

Andy Nielson,
Nielson Machine Works
862 River Road, Richmond.

Interviewed: May 2, 1973.

Born July 26, 1896 at Red Deer, Alberta . . . his parents homesteaded
1899 (winter) moved to Vancouver for a few months . . . moved to
farm at present site of White Spot, South Vancouver . . . mixed
farming . . . Andy attended North Arm School, corner of River Road
and North Arm Road (now Fraser Avenue).

1906 - came to Richmond . . . family moved with real estate boom
of 1905 - 1912 . . . father sold farm, bought farm from Dave
Webster at corner of No. 5 Road and River Road.

Father also a carpenter . . . built first Mitchell School
(Cambie and Fraser) . . . Andy attended this school . . . (age 10
years) . . . earlier built school called Roland School, Cambie
west of No. 5 Road. . . . recalled teacher Miss Shaw who was well
liked, then attended Bridgeport School for short time.

First work was at Pacific Iron Works, near corner Main St.
and Prior . . . served 4 years apprenticeship, certificate.

c1914 - parents bought farm at Hazelmere, south of Cloverdale
. . . Andy stayed with sister in Vancouver who married George
Mitchell, whose father Alex Mitchell owned Mitchell Island.

1915 - parents moved to Richmond . . . Andy continued work in
- machine shops, garages, Burrard Dry Docks, in steam engineering.

1917 - married and lived in Vancouver . . . except for two years
as mill engineer, Crescent Beach.

1921 - Moved back to Lulu Island, later built house at corner Sexsmith and Douglas . . . engineer for 21 years at Eburne Sawmill . . . walked or drove in car over old Eburne Bridge . . . it had a swing span . . . bridge tender Mr. Thomas lived with family at north end of Lulu Island to Sea Island bridge . . . Andy crossed two bridges to get to work . . . Eburne Sawmill shipped lumber to Japan and local trade around Vancouver . . . logs came from up coast, Vancouver Island and Harrison Lake . . .

First cars were Chevs and Fords . . . 1926 got new Hudson Essex.

Social life as young man . . . entertained at dances in homes . . . no one locked doors . . . could help yourself to food at friend's home, police chief Andy Waddell was only policeman on Island for a while . . . Jim Smith later named Deputy.

While working at Eburne Sawmill -started own machine shop, original Wallace Motors with Chuck Wallace then working for Andy.

1943 - Went wholly into own business: Nielson's Garage and Machine Works.

1946 - sold garage and built present Nielson Machine Works across the road . . . in present shop till 1962 . . . then leased it to Doug Sheran for 10 years . . . when he died Andy returned to operate the Machine Works. Meanwhile he built Castor Motors (across from Skyline Hotel) which he now leases.

Hunting on Lulu Island early days - on farm around No. 6 Road shot ducks on evening flights . . . also on Burns Bog, Ladner and up the Caribou area every year.

Roads-when Andy first lived here there was no Cambie Road . . . River Road extended from Westminster to the corner of Cambie then

turned onto No. 3 Road . . . also recalls Fraser Avenue which stopped at Cambie . . . and Steveston Highway which was rock and gravel originally.

Mitchell family hauled gravel and crushed rock from Pitt River area . . . old Alec Mitchell and brother Sam had own tugboat and owned scows.

When first here all dykes were hand made by Chinese . . . Indian families lived along Fraser River in scow houses . . . engaged in fishing . . . bir cannery at Terra Nova, also Steveston . . . No Indian children at school but one or two Chinese . . . visited Chinese houses . . . 6 to 8 Chinese lived in one house . . . given lichee nuts, ginger . . . one boss (Chinese man) with up to 6 Chinese working for him . . . all controlled by head man in Vancouver called the "tyee" who acted as agent lining up work for Chinese living on Lulu Island.

Re youth - swam in Fraser River, up Fraser Avenue, around Marpole and the sawmills . . . river cleaner . . . 1943 or 1944 his boat bottom clean but now covered with slime.

Played fiddle at dances in farmers' homes.

Not on tape - added information.

Andy Nielson held first class engineer certificate as steam engineer. He owns property and building of Marpole Trading (a building supply store in area) . . . nephew Lester Mitchell operates store.

1908 - 1910 - Early Slough existed by Westminster Highway, just Richmond side of Queensborough . . . lots of beaver there . . . racoon everywhere on Lulu Island . . . Andy trapped muskrat at \$1.00 for a good quality hide . . . 50¢ for poor one . . . no license needed . . . knew Muskrat Bill.

Dellis Cleland