

BOAT BUILDER: Mr. Geiri Sigurgeirson,  
1120 - 4th Avenue,  
Steveston, B. C. (277-7757)

David Stevenson - Researcher

- Formerly a sailor, 83 years old now.
- Born at Lake Winnipeg, west shore of Lake Winnipeg at Gimmlian Icelandic community.
- Not much education, came to B. C. in 1942.
- Worked in the cannery as a carpenter, then to the Skeena River in 1943 and built boats there.
- He calls himself a boat builder, a boat designer; he sailed boats when he was 9 years old with his dad.
- Shows photos of his first boat, "The Tempest".
- Story of the building of the boat....made the cabin big enough to stand up in and the other boat builders were all laughing at this boat that it would blow over.
- Three boats went out, two blew over, the other one, his boat, towed the other two back in. The next day, 3 or 4 fellows came and asked him to build them a boat.
- He took a boat designing course in 1910....talks of designing the "Olympic" which took three years.
- You need to be a sailor to design a boat...you build a model and test it in the water.
- He is a skipper with his captain's, papers that's been all over the world to Iceland, the Lake Winnipeg, Great Slave Lake, the upper McKenzie.
- Boats got heavier, beamier and wider.
- Shows pictures of boats, other boat builders, Copied his designs, i.e. when he introduced the square stern, they were all double enders.
- He built the first square stern in 1943 on the Skeena River.
- He changed the whole style of the boats on the West Coast.
- Boats are mostly of fibreglass now.
- Building is easier now with modern tools and machines.
- Last boat he built was "Noble Savage".
- The companies did not like him building at less than their price.
- Steveston in 1943, mostly farming, potatoes, corn, cows and chickens.
- Large Japanese community before the war and when they returned there

Geiri Sigurgeirson (Boat Builder)

was some reluctance to accept them.

- Discussion of the politics of the Japanese return.
- Steveston is a rough place now, crowded, bigger but not better.
- Not a large Indian community.
- He also put the first Flare on the bow of the boat.
- Early boats were \$2,000.00, the Tempest was \$3,500.00 with a car engine.
- He was in the Navy during WW I, took convoys to Iceland for 2 to 3 years.
- Visited Iceland last summer.
- Discusses the advantage of Icelandic society.
- Over 5,000 people of Icelandic descent in greater Vancouver area.
- He built a ski mobile---travelled very fast on skis on the ice and he towed lots of people on it.

\*\*\*\*\* tape becomes garbled as battery runs down\*\*\*Move to slower speed\*\*\*\*\*

- Discussion of where boats are built now-----no one in Steveston building now.