?
- Sointula was mostly all homestead, then with the land cultivated, they used to fish sockeye at Rivers Inlet.
- Logging was also an important occupation.
- The original aims of the settlement had passed and the land had been subdivided when he was born.
- Got his first fishing licence when he was 15 by appearing older in big boots and south-wester in front of the fishery officer.
- First boat was a skiff, up at Rivers Inlet with oars.
- He had his first command then at 15^{with} "10 foot sweeps" referring to the oars.
- Skiff fishing was not so hard in those days; it was all done at night; coho, humpbacks; 150 humps per night was the quota.
- Started as a boat puller when he was 8 years old at Rivers Inlet.
- No gas boats then at all, just skiffs.
- There were lots of canneries operating then: Beaver, Provincial, *Kildala* Brunswick, Rivers Inlet, Good Hope, Wadhams, McTavish, Strathcona.
- Large fleet of boats was towed out by the packer outside the Inlet.
- The canneries employed a large number of people because most of it was done by hand.
- It was like a community people from all over the coast gathered there for the sockeye season, from West Coast, Hartley Bay, Kitimat, the Fraser, even Sointula.
- Cannery was run pretty well by the Chinese who had a contract for canning.
- Cans were punctured and then soldered to get the vacuum seal by hand.
- The tins used to be made by hand.
- Sockeye was about 25¢ a piece (hard to remember all those different prices).
- When he first started fishing (trolling) got 7¢ a pound for big spring salmons, 1¢ a pound for whites around 1934.
- He lived in Sointula for 20 years.
- First gas boat was in 1927, a converted cannery skiff.

- His first engine was a 5 HP 2-cycle "Eagle" put in by his father.
- Used to use a 2-cycle Fairbanks-Morse which was quite popular.
- Gear has changed a lot over the years; it is more electronic and mechanized.
- He owns a 41 foot troller now.
- In order to troll, you need all the modern gear in order to compete.
- Trolling starts 15th of April and is getting more congested now than before.
- He used to fish at Hecate Straits, called "Old Man's Home", it is not as rugged as further south...no big ground swell or wind.
- More trollers now even with the "licence limitation" which he considers a big joke.
- There is more money going into capital investments on boats now... for example, \$300,000 boats which take 10 years to pay for than before the limitation plan was put into effect.
- The plan was to reduce the fleet but the actual "catching power" of the fleet increased hence, very little fishing time was allowed in last few years.
- He lived in Bella Bella for 27 years.
- His father was a union man when the first "private gear" appeared on Rivers Inlet...he was against it. When the cannery owned the equipment, your pay was all yours, now with private gear, you are stuck with the costs and therefore, you are not as free to withhold labour to get better prices.
- It would be better if company owned all the gear or if the fishermen owned it all outright.
- The trollers form a separate association; there is some friction with the U.F.A.W.U.
- Bella Bella people used to go to Namu and Rivers Inlet during the sockeye run to work in the cannery.
- The Chinese used to gamble amongst themselves, but the Indians gambling "hallal" was more like a picnic.
- Coast is kind of dead now compared to what it used to be.
- Used to hand log at Bella Bella as well.
- Discusses the grade-school at Sointula; had to move down for the sake of the children's high school education.

- He doesn't like the cars...the pollution "down here" he would rather be in Sointula.
- Both his boys have trollers and are presently fishing herring.
- Story about when he nearly went down in a 30 foot boat; he was trying to get in in a storm boat had an open cockpit, the sea got in, melted the ice and it was night time this brother-in-law, lost him as he "love to"; his engine got wet except for when he put his hat over it managed to keep it going and pump it out.
- During the war there was an airport at Bella Bella and they were practicing firing guns.
- Also you had to stop in a check with the navy boat.
- It was scary running at night because you weren't allowed lights.
- Talks of a big pod of fin-whales 50-60 foot long near Goose Island puffing all over in a playful mood.
- One year before the whaler~~s~~ started, between Goose Island and Cape Mark, there were hundreds of whales everywhere you looked you saw a spout but as soon as they started knocking them off, they disappeared.
- Remembers seeing the whaling boats going up to the Queen Chado in the spring.
- The settlement at Swanson Bay was long gone before his time.
- Benson, an old ~~habitat~~^{halibut} man had lots of old stories but he died at 100 years old, with his stories unrecorded.
- Ed Anderson used to log there with an ox team, yarding with an ox or horse, he used to trap above Swanson Bay, in and over the coast range all by himself; he shot the grizzlies behind Swanson Bay: he was on a slide cleared ground with lots of big boulders when four bears came running towards him so he jumped on top of the boulder, he had 6 shells so he had to shoot all four of them or they would have gotten him.
- Supposed to be a picture of the skinned bears in Rupert.
- Used to be a pulp mill at Swanson Bay supplied by hand loggers.
- Swindle Island was logged by steam donkey during WW II.
- Swanson Bay is just shacks now.
- Ocean Falls was pretty well all hand-loggers at first.
- Describes hand logging; big trees chopped by axes as smooth as by a saw, even a big six foot spruce.
- In those days logging methods didn't harm the fishing; today the logging methods just sweep it all clear down to the rocks.

- Fishing is not doing very well right now; the fleet is so efficient the catch is declining.
- Prices during the war...used to get 15¢/pound for coho; 10¢ in Bull Harbour.
- The government has subsidized draggers...until there are too many of them and they don't know what to do with them.
- Dragers fish sole, hake, flounders and cod.
- Talks of the boat "The City of Alberni" loaded with lumber for Africa... it was old and rotten and had to be repaired in San Francisco and nearly sank except it was saved by its cargo of lumber which kept it afloat.
- Surf Inlet used to be a gold mine on the south side of Princess Royal Island started at the same time as Swanson Bay.
- At one time there was a big settlement there.
- He helped remove a "donkey" from there...at a time when the houses were still standing including a dance hall with a beautiful wooden floor.
- Watchman tells of using dynamite to scare off the cougar.
- Tells the story of a white "^{gr}kamole" bear (^{white} looks like a sheep) which he nearly had to shoot.
- The dam is still there at Surf Inlet.
- Tells the story of bringing out a donkey engine from Surf Inlet and getting hung up on a tree.
- There was a big cannery at Bella Bella called ^{Goss-}Millards.
- His sister-in-law had a bottle collection including bottles that used to contain opium from the old Chinese labourers.