JOHN BROUGHTON

Interview: July 2, 1975

Interviewer: Ivan Donaldson

Today the 2nd of July, 1975, we are here at Stevenson, Washington, conducting an interview with John Broughton, who has had a world of experience as a fisherman and fish trap operator on the Columbia River and probably other streams of the Northwest.

Ivan: John, when did you begin your career as a fisherman?

John: As a trap fisherman, in 1930.

Ivan: And where was this trap?

John: Up at Lyle, Washington. There was four traps at Lyle, Washington.

Ivan: Who was with you?

John: Jim Bailey and Ikey Lamp were the two men that worked for me.

Ivan: Ikey Lampi , would you spell that for me please?

John: Well, his name was Alec Lampi, Finnish.

Ivan: Oh, a Finnish man. Were these traps successful up there?

John: Yes, quite so.

Ivan: What species did you take?

John: Chinook, silver sides, steelhead.

Ivan: Blue backs?

John: Blue back and sturgeon.

Ivan: Did you catch any chad in those early days?

John: No, no chad. The runs were quite low at that time for chad.

Ivan: Were you the owner of these four traps?

John: My two older brothers were the owners of these traps.

Ivan: Who were they, please?

John: Clarence and Tracy Broughton.

Ivan: I worked with Hilda Broughton, who was a fish counter at John Day, at The Dalles Dam for a number of years. Was she your sister?

John: Sister-in-law. Wife of Clarence Broughton.

Ivan: She really knew her salmon.

John: Oh yeah, she lived her life at it.

Ivan: She always wanted that counting board real deep, the salmon passed much better. Where were those traps located in relation to Lyle? Upstream or downstream?

John: Two of them above Lyle and two of them below Lyle. One at the mouth, just above the mouth of the Klickitat River, and one about a mile downstream, below the mouth of the Klickitat. One directly above Lyle and one about a mile above Lyle.

Ivan: All on the Washington shore.

John: All on the Washington shore and that was in 1930.

Ivan: How long did you fish those traps?

John: One year.

Ivan: Where did you go then?

John: I moved down to where my brothers were at Sepsican and Collins.

Ivan: You had more traps at Sepsican and Collins?

John: Yeah we had four more traps down there.

Ivan: Same species and . . .

John: Yeah, same species and same situation only these traps were much more profitable and so we moved down and worked on them and the price of the fish got quite low.

Ivan: Then you just moved from Lyle to a more profitable area, was that it?

John: That's right.

Ivan: How long did you fish those traps?

John: Until the close of the traps by popular vote in 1934.

Ivan: So you fished four years with river traps.

John: On the Washington side and then we moved to Oregon.

Ivan: Oh, it was outlawed in Washington first, then and you moved over to Oregon. Where did you have your traps then?

John: Well, we had one at Multnomah Falls, just above Multnomah Falls at Horse-Tail Falls, and we had one at Multnomah Falls for awhile and we had one down at the mouth, above the mouth of the Sandy River, had one about a mile below the mouth of the Sandy River and one across from Smith Rock Quarry, below Camas.

Ivan: Oh, just across the river from Smith Rock Quarry on the Oregon Shore. And when did you have the Voyer Rock Wheel at St. Helens?

John: Oh, trap you mean. That was in 1939.

Ivan: When were traps outlawed in Oregon?

John: They were voted out in 1948 but didn't go clear out of existence until 1950 when we had the last trap on the Columbia River. There was an injunction after the election in '48 and seining and trapping both continued during '49.

Ivan: And they were prohibited in 1950.

John: Well, in the later part of 1950 but the injunction wasn't enforced until after we'd fished the trap for awhile and followed the year.

Ivan: Oh, the year of 1950?

John: Yeah.

Ivan: Were these traps successful?

John: Always.

Ivan: Did you fish them each year from 1934 onwards?

John: Yes, we fished them continually.

Ivan: All these traps, one at Voyer Rock and . . .

John: No the one at Voyer Rock we fished in 39 only and then I moved back up the river and fished with my brothers again on the upper river. I was the Supt. down there while Kyue was getting started.

Ivan: Henry Kyue, this is the man who built this trap there at Voyer Rock with your brother Clarence.

John: Yeah.

Ivan: So then you had several traps on the Oregon shore during this period from 1934 to 1950. What was different about these traps, I've heard said that the Broughton traps were highly successful, that they were unique, they were different from other types of traps. What was different about them?

John: Well, they were one-way traps to begin with but we used all wire, we used wire pots and wire _____ and wire leads and hearts.

Ivan: And the wire was the singular difference then? That you, instead of webbing, mesh webbing or fabric webbing, you used wire.

John: Yes instead of cotton, cotton webbing, we started using wire and it was very successful.

Ivan: Much more successful than cotton webbing?

John: Yes, a lot more.

Ivan: Why was it more successful? Do you have any idea?

John: Well, because the fish couldn't see it as well and they lead closer to the wire and then they'd go into the gaps and the heart and then lead right on in, they didn't seem to fear the wire.

Ivan: Oh, very interesting.

John: Yeah, and we had straight upstream tunnels and that seemed to help the matter too.

Ivan: Straight upstream tunnels leading into the heart or . . .

John: Leading in to the main pot and there was a side gap into the heart.

Ivan: When did you begin using this wire, from the very start of your career or . . .

John: The time I started was in 1930.

Ivan: Did your brother Clarence, did he operate traps earlier than that?

John: Yes, they started in 1926.

Ivan: And they started with wire or did they . . .

John: No, they started with web at first and then they figured that the wire would be better and then they experimented with wire until they found out what they used in Alaska and then they started using that regular Alaskan wire.

Ivan: Oh, the Alaskan people had used the wire earlier?

John: Yeah.

Ivan: Did Brobling and others make this wire especially for fisherman?

John: Yes, made especially for fisherman.

Ivan: What was the mesh size of that and the gage?

John: Well, the lead wire was 3 inches by 6 inches and the gage was, they had different gages but the size we used was 16 gage and on the heart wires, why sometimes we used 3 by 6's, sometimes we used 2 by 4 in the heart but the pots was 2 by 2 and 16 gage which is very strong and spillers were 3-inch, would be12 by 12.

Ivan: Why was the necessity for the smaller mesh there?

John: Because the little fish when they get penned up that way, a small fish like a jack salmon and blue backs, could stick their heads into a two inch mesh and then they'd wiggle and wiggle until they crystalized it and if you had it smaller, they couldn't get stuck in there, so possibility you didn't get a break in your spiller.

Ivan: This wire was galvanized before . . .

John: All of it had to be.

Ivan: And what was the reason for this again, please?

John: To prevent crystalization of the wire because if it was galvanized before weaving, why it worked like on a hinge, the movement of the water would just move the wire back and forth but if it was solid like it is when galvanized after weaving, why, then that's solid wire and then it would just crystalize with the joints and break open.

Ivan: Just moves and moves and flexes and bends and breaks.

John: Yeah, that's right.

Ivan: And when did you, please describe the trap that you had here at the upper end of the Cascade Rapids and tell, for the record here, about where the trap was located and how it was made.

John: Well, there was just about a 100 feet or less above the white water at the head of the Cascade Rapids.

Ivan: Washington shore?

John: Washington shore and there was quite some large boulders or nigger heads in there with hard driving and it was a short lead because of the swift water. But we managed to get the piling in there and probably 12-15 feet apart for the lead and then we got the pot piling stuck in there, too, and we had to hang on for all you was worth, everybody, cause you didn't dare to turn loose when you were working around there with a scowl. Somebody had to have ahold of the skoul all the time when you were moving so we always had two men hold cause otherwise you were down over the rapids. It was quite dangerous.

Ivan: Real swift water there. And how long would you approximate the lead in this case?

John: Oh, 350 feet.

I: What year was this?

John: Well, first was in there in 1927 and then several years from there on up until '34. Seven years I guess they had that trap in there.

Ivan: There are some old, old pictures of what appear to be leads between the island. Trap leads between the islands there above the rapids some little more distance

than 150 feet or 100 feet. Do you remember any early traps there between the islands, leads?

John: No, I think we were the only ones that ever had one in there. I do remember someone had a trap in there between the islands in there before we did, a long time ago.

Ivan: This picture definitely shows.

John: Thats right. I do remember it.

Ivan: Do you know who that was?

John: I don't know who that was. That was long before my time.

I: It was before 1926 or '27.

John: Yeah, it was long before that.

Ivan: How close were you to that big wheel 16, that big wheel at the upper end of the rapids?

John: Oh, we were probably 400 or 500 yards above it. They were at the lower end of the rapids and we were at the upper end, whatever the length they're at.

Ivan: No, wheel 19 was below the rapids, wheel 16 was right up at the upper end of the rapids. I was just wondering where your trap was in relation to that upper wheel at the rapids.

John: The only one I remember was the one right there below where the Bridge of the Gods is, just above the Bridge of The Gods. Well, yeah, it was up around the corner. We weren't too far from that trap, from that wheel.

Ivan: But this other one, wheel 16, what the people of Stevenson called the big trap, why you don't remember that one?

John: I can't seem to remember that one.

Ivan: Oh, that was a big wheel.

John: Yeah, I guess that was around the corner.

Ivan: Up above you then?

John: No, they were all below, there was no fish wheels above us until you got up to

The Dalles.

Ivan: Oh, that's interesting, significant. What is the law about spacing of a fishing device like this?

John: For traps why, 900 feet, they had to be at least 900 feet apart.

Ivan: Did that also hold with fish wheels?

John: I don't know about fish wheels. Set nets were about 300 feet, I believe and fish traps were 900.

Ivan: Did you know any of the fish wheel operators as Al Hendrix?

John: I knew Al Hendrix, he's the only one I knew.

Ivan: Did you know anything about those wheels at North Bonneville or the skoul wheel on the stationary at North Bonneville?

John: No, I didn't have anything to do with that. I was pretty busy all the time where I was at.

Ivan: Taking care of the traps. Then I recall at a later time that you went up to Rock Island and what other dam up there to take care of the fishways, be f ishway foreman.

John: Well, I was Supt. of Fishways at Rock Island Dam for five years.

Ivan: About what years please?

John: That was 1961 through 1965.

Ivan: And you worked with Bernie Lehmann in this case?

John: Yeah.

Ivan: Did you find that a challenging occupation?

John: Well, it was right up my alley, I was right at home, I had no trouble at all.

Ivan: I'll say for the record, we found in our fisheries experience on the river, that these commercial fisherman made excellent, made supurb fishway operators, because they had their hearts and souls in getting those fish upstream. Did you work for the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Washington Department of Fisheries there?

John: I worked for the Fish and Wildlife shelter, the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries until they changed over, then I was transferred to a different section and was sent to Wells Dam when they put Wells Dam in and then I was an inspector of fishways until that dam was completed, for two years. Then I inspected dams up and down the river, several dams for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Ivan: Inspected the fishways as a regular fishway inspector?

John: Yes.

Ivan: I don't remember that you ever came through to the Dalles and Bonneville when I was here.

John: No, I was out of Ice Harbor with my lowest dam.

Ivan: Did you know the biologist at Wells Dam?

John: Yes, they had a biologist, Mike Airho. I was there before he came. Yes, I knew him well.

Ivan: Did you ever find any strange species in your traps?

John: No.

Ivan: Any forked tailed catfish?

John: No, I never saw a catfish. Oh when you was talking about fish traps I was thinking about fish ladders. No in fish traps, I don't know of anything I found that was abnormal, just regular run of suckers and squawfish and chubs.

Ivan: Ross Leonard told me that the Idaho Fish and Game Dept. introduced the channel catfish about 1940 into the river and I wondered if you'd come on any of those?

John: I never have.

Ivan: We did at Bonneville and some sizeable speciemens up to 9 or 10 pounds.

John: Well that was after we did our trapping.

Ivan: True, but some of the other exotic species had been introduced before as some of the pan fish and certainly carp. Did you catch a number of carp in your traps?

John: Quite a few. There weren't too many carp. We caught lots of small sturgeon when we were down the river across from Smith Rock there. The state of Oregon tagged 2600 sturgeon out of that one trap alone.

Ivan: Oh, Dr. Alexandar Bykoff?

John: Bykoff, yeah.

Ivan: I caught the sturgeon for him in the fish lock at Bonneville, the North Washington fish lock, and we tagged them together out of that lock. What were your impressions of Aledandar Bykoff?

John: I loved him. He and I were fast friends. He wanted to go everywhere I went, he couldn't keep from coming up there where I was as much as he could. It was home and, yeah, we was real good friends.

Ivan: You know he was interested in plankton, he liked plankton very much, the study of plankton and he thought there was great future in plankton as food value for the human race. I associated with him around Bonneville.

John: He wanted me to go to the Bearing Sea with him but I didn't want to go up there. He was going to be a biologist and the CRP was going to furnish an experimental vessel for trapping fish and catching fish and he was going to be the biologist on there and he wanted me to be captain on the boat and I didn't think that I was capable of running a boat like that and a crew of 7 or 9 men.

Ivan: You had the proper papers, I expect. Coast Guard papers?

John: Oh I could have gotten them but it just didn't strike me right.

Ivan: Did he actually go up there? I didn't remember this.

John: He went up that way someplace but I don't know where he went.

Ivan: This was after he left the Oregon Fish Commission?

John: I think so. I think he took sick up there when he . . .

Ivan: Oh, this was his passing then.

John: Yeah, I think so. He also wanted to go up there someplace and raise oysters on wires, strung on wires, suspended between pilings.

Ivan: Such as they do down on some of the bays down on the Oregon coast.

John: Yeah, that was a long time ago.

Ivan: Yeah he obviously had quite good training. Did he ever tell you about the, you know they were trying to escape from Russia at the time of the Revolution and they had this, oh, he went in to where the Crown Jewels were located and he snitched, purloined this ruby as big as your fingernail and they were near starvation and the family finally traded it off for 3 or 4 or 5 potatoes.

John: No, I never knew about that. He always talked about fish when he was with me.

Ivan: How big a sturgeon have you caught in your trap?

John: At that _____ Rock station there, the biggest sturgeon I ever caught was 9 foot 3 and weighed 387 pounds and the picture was taken and put in the Oregonian.

Ivan: Was this, did you release it or was it still legal then . . .

John: No, it was legal in 1939, they hadn't made a law against 6-foot sturgeon.

Ivan: Do you remember when that was, what year that was that they made the law against 6-foot sturgeon?

John: Around 1950 is awful close.

Ivan: Around 1953 maybe?

John: Could have been. I know it was right around that time.

Ivan: You probably butchered this out, this fish, I'll wager it was a female.

John: It was a female and had 80 pounds of caviar.

Ivan: Ready for making into caviar?

John: Yes, right.

Ivan: What time of year was this, May or June?

John: Oh, it was in August.

Ivan: In August, well she would have spawned the next year then. If the caviar were that ready, in the May or June of the next year. One of the first places I came to know you was when you were fishing for sturgeon up there off the mouth of Wind River.

John: No, little White Salmon.

Ivan: Who was fishing with you for sturgeon up there?

John: Dana Nicholson was my boat builder.

Ivan: Dana Nicholson. Were you fishing with net or with . . .

John: I was fishing with a diver net.

Ivan: Was this your son that I met up there too?

John: Well he fished with me for some times.

Ivan: And he is working here in the city now?

John: Yes, at the Co-Ply. We caught as much as a ton, quite a few different nights up there.

Ivan: And did you find those, some of those sturgeon that are exceedingly red braided mouth and vent that Dr. Rucker and I examined?

John: Oh, very few of them, all around their lips was red and such as that, swollen and that but there wasn't very many of them, there was some.

Ivan: What were they feeding on in that drift?

John: Oh, mostly little clams about as big around as your thumbnail. Their belly's would just be full of them, shells and all.

Ivan: For the record, this is carbiculis, genis carbiculae which was, this type of specimen was taken in the Canton, Hong Kong region of China as told to me by the Smithsonian Biology section. In other words, the Chinese may have intro-duced them to the strain. We just really don't know because they were the type speciman, the earliest known were taken there in the Canton, Hong Kong region of China. Their stomachs would be full of these and they . . .

John: Yeah, distended even, the river must have been literally alive with them.

Ivan: You know, in that flood, after the peak of the flood, I counted gillions of the

visera of these little clams floated downstream so they must have died in the flood, must have just been silted out and died.

John: I saw that meat from the clams, that's what you're talking about, I saw it coming down the river several days there and it looked like a snow storm suspended in water.

I: And that was coming from all up and down the river.

John: Yeah, from the Snake River on down.

Ivan: There must have been trillions of those, the insides of the clams coming downstream . . .

John: Yeah, oh there was, and another thing that I don't know whether you and _____ know but we had the angle worms by the millions, came down during that flood, and they were alive.

Ivan: No, I didn't know that one.

John: The sturgeon were clear full of them and they were hanging all over the nets, course they fall right out of the nets, they were no bother, but there was just a solid mass of angle worms, 5 or 6 or 7 inches long.

Ivan: Where did they come from?

John: I don't know, they must have come from flooded land because in less than about 4 or 5 days and it was just a solid mass of angle worms.

Ivan: No, I didn't see that one but we know at that time we had a great many gulls wheeling, diving, feeding, circling, endlessly scores of gulls feeding there just below the power house at Bonneville, diving for these clam insides, and possibly for the angle worms, too.

John: Might have been angle worms too but I didn't see them in the water and they seemed to be only on the lead line of the net. They seemed to be on the bottom but they were all alive, they didn't die in the water.

Ivan: That's puzzling, you'd think they would die sooner or later. Did you ever have a _____ upstream, did you ever have the fish then retreating from the mud, ever come down against the upper side of one of your traps or one of your nets?

John: Not against the traps but I know fish retreat when fresh water comes down the river.

Ivan: Yeah, we've known that at the dam a long time. Mr. Clint at The Dalles, told me how the fish sometimes would collect on the upstream side of his set nets up there.

John: Well they could possibly do that but they might have been, a set net sets between the downstream current and the upstream current and fish, in order to get out of that mud, may have gone into the eddy from the current side and it would appear to be on the upper side but the way I fish drifted net straight in the current, why our fish were always from the downstream side.

Ivan: Tell me John, did, were the dams totally the cause of the great lessening of fish numbers or were they, were the fish numbers decreasing long before the dams were built?

John: I don't know quite how to answer that because the seasons kept getting chopped off more and more and fish seemed to increase. I've got proof of it. I've got a book out in the, if you want to sit there a minute I'll bring you in the book that I wrote up at Rock Island Dam and I can show you something.

Ivan: Well let's pursue this for a moment. You mean after the seasons were shortened or after the dams were built, that the fish seemed to increase. After the dams were built, the fish seemed to increase?

John: I'm sure they did.

Ivan: Could that have been because the seasons had been shortened?

John: I think so.

Ivan: Very interesting, but could the reason for the seasons being shortened have been because the average numbers had been diminishing?

John: That sounds right. They shortened theseason because the run was decreasing and then afterwards the fish seemed to pick up for a good 20 years at least.

Ivan: This was after Bonneville was completed?

John: After Bonneville was completed and Rock Island, I've got all the statistics on Rock Island.

Ivan: And I have them on Bonneville. But I would say this is about right. I think we could have lived with Bonneville and Rock Island but when you get many, many others.

John: Yeah when you get too many it gets kind of bad but there was conditions that happened sometimes that fish didn't get over the dams the way they should have but if everybody had known exactly how to run the fish ladders the way they was supposed to have been run, there could have been a great many more come over the dams.

Ivan: Some of those early years at Bonneville was pretty bad alright. There was some operators that I could name but when Bob Moore came in, those fishways, oh, how he was jealous of how those fishways operated. Tried to make them operate right. You knew Bob Moore, I believe.

John: Yeah. You know, I believe the first time I met you was in a controversy over fish ladders down there at Bonneville. They had a counting station down at the lower end to see how long it would take the fish to get from the lower end of the ladder, I believe, to the upper end. That was when the dam was in its infancy, the first year or two. I think you were there and the fish weren't going up there, I hollered about it.

Ivan: Seems to me I remember something about that but it would have to be after, let's see, I went there in 1941, September 26, 1941, and then I was gone for four years with the Air Corps and I came back in 1946. Could it have been

John: It had to have been around 1941 sometime. Do you remember them putting a counting station down at the lower end of the ladder?

Ivan: I remember several counting stations in the lower ladder but, was this on the power house side or the Washington side?

John: It was on the Washington side.

Ivan: Could it have been in 1948, 1947?

John: No, I think it was quite a bit earlier than that. I'm not sure though.

Ivan: I do remember counting fences in the Washington ladder in 1947 and 1948. Then over in the powerhouse branch we had at other times other counting stations were developed but since you mentioned this I seem to remember that protest was made.

John: Uh huh. I was down there two or three times. One time the fish were held up in the dam and they weren't going over the dam at all and they had the gates open right up next to the entrance to the fishway and that number two gate was pushing number one gate right straight across the entrance and the fish weren't coming up and I hollered about it and I think the Oregon Fish Commission they came up and whoever was in charge of the dam there, they said they would

raise that number two gate and let number one gate go straight on by, let the water . . .

Ivan: You mean they closed number two a little bit.

John: Close number two down and let the water not crowd number one over and they did it and away went the salmon, they started going over the dam.

Ivan: Is that when they washed across that entrance so violently the fish didn't seem to mind it.

John: Yeah, and then several years afterwards, the same thing happened again and I hollered and then they swore up and down, you weren't there then, they swore up and down that they hadn't changed the gates and so finally they had them, looked back in the reconds and they found the green work sheet and they found they had done it and they went back and done the same thing again.

Ivan: This is very important to have proper flows there at that spillway entrance. Did you know Roy Hendrix?

John: Oh, yes I knew him real well.

Ivan: You know he used to fish down there in the region below Warrendale.

John: Yeah, he fished down on the _____. I fished on the same drift with him in later years.

Ivan: I know he was drifting when I knew him.

John: Yeah, my brother and I put up the first net he ever fished and he fished it in the funniest place, I would have never have believed it possible but he fished from that wheel across from Moffett's, you know the wheel on the island over there at Moffett's?

Ivan: The wheel across, now would this be on Ives Island?

John: It was on an island yes. And he layed out above that wheel and in that terrifically swift water and it worked out beautiful and he and my youngest brother fished together and they caught fish hand over fist in that gravel in that fast water.

Ivan: I would think the nets would just be torn to pieces.

John: I would too but they had no trouble with them.

Ivan: How many fathoms?

John: I think it was only a 100 or 110 fathoms, it was a narrow river there.

Ivan: Very swift at that point, still actually in the Cascades.

John: That's right, swift water. Yes because they had a hard time sometimes bucking the current to get back up.

Ivan: Well, you know Lee Sams and Mrs. Sams used to work over there on the P. J. McGowan. In an interview just like this they stated that the fish runs were diminishing long before the dams were present.

John: They were, there's no doubt about it in my mind.

Ivan: Well, I get myself into trouble by saying that the fish runs were diminishing long before the dams were built but I'll say now that the dams, too many of them changing the river too much. In other words there have been two periods in history that vast abundance of fish: in the 1860's 1880's; and then 10 to 20,000 fishermen and 2,500 boats in the river just knocked the bottom out of it. And they, of course, we know that P. J. McGowan and Warren Cannery closed 1926 for the Warren Cannery and about that time for the McGowan cannery for lack of fish up here.

Ivan: Did you work on the Snake at all other than as an inspector?

John: No, I didn't do anything on the Snake.

Ivan: Did you work at Rocky Reach at all?

John: One year, 1st year of Rocky Reach's operation I went up there twice a webk to keep track of the fishways.

Ivan: Did you work at Wanapum or Priest Rapids at all?

John: I was consulted and called down there for consultation several times on the Wanapum and Priest Rapids. In fact I worked 1965 I worked for _____County and they paid my wages while I was running Rock Island, they were doing some experimental tagging and _____ County was paying for it. They wouldn't have anybody but me there to run it. It was the most complicated piece of work that you ever saw in your life, I don't know how in the world I ever did it cause I'm not an educated person.

Ivan: What do you mean complicated?

John: Well, they were catching fish in traps in the fishways and taking them below the dam and tagging them below the dam and turning them loose below the dam and we had 3 cush ladders to drop down and running two shifts a day and they called it the human element and I had to separate those _____ from one ladder to another every day and have each one put in an equal amount of time on each ladder.

Ivan: Oh, this apportionment of time, that gets complicated.

John: Yes, then they had to keep track of all the tagged fish and they all had to be separated according to a ladder too. But I did find out some things that will, up there counting fish, there were fish sometimes dumped above the dam but they went back over the dam and came back up again, we found that out too.

Ivan: Oh yes, you and I knew that decades before they learned here at Bonneville with their radio tags, certainly you and I knew it. Cause when I'd see them come out of the spillway with their heads gone or squirting blood from their gills but they now have determined that maybe a 30% drop back.

John: Yes, well I didn't think it was that much, didn't show that much up there but . . .

Ivan: Did you know Clifton Davidson, the Biologist at Rock Island, before his death?

John: No, I didn't.

Ivan: I know you went there after him.

John: I took his place.

Ivan: He was there from the beginning of Rock Island, keeping these records and he loaned them to me once and then the Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland found out that he had and they gave him trouble and I could never get them again. But you knew Dr. Fred Davidson I bet?

John: I knew him very well. I worked for him, I worked under him that one year I worked for him in 1965.

Ivan: I admired his savvy, he was a . . .

John: He was a real smart biologist.

Ivan: He had some difficulties. So you have there a record . . .

John: I think that's it, I don't have my own glasses, but isn't that it?

Ivan: Annual Fish Passage Report, Rock Island Dam, Columbia River, Washington 1965, 1933 onward. This gives the account. I'm famaliar with this publication.

John: You have that publication.

Ivan: I had it but I gave it to Dick Duncan.

John: Well anyway that shows that run of fish increased substantially after dams were in, doesn't it?

Ivan: There was a period there where the runs were certainly abundent here say from 1950 onwards until 1960 abouts.

John: Yeah that was what I wanted to show you.

Ivan: Did you have any contact with this nitrogen super saturation, had that been discovered before you left?

John: Yeah at Well's Dam, when I was at Well's Dam that was discovered and when they first put that hatchery in at Well's Dam, they put in quite a large hatchery there right at Well's Dam and they hatched out a bunch of little fish and the water they turned in there, the fish started getting swelled bellies and such as this and they said that was the nytrogen. I had them, the water was coming from up above and I had them make some steps and let this water drop step by step and go down there and I think it helped them.

Ivan: Well, this is one method of taking nitrogen out of the water.

John: Well, I just did that accidentally.

Ivan: Well, you used the right technique alright. I didn't realize that that was, that they'd had that trouble at the hatchery. I've got this in an aquarium, letting water jet in to the water under pressure jet in and this carries nitrogen and it will kill the fish.

John: Yeah and then it was killing some of them up there below Chief Joseph Dam. They had a, I think it was around 110 then which, 110 isn't as bad as it has

gotten but the biologists thought . . .

Ivan: 110? Air temperature?

John: Oxygen content.

Ivan: Oh super saturation of nitrogen, oh alright.

John: I think Tom Meekin was a biologist up there for the State of Washington. Do you know about him?'

Ivan: Yes, I know Tom Meekin.

John: Well, he was the one that was telling me about it. I was pretty well acquainted with him.

Ivan: I liked Tom. He was one of those Washington State Department of Fisheries men who discovered it up there, started all this great fan fare about nitrogen super saturation.

John: Yeah, well, I think that was the start of it right there.

Ivan: Did you know Fred Devine, the diver?

John: Oh, yeah. He started in when he was just commencing to dive, started diving on our _____ in the early days in the 20's.

Ivan: Oh, you employed him then to build, help build your traps?

John: No, to go down on the traps after the traps were in and inspect them to see if they were all down on bottom and that there were no holes or obstructions.

Ivan: And on weekends, did you have to pull the wire leads up or did you just keep the _____ open?

John: Oh, you had to make a V in the lead, adjacent to the gap that led into the heart, then you had to have an _____ that covered the gap in the heart, see so that the fish naturally would come along with the lead and then raise up hunting for an out and then they'd raise up. That V had to be for 10 feet on the diagonal and 10 feet deep at the point and that would be next to the _____ next to the gap well then they could just come up, go on up the river freely.

Ivan: In your discussion with others on the river, did you ever learn why the law was passed with the Oregon legislature that required fishwheels to extend more than three feet above the water surface. Did someone invent a submarine

fishwheel? Did you have trouble with dead lampreys on the upstream side of your leads?

John: Oh yes, terrible.

Ivan: What did you do about it?

John: Picked them out by hand as many as a ton in one day.

Ivan: How could you get those way below the water surface?

John: Well you'd reach down as far as you could and that's all you could get was just what you could reach down maybe 3, 4, 5 feet under water. Mostly with your hand. Most of them seemed to be near the surface.

Ivan: They didn't come down deeply then.

John: Not nothing like they did near the top.

Ivan: Did you have any observations about the number of lampreys increasing or diminishing after the dams were built.

John: I think they diminished as far as I could see.

Ivan: I do, too. They had trouble getting over the dam. How many times have visitors come and asked you to destroy those filthy things?

John: Yeah, everybody wants to kill them.Those workmen around the dams, they'd want to kill them anytime they saw then. They seemed to draw antagonism for some reason or another.

Ivan: Well, those people don't know that those are things that are good to eat. They are delicious. I've eaten them and, course, they were a primary food of the Indians, a delicacy to the Indians.

John: I found out how to catch them only a lot of time they get stuck on the counting board, up there, they'd go half way over the counting board and get stuck. So I'd put a tin can on a stick handle and you slip that right under their mouth and they immediately grab ahold of the can and they hang onto the can and you just slip them right out of the water.

Ivan: Well, that's good. How do they react when you apply electricity to them? They come right up out of the water and the fish counting slot there at John Day Dam they cover the windows so you just obliterate the windows, you can't see the salmon run through so we had to get rid of them. I had Vance, the electrician

rig up an electrode to see what it would do. They let loose then and come right up out of the water. Course, they'd drift right back downstream, salmon do the same thing, too, and the steelhead when they come under the influence of that electricity. Did you participate in any downstream migrant studies?

John: No, not in this area. I had that squawfish study, you know.

Ivan: Let's see, this was with Zimmer?

John: I was with Zimmer on that squawfish study. That was in 1955.

Ivan: Seems to me he did quite a bit of his work at Drano Lake, did he not? And Little White Salmon?

John: Yeah he did work there but then he hired me with my boat and we sampled the river from Astoria to The Dalles.

Ivan: Oh, for squawfish. How did you catch them and how did you _____ them?

John: Oh, we set nets, graduated nets from one, from 3/4 inch to 4" in sections. And then I had a diver net and it was graduated the same way only in longer sections and we'd take it out and all these diver drifts up and down the river, I'd sample them, one at each station. One week I'd go over to Astoria and back and the next week the Dalles and back and I'd sample by drifting and we'd set the nets on the lake and in different stations along the line.

Ivan: Using set nets then.

John: Set nets was more successful than drift nets.

Ivan: Would you actually open the fish and . . .

John: Oh, they opened all of them and I had three biologists with me and the two traveled by station wagon and the one in the boat with me and then when we'd catch the fish. Why, they'd take scale samples and weights and measurements and stomach samples and put the stomach in formaldehyde. So what they did with that I don't know.

Ivan: Determined what the food was that was in the stomach. How did you happen to get started in this fishing, you say you came on the river in 1930?

John: Yeah, I'd fished before that. My brother, Clarence, he started fishing in about 1913 or 1914. Bought a pile driver and a trap location from a man named Lords at The Dalles.

Ivan: I know the name.

John: Used to be a cold storage man up there.

Ivan: I know the name, Mr. Clint told me about him.

John: Yeah Clinton knew him and they had their first trap then at The Dalles, right across from _____ Point and then that was the first trap in 1914. Then they continued fishing part of the, Clarence kept right on fishing and then _____ and I went into business together, hauled gravel for the highways, that's digressing from this.

Ivan: That's alright. So your brother started in about 1914 and you gradually broke into the fishing there after.

John: Yeah, I fished with him part time, then between times, but the full fledged fishing I started in 1930.

Ivan: Were you a native Oregonian?

John: No, I'm from Savannah, Georgia, all of us.

Ivan: Oh, how did you happen to come out here?

John: My father was a mill operator back in Georgia and a lawyer friend of his came up to this country and he wrote back to my dad and told him the opportunities was unlimited out here and dad jumped on the train and come out here and bought a saw mill and brought us all out here.

Ivan: Oh, he was a saw mill operator. And where did you settle then?

John: Well, we were in Portland for a long time, then he bought a saw mill up here at Chenoweth and it went broke. So I was about 9 or 10 years old when I went there and I went through the whole works of school in four years. So, that's all the schooling that I got. Then we branched out from there.

Ivan: Tell me, did you observe, what is your experience in relationship with the development of the use of engines on the boat. We know that originally boats didn't have engines and then they started soon after, say after the first of the century and what was your observation about the use of engines, how they developed?

John: Well, I got in on just the first part of when they started to use engines, it was mostly small, one cylinder engines, 2, 3 or 4 h.p. but they kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger and then they finally graduated to big engines now, 300

or 400 h.p.

Ivan: Did all the fishermen have them, or just a few have them?

John: Well, by that time, most fishermen had the one lunger's, you know what I mean by one lunger's . . . one cylindar, and then they called them one lunger. But they were slow and they made 3 or 4 mph, then they started using automobile motors and then they kept on going on up to high speeds.

Ivan: Are you familiar with that reversing propellor, where you just had a sleeve and you just moved the sleeve back and forth to reverse the propellor?

John: That first boat my brother had was called a Wolvereen and by changing the pitch in the wheel, you'd get reverse.

Ivan: We have one of these down at the museum. Very interesting system. Did you know the Frisco Standard?

John: Oh yeah, I knew a lot of them.

Ivan: You know when Clarence _____ asked on, Mrs. _____ came to me and asked me to see that the junkers didn't get those old engines down there at P. J. McGowan's so I called in. I was so terribly busy with John Day at that time and Bonneville and research that I didn't think I had time to restore these old engines so I called in Tom Graves who was the Superintendent for Willamette Tug & Barge, then a collector. Among them was this Frisco Standard and the fellow up at Olympia, Dave Clinton, had been seeking a Frisco Standard for years and years and years. Tom never did tell me how much he received from Dave Clinton for that Frisco Standard but they restored that thing to absolute perfection. Probably the best machinist in Olympia worked on it, put in a new sleeve, bearings and new valves. I went up there to Dave Clinton's one time and wanted to see the engine run. So he fiddled with it, put a prime in it, flipped that wheel and the thing began to fire, it fired very, very slowly at first and finally warmed it up and then he slowed the thing down to 58 exhausts per minute. It was just running perfectly and beautifully, so I've been trying to get it back for our museum. Dave said that the only reason that it was restorable was that it had spent it's lifetime in fresh water and not in salt water. So you run lots of those Frisco Standards, huh?

John: Well, I know they used to call them Frisco Standards, all I ever heard them Balled was just Standards. Yeah, they were pretty dependable, you could always go and they was always ready to run.

Ivan: Did you ever have a boat burn out from under you?

John: No, i had one swamp on me though.

Ivan: What happened there?

John: I come down river in the middle of the night and I thought I was further up the river than I was and all of a sudden I saw a trap lead, an old trap lead ahead of me and I thought I saw a light and I thought it was a fisherman with a net, and I thought instead of running over his net I'd go around inside of him instead of running over his net and when I went to go by him I saw the trap lead and I swung around to come out of there cause it was an out-going tide and midnight and I hit a submerged upright piling as big around as a barrel in the bottom of the boat and I was still behind _____ and I saw the water coming in and I gunned that boat as fast as could an got off from behind the trap and hollered at this guy and he come around there and grasped my _____ and I jumped on the back of his boat. My boat went down to the level of water but it floated there a little bit just the next level of the water and so he made fast on the back of the boat and started for shore with it and got half way and the boat was submerging and finally it hit bottom. He hadn't turned loose cause it was swinging them around, the tide was so strong. They let it go and then the next day I went back to look for it with the Coast Guard and found it about half a mile down the *(end of tape)*.

Ivan: You were telling about your boat being swamped and I think we missed a part about this fisherman that you had tried to evade, came and tried to help you hook onto your boat and then what happened?'

John: Instead of being, hanging onto his net, he was tied up to the outside of the trap and when I went by the trap why then we went by close enough then that he grabbed the bow line and it fast around the cleat on the back of his boat and my partner and I got _____his boat and he took right off for shore to try to get the boat ashore so it wouldn't swamp in deep water and it went aground and we had to leave it with all the lights and everything burning on it. We thought it would stay there but course the tide was dropping but the sand washed out from under it and next morning at daylight why, it was about a half mile downstream.

Ivan: In water then about 5 to 10 feet deep?

John: 8 or 10 feet deep. Well we got ahold of it and pulled it out of there with a Coast Guard boat and dragged it on the bottom of the river, dragged it along the bottom, it stayed on bottom and we dragged it to Chinook and dragged it clear ashore with a 1,000 feet of cable with a big winch on the Coast Guard _____ and patched it up.

Ivan: What did it do to your engine to have it . . .

John: It burnt up every switch I had and all my wires and all the electricity was gone on it completely and I had to take off my starter and generator and take them up and get them cleaned up and carburetor had to be taken off and cleaned and drained the motor and I had to put all new wiring on the boat and I had to do it myself, I couldn't hire anybody and I finally got it done, started her up and away she went.

Ivan: Was this a 4-cylindar engine or . . .

John: No, it was a 6-cylindar, 135 h.p. Nortenberg. That was the one I had that I used when I was with the Fish and Wildlife Service. It was pretty fast, pretty powerful engine.

Ivan: What year was this then?

John: That was in 1956. Traps were long outlawed about five or six years and I was gillnetting on the lower river.

Ivan: Oh, you actually did gillnetting after you left trap work.

John: Oh, yeah, I went out gillnetting for 10 years. From 1950 until 1960 and then in '61 I went to work for the government. But one year in there I did that squaw fish work for Zimmer. Then I was a little over seven years with the Fish and Wildlife Service on the dams.

Ivan: Did you ever see any of your friends get a net in their prop?

John: Oh, lots of times. That's a frequent occurance.

Ivan: What do you do?

John: Well, sometimes we used to just jump overboard and dive underneath and hang on holding a knife in your teeth until you get down there and cut it out. Sometimes you can't do that, well, then you holler for help or maybe you can chew it out with the engine, it's hard to do.

Ivan: Reversing back and forth?

John: Yeah, sometimes you can't do it at all and if you can't cut it out, if there's too much in there and you can't cut it out, why, you just throw and anchor out and wait until you get somebody to pull you.

Ivan: What other old early engines of this one-lunger type do you remember, the

Kermith . . .

John: The Kermith I had one of those once and they were pretty nice. You're talking about one-lungers

Ivan: The old, real early ones.

John: Well, there was a Union and 4-horse and 5-horse and 6-horse Unions, maybe bigger than that, Unions and I don't know. Pretty near everybody had a union or a Standard or, I think there was a Scrips. I can't remember that far back.

Ivan: Did you ever know Eric Inpust, the fishwheel operator? Who had eight wheels on the river at one time?

John: Was he the Inpust that had a tavern over there above Bonneville for awhile?

Ivan: Uh, that may have been one of his sons.

John: Well, I didn't know the other one then, that would have been the only one I knew.

Ivan: I know Eric told me he lost $50,000 in 1927 when the wheels were outlawed. I have a copy from Mike Hoy here, ex-master fish warden, ordering him to cease operation, I have that in my files downstairs.

John: Yeah, that was quite a blow. You know they, in that book of yours you give some statistics there on the production of fishwheels. I think it was in your book, and according to that I think our fishtraps caught a good deal more fish than those fishwheels caught but it seems awful hard for me to believe but you must have known what you were talking about.

Ivan: Oh we have pretty good data alright. I have downstairs here, I have from 1909 onwards. I have the record of each individual FM-1 wheel and the exact number of fish it caught per day and the species, by species, and, of course. Souffert's records were even better. They weren't as old as the one records but we have fair records and, of course, the fisheries literature says the fishwheels took between 5% and 7% of the run.

John: Well, it was nothing like everybody imagines that the fishwheels caught all the fish in the river because I remember reading that and I thought at that time, good God, we caught more fish than that.

Ivan: Yeah, everybody had the impression that here was the giant wheel with the cups rotating three times a minute, three cups, completely across the river you know, picking up every single fish. That's what the editor thought that they

were scooping up every fish in the river, but most of them were just not successful, some were very, very successful as wheel number 5 up at The Dalles.

John: Yeah, I know. I was thinking about, you were talking about that submersible fishwheel. That wouldn't even be practical would it? The fish were caught and delivered at the axle and that way the axle would have to be way under water, they can't do it.

Ivan: I could never understand that law.

John: Somebody didn't know what they was talking about.

Ivan: It puzzles me alright. I found this in searching through the state house file, and this was long after the capitol burned but this one has always puzzled me and I'd just hoped that you'd had some contact with it.

John: I never had any contact with that becauee it seemed foolish to me.

Ivan: I agree. Do you remember the wheels operating though.

John: I remember them operating but I didn't work around the fishwheels that much. Like I say, I was pretty well busy with what I had. Sometime we had, we put in these 11 traps up here once and started putting them in when the river was up and as the river receded, we'd have to pull them out and move them up further river so we put in as many as 11 fish traps and fighting this terrific wind all the time that we were working. It was quite a chore.

Ivan: You had your own pile driver, or . . .

John: Yeah, we had our own pile driver.

Ivan: So you'd actually move the trap as the water flow diminished.

John: Yes, a lot of traps would start to go high and dry and we'd have to pull up the whole works and we'd lose a lot of wire. We'd just pull up all the piling and drive it on up further out in the river and go back to work again.

Ivan: Did you find that pulling this piling is difficult?

John: No pulling the piling is not difficult, it's work though.

Ivan: You'd get ahold of it with some kind of a winch or . . .

John: Well the pile driver had 50 foot leads on it, the first one wasn't that tall but they

had the leads and they used double box, you know cable with double box, a chain around the piling and put the lever down. Sometimes you pulled the pile driver down under water a little bit, but it finally jerked loose and started and once they started they come right on up. Soon as they loosened up and the pile driver came up why they put the piling lip on and take off the block and then jerk them right on up.

Ivan: Were you using steam or gasoline?

John: Gasoline first it went under. Fairbanks Morris, there's one for you. The, when we got the big pile driver we had a great big set of drums for the, off a big steam engine and that was driven by a Pontiac motor and we had a set of little guns in front of that. It always seemed like a funny thing to me but there was a reason for it. When we drove piling, we tried to get on down 8 or 9 feet if we could and seven feet was pretty fair and hard driving you know like a gravel bottom or something like that and when we got ready to pull them out, they'd come easy, they were easy to pull out, drove awful hard and you go someplace where mud bottom and drive piling and you just put your hammer on the top and go boomp, boomp, boomp, boomp and was down 12, 14 feet about what we had to drive then in the mud. Then when we got ready to pull them out, couldn't hardly pull them out. Sometimes we had boom chains, but boom chains couldn't stand it. We'd break boom chains as fast as we put them on. We had to get big chains, I think, I don't know what size but a great deal bigger than boom chains to go around the piling with a hook on it and there were big double blocks and geared down in low gear and pull that big pile driver. It was 60 feet long and 24 feet wide and sometimes it wouldn't come. That chain would just pinch the piling right straight in two. Then I'd have to go down and get ahold of it underwater someplace and get it out. We'd finally work back and forth and get it.

Ivan: You can move them around and loosen them a little bit.

John: Yeah, but they pulled awful hard when they come out of that soft mud and, boy, they really pulled hard.

Ivan: Did you ever work with steam at all?

John: I didn't run the dye. This trap was driven down there at St. Helens. We had the biggest pile driver on the Columbia River when I drove that and we drove it in 45 feet of water in a strong running tide and they had either 90 or 100 foot leads on that thing thing and that was a steam hammer on that. No, that was nothing to that, we just picked it up and set that big casing on top of it and turned on the steam and away she'd go.

Ivan: In that deep water did you have to run your lead all the way to the bottom?

John: Oh, yes.

Ivan: And what is your impression about what depth do the salmon usually travel in the water?

John: Oh, real good at 30 feet, 24 to 30 feet is real good, they travel in shallower water but I always found a trap in anywhere from 24 to 36 feet of water was very successful.

Ivan: And you conclude that at given an open river channel, that the fish will travel about that deep of their own will . . .

John: Yeah, I think so. You catch lots more fish when you get out about like that but then there's fish you catch pretty good. That trap we had across from Smith Rock Quarry was only 18 feet of water on the outside and it caught a lot of fish and the water on the lead was only nine feet deep, but you get the biggest and the strongest fish when you get down under 30 feet of water.

Ivan: Bill Sams told me this, also. Do you remember Bill Sams?

John: Yeah.

Ivan: And what about your diving net experiences, did you corroborate this with your diving net experience?

John: Yeah, that seemed about the way for a diver, too. Thirty feet of water is just nice for salmon, real nice. And, of course, it varies to that, they can go in deeper water and they go in shallower water but when you're fishing around 25 to 35 feet of water, you're in salmon area.

Ivan: What did you do when you're drift diving? Did you hire a diver to take out the snags when you drift?

John: Sometimes. We'd use regular snag nets and then we could hook, catch a snag you know, and then drift down over the top of it and hook a cable around it and pull it. But sometimes you couldn't do that and you'd have to send a diver down and hook one of those snag net and then he'd go right down the net and put a cable on it and if he couldn't put a cable on it. He'd take dynamite down and blow it out.

Ivan: Oh, you mean they'd be imbedded in the bottom?

John: Yeah. Funny thing, a lot of those snags would be down there at the bottom of the river and you'd pull them off and get them loose from the bottom and then

they'd come up and float. You'd just see the air bubbles just come sailing out of there and then you come up and go floating down the river. A lot of them would, yeah.

Ivan: Does this mean the decomposition gases in the wood would . . .

John: I don't know, it must be, I don't know of anything else. Pressure down there may have been holding it in and when it got close to the surface, I know there was lots of bubbles but a lot of times those snags would float when you got them up.

Ivan: Tell me, have you ever seen, as below McNary Dam when the Sockeye were blocked up there at one time, have you ever seen a similar circumstance where the sockeye would give off these great masses of bubbles and betray their presence.

John: Yeah, I've seen all kinds of salmon do that. They do that in fish traps in the main pots, lots of times you see those bubbles come up.

Ivan: Yeah, well a great many fish, that makes quite a few bubbles. Other fisherman of an earlier era told me about this and they observed it there right below McNary Dam, where the sockeye, the blueback was blocked. And I've seen it in the counting pool there at John Day Dam, also.

John: Yeah, I've seen it quite frequently in trap pots in the deeper water.

Ivan: And have you heard the noise that sturgeon will make when you pull them up out of water sometimes?

John: Oh, a little bit but I never heard too much of it.

Ivan: I don't know whether it's gas escaping from their alimentary canal or their air bladder or what.

John: I don't know either, I haven't heard too much of it. Some of those sturgeon out of those 2600 they tagged down there, several of them entered the _____ River and they caught them up there above where I worked.

Ivan: They were released in the Columbia after tagging and they descended the Columbia and went up the coast to _____,

John: Yeah, they went up that river and then there was a couple of them caught clear up to Lewiston. And there was several caught up at Oregon City. So they was distributed around quite a bit.

Ivan: Now, how do they, they go through the navigation locks at Bonneville?

John: Well, they got through there somehow, let's see, when was that . . . yeah that had to be Bonneville, they went through the navigation locks or they got lifted over with, well, sometimes a sturgeon goes through the fish ladder, I guess, not very much but . . .

Ivan: Oh, one or two a year, maybe nine, the greatest number of any one year was 27, so this is nothing. But I did operate the fish locks for some years, some of the earlier years. I operated them day after day to put sturgeon upstream but the most I ever sent upstream was 1,200 in one year and that's nothing actually so quite a few must have gone through the navigation locks. You are aware that in the spring of the year recently that The Dalles has been counting far more shad than Bonneville.

John: Why's that?

Ivan: Well, I think they're going through the navigation locks. It appears that the power house fish collection system, this new system, is not working properly.

John: You know, sometimes they count more bluebacks over at Rock Island Dam than Bonneville Dam, too.

Ivan: They sure did. This might have been a migration, turn about migration, from those fish living in the river resident and going back up-stream.

John: Might be, but I believe maybe there is an awful lot of blueback goes through the navigation locks. They're a shore fish.

Ivan: Tell me, in your association with the dams, when you get a fish trapped in one of the stop load slots or in the navigation lock or in an enclosed area, which way do they circle?

John: I think they circle clockwise.

Ivan: My observation down here is that they circle the opposite way.

John: Well, I never paid too much attention but it seems to me the fish go this way, they did on the upper river.

Ivan: In the early days they would operate the fish locks down here for smelt in 1953 as an example, and these great masses of smelt would come in on the south side of the lock with the gates open. This great mass of smelt would come in and they would proceed along the south wall; we watched them and they'd circle at the upper end of the lock and come down headed west on the north

side of the lock and as they approached the gates going back downstream. The boys would watch them and close the gates and when that great school of fish would pass the gates and start back upstream on the south side again. The boys would open the lock gates and let in another group until we got so much conflict that, where one group might be coming in and another going out so then they'd complete the lockage and let the fish go out and start all over again. By doing this, people at Cascade Locks and the old navigation canal were able to go down there and dip net smelt.

John: Well I never paid too much attention about which way a fish _____ in captured area, so I wouldn't know for sure.

Ivan: Did any of your other friends get into troubles on the river, not with the law, I'm not talking about that, but amusing troubles, incidents that proved hillarious and amusing?

John: I can't remember anything that was ever funny that I can remember.

Ivan: No accident was funny, of course.

John: I got in pretty bad trouble, putting in that trap down there, we had . . .

Ivan: This one at _____ Rock?

John: Yeah, strange people worked for me and they had that great big pile driver there and had a slide anchor out and so I had a launch and I _____ there was an open launch and I had my partner with me and we run the line and I had a hard time breaking it loose. I twisted the boat around hard and the engineer saw I was having a hard time breaking so he slacked off the line and here I am hard oar, I switched back and he _____, the same time and it just caught me under the arm pits and picked me up and threw me in the air about 10 feet. I hit in that swift water and the motor was running full blast and my partner standing up there in the bow looking at that. I've done quite a bit of diving like on those traps, opening my eyes and seeing under water and everything. When I was going down I had my eyes open and I saw the cable go by and I just reached out to grab it and about that time he tightened up on it again and brought me right straight back up to the surface. He held it there and the boat was running and it held it, too, so I went hand over hand back up the cable about 20 feet and my partner helped me back in the boat there but I pert near drowned.

Ivan: Yeah, I've had some incidents on the river, too. July 23, 1942, we went down looking for these dead fish. You know, we made these patrols, and crossing there from Multnomah Falls over across by Sand Island we got out in the shallow water upstream of Sand Island and here we were and the waves

increased in the shallow water and we ran right in underneath the waves and the boat tipped over and we lost all our gear, coats, fuel can. The boat floated, it turned over but about six feet of the prough floated, sticking out of the water. The motor held the back end down and here three of us hung onto that 'till a CRPA boat just happened down river and picked us up. I can remember the lady on board. She was just shaking like a leaf, but she wasn't shaking any more than I was. They hauled us over there to St. Cloud ranch and went over and telephoned, then up at "The Dalles. I guess you know the, when they were blasting up there we went up to look for sturgeon and this operator didn't have any kind of a ticket at all, no license whatsoever, it was just a construction boat darting back and forth picking up sturgeon and he didn't even see us when he hit us, tipped us over and I bailed way out to keep from to keep from going through his screw. They picked four of us out of the water that day.

John: You know, there is just a lot of fisherman don't even know how to swim either, out there working on those boats.

Ivan: I judge that you know how to swim.

John: I know how to swim.

Ivan: Any other accidents you witnessed?

John: Probably lots of them, but I can't remember, they'd get so they'd be common place.

Ivan: This Jim Bailey, this name you mentioned. There is a Jim Bailey up at The Dalles, an older chap who's connected with the cherry industry, but formerly he was hatcheryman with the old Bureau of Fisheries here on the river and the Oregon Fish Commission. He had a world of experience on the river and he knew the old timers, real old timers: Hugh O'Malley and Hugh Mitchell and Mike Hoy. He knew the real old timers. He began right at the beginning of the hatchery era and I had two very excellent interviews with him. I judge that he is close to 80 now, I wonder if this was the Jim Bailey that you knew?

John: No, the Jim Bailey that I knew is about the same age as I am and he was Clarence's brother-in-law. He married Clarence's wife's sister, and he fished with us quite a lot but he's dead now. He died shortly after the accident down there when my boat swamped. He was with me when the boat swamped and he died shortly after that.

Ivan: Tell me what happened when Lee Sams and the Corp of Engineers boat, his boat collided with the Ocean liner, cargo beat coming upstream?

John: Yeah, I was right there. I didn't see the accident but I was about a half an hour

ahead of him. That was during the time I was running the boat for the, for Paul Zimner, that squawfish expedition, and it was that time in 1955 when we had a terrific freeze, right about Armistice, remember?

Ivan: Oh, Yes.

John: And I had to go no matter what the weather, I had to go. So I was going down towards Astoria and it got so bad I pulled in to Cathlamet. There was ice all over my windshield and everything else. Then I got in there and I hadn't been in there too long and here I see Sam come in there and one of his crew men and the ship had hit him and he was right behind me. He said he was iced over, too, and the Jap boat hit him and they just had time to get their little dingy when the boat went down. So, next morning they wanted me to go back up and see if I could locate it. I went back up and I was doing what I wasn't sposed to do, but I found it and then they went and we got boats and got it up.

Ivan: How did it happen, what actually happened, do you know?

John: Well, I guess he couldn't see very well, it was iced up and it was winter and the wind was blowing, I know I could scarcely see.

Ivan: Is it true that under these icy conditions that he ran right into midships into the bigger ship?

John: Well, that wasn't what he said but . . .

Ivan: Oh, what did he say?

John: He said the ship ran into him. He said it went one way and then the ship came right at him.

Ivan: Vigilant that he was on the river, I guess I would tend to believe Lee.

John: I kind of think myself that he was down making some coffee or cooking something and the other guy was running the boat, is what I think. I think Lee was too good a boatman to ever run into anybody as far as I could see. He was an excellent boatman. I always did think that he didn't do that himself.

Ivan: I believe that. This ruined his career.

John: I know that and he was getting ready to retire, too. I think he had 2 more years to go.

Ivan: I always enjoyed my association with Bill Sams, boatman on the river and later on . . .

John: I didn't know him so well. I knew Lee Sams better and, course, he used to pick up fish before he went to work for the government. He was the pick up man, had a pick up boat.

Ivan: Do you remember any of the names of the old pick up boats, the Keystone, the _____, what were the other names?

John: I saw a man fall overboard in the rapids off the _____ one day during _____. He was trying to help them get some boats up over the rapids, that was a pretty fast boat, that _____ and his name was Bill Marshall and he was a pretty good boatman. He went around the side of the boat and fell overboard and just as he fell overboard why he reached up and grabbed ahold of the side of the boat and the other guy slacked the boat off then and climbed aboard but he fell off right in that swift water.

Ivan: Out here at the rapids? Cascade rapids?

John: The Garrison Rapids.

Ivan: Oh, Garrison Rapids, that was fortunate that he grabbed ahold of the _____.

John: I don't believe the dam was in then; no the dam wasn't in then because we went, we was going right up by, that was in '33, that was in 1933, 1934

Ivan: The dam started in fall, in September of '33.

John: They might have been doing something around but the river was still open, that was the spring of '34, that was the same time I cut this off.

Ivan: How did you cut your thumb off?

John: Oh, I was workin with old High John, got to be 101 year old. He was 75 years old and he was buzzing up wood and I was helping him and I went into eat lunch. I cut the wood for my wife and hit the last stick and I hauled off and whacked it, had my thumb on top of it and just whacked it straight off. It was a bad one, handicapped me all the rest of my life, more or less. Working with nets it's hard to make your knots and it's quite awkward for me, but I get by.

Ivan: I see you've developed a callus on the end of it.

John: No, that there I did just before, a week ago yesterday. After all these years of mending nets and working around using a knife all the time, I came on the idea that I'd tie a piece of string in a loop like that and then wrap the end of the knife with tape around that string and then I could tie onto that and I could hang

down between my legs. I could always reach down and grab it and have it. I stooped over to pick up a rope and my knife, laying on the deck, and when I stooped over it just nipped off the end of my thumb.

Ivan: Have any favorite recipes for preparing salmon or sturgeon?

John: I don't have any. I use it any way you can get it, boiled is the best of all. Boiled salmon, boiled sturgeon, boiled black cod, that's all good.

Ivan: Did you ever make pickled fish at all?

John: Yeah, I do it sometimes but not very often. Some of the guys I go down there to stay with make pickled fish all the time.

Ivan: Chuck _____ told me about this Fin down at Astoria or Bushman there that has this very secret recipe to make specially delicious pickled fish.

John: Yeah, it's really good. Take and salt fish and then bring it out of the salt and put it in spice water and half vinegar and spices and onions and stuff like that in it and let it sit for two or three days, and it really tastes good.

Ivan: Who assigned you to what job?

John: The Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland there. It was a water survey of some kind, water resources survey is what it was, stream survey . . .

Ivan: Stream survey from the fisheries standpoint?

John: Yes, I think so. It was a different section from my regular section but they hired me out of my fisheries section for this section of Walter Keetis.

Ivan: Oh, Keetis. Well, what streams did you investigate?

John: Well I had the Okanogan, the Entiat, Methow, Wenatchee, Klickitat, Big White Salmon, Little White Salmon, Wind River, Lewis River and Cowlitz River.

Ivan: The Washougal?

John: Yeah.

Ivan: And what did you look for, the number of spawning beds in the stream or . . .

John: Well, I looked for the terrain and what looked like would be good gravel and what size gravel and what might be good beds and all of them and. On top of that I had to go and interview the hatcheries that was all on these streams and

get their output and their hopes and all that stuff. I'm not a writer but they said I did fine.

Ivan: What year was this?

John: That was in the spring of '67, I believe.

Ivan: And you were up at Wells when they called you?

John: Yeah, I was up there when I wrote that thing out but here was the funny thing, I was under temporary work for the fisheries. I couldn't, they made me lay off a month every year, you that, I forget what they call it. So I came down here to take temporary assignment from my section and then this other section they wanted this survey and they said, well, I could do it, and they sent me out there. So I did it and it took about a month.

Ivan: You were born back in . . .

John: Savannah, Georgia. I came out here when I was 7.

Ivan: Let's see, you were born there in the year, 1900?

John: Yeah 1900. I'll be 75 years old this fall. I get around pretty good, too. I never told you about the sturgeon that made the Ripley's Believe It or Not.

Ivan: No. I didn't hear . . .

John: I caught a sturgeon up _____just below the Dalles about eight or nine miles and he was about three feet long. He had a rubber, just like a plain rubber that you use to wrap packages sometimes. It came around the middle of his back right behind his head and went around one side of his body and entered his stomach right opposite where it went in the back and you could turn that rubber around and around and around and how it ever happened. I'll never know, but I took the fish and I was hauling some fish to _____ Fish Co. in Portland. I took that down as an oddity and he was still alive then and folks said, let's put him in the freezer and maybe we can get some notoriety out of him. So they put him in the freezer and here a couple of weeks later and I was looking in the paper and here was that sturgeon with rubber sticking out his back and got in a Believe It or Not cartoon.

Ivan: So you caught the fish.

John: I caught the fish, my name wasn't listed but I caught the fish.

Ivan: That gentlemen over in Vancouver right now that's had so many articles in

Ripley. Editor of Alaska Fish & Game, I can't think of his name to save me now.

John: Yeah, I was reading about that a while back, a month or two ago.