

Interviewed by Oonagh O'Connor, 1995. Mary Ann McCoy is also present.

0:00:00

*This is Dave McCoy in his house on Cortes Island on April the 26th, 1995.*

0:00:34

*And he's about to tell a story about himself, a story about Tiber Bay.*

We were living on a float house in Tiber Bay, and the float was freshly built. You could see the logs, and the bark was still on the log. And myself and my younger brother were out playing boats between the logs and the water. But there wasn't enough room for two of us, so I moved over to the edge of the float where I proceeded to fall in. And I remember we had a biffy on the corner of the float. And I couldn't swim, but I didn't want to live..land... in that pile of biffy. And I got down to the bottom and I tried to walk to the beach. And the next thing I remember is my brother pulling my hair and a native that we had known for quite some time by the name of Bill Mitchell pounded on me and I was back in my bed in the house and I don't know how I got there. I found out later that Mother had come out and saw me laying on the bottom, dove down and picked me up.

0:01:52

*Just about drowned.*

0:01:55

*You were 5 years old were you?*

0:01:58

Yeah, about five, but I remember just like it was yesterday. I'll never forget that.

0:02:03

*Were you afraid of water after that?* No, I wasn't afraid of water but I've never learned to swim very far.

0:02:10

260 feet is the maximum.

0:02:14

But getting back to your notes, when we left Morris Bay [?], we went to North Bend,

0:02:21

across from Boston Bar.

0:02:23

We were about three years there drying the logs and shipped the logs on the railroad. That wasn't very profitable, so Dad decided we could move back to the coast. However Dad moved to the coast and the family moved to Vancouver. And I was 12. The summer of my 12th year, we had a little logging show in Pendrell Sound. And the family came up to spend the summer there. And at the end of the summer, Russ and I were quite a problem for mother so dad offered to keep us in camp and teach us by correspondence. We didn't learn much. That was the beginning of a working life. And from Pendrell Sound, we went to Pryce Channel, Teakerne Arm. By the time we got to Teakerne Arm, we were a united family. When I was 15, mother opted to move herself to Squirrel Cove and where she set up residence in one of Irv Reedel's cabins. And I guess Dad missed the cooking, so we moved down to the island, too, and we moved to Whaletown to the old Cherry place, which at the time was a two-story house.

*Where was that, the old Cherry place?*

0:04:37

*Would it be hard to describe?*

0:04:38

Sawmill Road is what it's called now. [Note: 394 Sawmill Rd.]

0:04:41

*How old were you around that time?*

0:04:44

I was around 15, 16.

0:04:47

*Were you the second oldest in the family?* I was the oldest.

0:04:51

*The oldest.*

0:04:52

My brothers are Russell, Howard, Stan, Pat, Doug. My mom always wanted a girl and lost the most part of her. *Had fun trying. You also had Dorothy stay with you.* Dorothy... I had two half sisters and a half brother from a previous marriage. Another instance I remember from Tiber's Bay, after this falling off the float,

0:05:30

Mother was so upset of Dad that he had to get them houses on the beach,

0:05:33

and when he pulled them off the float, we sat at a very precarious angle for about three weeks, because he got them off the float, but he wouldn't level them up. At that time my step- sister Dorothy was with us with her husband, Sid Knudsen. And I remember Dorothy

had long hair and got it in the wringer washing machine and it took half the hair off her scalp. So. Another interesting thing that was there, they had cut wood blocks with firewood in the water. And Sid had stuck a double-bitted axe in the top of it and tied a string to it. And Brother Russ jumped up on this block of wood, which tipped out from under him, and he landed on the double-bitted axe and cut a little hole in his chest.

0:07:15

*Did he have to get taken somewhere?*

0:07:17

No, no, it wasn't that serious.

0:07:20

*Lots of different...*

0:07:22

There were many instances of bruises.

0:07:26

*Did you have water running into the house?*

0:07:29

Most times, most times. Dad's first thought when he hit the beach was get some logs in the water. Once I got old enough, it became my duty to get the water line up the creek where we were at. One place we were was at the head of Teakerne Arm and got the water line up the creek and lots of pressure; we'd never had it so good, I don't think. But then the water pressure started to go downhill. So we went up to check the water line and the dog had gone up there and chewed it full of holes so it looked like a sprinkler.

0:08:21

*[Mary Ann] He's been working since he was 13 years old.*

0:08:28

*Yeah, I was wondering when you mentioned about the correspondence, you were 13 then? 12 and a half, I guess, when I came back that summer.*

0:08:38

*What was the first job you did logging?*

0:08:40

Oh, I don't remember.

0:08:42

*You don't remember?*

0:08:43

Looked behind the cat, did whatever we were told, that's what we did.

0:08:50

*[Marianne] Robert Christensen said he remembers him and his brother and their suitcases when they were going to camp. And the suitcases were almost as big as they were.*

0:08:59

Yeah.

0:09:00

From the time I was 14, we were at Pryce Channel, I used to take the boat from there. The weekly journey to Refuge Cove for groceries and fuel. Some of them were pretty stormy rides.

0:09:31

*That's where you got your supplies from, from Refuge Cove?*

0:09:33

Yeah. When mother was expecting baby number six, which was Doug, it was decided that the whole clan couldn't go to town for this. So myself and my brothers stayed in our camp in Pryce Channel. And about four or five days after they had left, the dogs were kicking up quite a storm. As I looked across the beach, there was a cougar coming out. So, the one dog took off after the cougar chased it up on the bush, and then the cougar turned around and chased the dog back to the beach. So I got Dad's trusty 30/30 out, and put a hole in the cougar. But I didn't kill it on the spot, so we were pretty weary that night. We boarded up the windows, and the next morning I made a decision that we would all pile into our little 8-foot rowboat and row down to Gordon Heatly's camp. And he was in Waddington Channel, where we spent about the next 10 days till Dad came back.

0:11:00

*You look like you were quite young, weren't you?*

0:11:03

Yeah, I can't remember.

0:11:06

*Sounds like you were helping run the family.*

0:11:15

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, he had to stay and look after them.*

0:11:17

*Oh, wow.*

0:11:18

That was just the way things were back then.

0:11:20

*Do you know how Tiber's Bay got the name?*

0:11:24

It was a family name, Tiber's Bay.

*And when?*

0:11:28

*Do you know how long ago?* No.

0:11:35

No. I would say it must have been around...

0:11:39

It must have been early... maybe 1950, 1950, or maybe before that. I don't... I just can't really remember that far back. *[Mary Ann] Wasn't it called Bennett's Point first?* Well, there's a point there, but it's a little bay, it's called Tiber's Bay.

0:12:00

*[Mary Ann] Because my grandma lived on...*

0:12:04

*Was it Bennett's Point or Tiber Bay?*

0:12:06

No.

0:12:07

*[Mary Ann] Bennett's Point?* No, no, your grandma lived on Chris' Lagoon.

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, but she also lived over at Whaletown, where all those, there's a couple of ministers have little cabins in there.*

0:12:28

There's a whole bunch of places in there now.

0:12:29

*[Mary Ann] So I took pictures of these when they first came here, they lived there.*

0:12:52

Was that out at Seaford?

0:12:54

*[Mary Ann] Uh-huh.*

0:12:55

*Yeah.*

0:12:56

*So I was either... I think Auntie Betty called it Bennett's Point then.*

0:13:08

It was not Whaletown.

0:13:10

*[Mary Ann] Huh?*

0:13:11

It was not Whaletown.

0:13:12

*You said Whaletown, but I think you meant Seaford.*

0:13:16

*[Mary Ann] Seaford, yeah. But see, where was we going?*

0:13:20

*[Mary Ann] We went in with my Bronco to where we used to have... You went into Tibers Bay. You went down to Seaford Road, then you went up over the top.*

0:13:33

*[Mary Ann] Oh, that's when we went to that guy's place.*

0:13:36

Well, Seaford [unclear]

0:13:39

*Yeah, my aunt would know. Betty?*

0:13:42

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, did you go see her?*

*She said if Nellie would see me, she would see me, and Nellie has decided she'll see me.*

0:13:47

Oh, yeah.

0:13:48

*[Mary Ann] So, it's still to come.*

0:13:50

*She would know for sure. Okay, I made a note of it to ask.*

0:13:54

*[Mary Ann] Because we went in and I took a bunch of pictures. And, yeah.*

0:14:02

*Was there a place that your grandmother lived when she came?*

0:14:06

*That one?*

0:14:07

*[Mary Ann] Yeah.*

0:14:08

Oh, okay.

0:14:09

*[Mary Ann] Yeah. One of the places. Mm-hmm.*

0:14:12

*Mm-hmm.*

0:14:13

There were many, many interesting people on this coast when I was 16 or 17,

0:14:21

around that age, I think every little bay around here, every channel anyway, had a couple of little gyppo loggers. And if you were out of work, all you had to do was get in a rowboat, or a speedboat, and take your kit with you, and just go from camp to camp. You had a job.

*You mentioned Billy Mitchell earlier. Did you know him very well?*

Yeah really well.

Billy Mitchell I believe was the first person in Squirrel Cove to have a power boat, a good-sized power boat, anyway. And Billy had the Dorothy M., which was my dad's boat, and dad had sold it to Billy Mitchell, and the name came from my sister. My step-sister, yeah.

0:15:51

*Was Billy chief there or related to a chief?*

0:15:54

No, Billy was the chief. He was chief for a long time. I can remember them getting herring and smoking them on open racks on the beach. I remember Billy Mitchell's wife gave mother some very nice knitting baskets, hand-woven knitting baskets.

0:16:31

*So when your family came back here, where did you end up settling?*

0:16:38

We were at the Cherry place and then

0:16:41

I believe the house was a little smaller, awfully cold or something. We wound up on the

Burnside property. A big house that had been built, I believe, for Dunc Robertson. And when we moved there, that's about the time I met Mary Ann and that's a whole new story.

0:17:15

*How did you two meet?*

0:17:18

*[Mary Ann] It was your brother.*

0:17:22

Cupid.

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, his brother wrote a letter to him and said that I wanted to sit with him in the show. And... Or you wanted to sit with me in the show.*

*Is it true?*

0:17:56

Yeah, it's true. *[Mary Ann] But his brother...*

0:18:02

I never wrote the letter. My brother was playing Cupid. So I went to the show and Mary Ann sent another Cupid up to me and said, well are you going to go sit with Mary Ann or not? So that's how we met. *Where was the show?* Manson's Hall where there's a show every Friday night.

0:18:26

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, we used to have lots of things going on when we were younger.*

0:18:30

That one show, I think it was every Friday night or every second Friday night, something like that. That's what started the whole island getting together. The roads were really poor. But, uh, Freddie Reedel lived at Whaletown, like down at Coulter Bay. And he had a one-ton, I think it was a 1946 GMC, and he brought every kid that wanted to climb in that thing over to the show Friday nights and back. And he did the same as he does now.

0:19:05

He complained both ways.

0:19:06

*He's a natural love-starter.*

0:19:07

*And that's how you used to get to the show?*

0:19:08

Yeah.

0:19:10

That or we walked.

0:19:11

Yeah.

0:19:12

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, I used to walk to Whaletown, from Whaletown to my house down in Smelt Bay, when you didn't have a vehicle ready.*

0:19:20

Yeah.

0:19:21

*And were the roads pretty rough?* Pretty rough and pretty narrow, yeah.

0:19:29

I remember one time, Gordy Irwin and I, myself, we decided we were going to a dance on a Saturday night, and this was Tuesday. And by Saturday noon, we had gathered up enough parts for a Model A Ford and I had that thing running and had enough time to go to Heriot Bay and get a couple of cases of beer to put in the rumble seat. And we made the dance.

0:20:15

As I remember it, we both walked home too. *What did it break down then?* Yeah.

*How much longer was it after you met that you were married?* Three years, three and a half years.

0:20:39

Yeah.

0:20:40

*Did you raise your family on Cortes?* Most of the time. We moved to Campbell River for eight years. We had Dale and Ian while we were living on Cortes. And we moved to Campbell River and our third came, Reo. And I wasn't working right in Campbell River. I was out in camps all the time. I came home once and Mary Ann says, you know, I think I can raise these kids just as well in Cortes as I can here, so we moved.

0:21:24

*[Mary Ann] The doctor over there kept saying to me, do you like it over here any better? I said, no. Once you've been in the country its.. I didn't really like it over there. I made a lot of friends but I thought the sportsmanship was much better in the country for kids.*

*So at what age did you bring your kids back here?*

*[Mary Ann] Rio was four when we came back, Dale's 7 years older and Ian's five years older.*

*And did you settle in this area near Smelt Bay?*

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, on Smelt Bay Road, on one of my mom's pieces of property. Yeah. We're going to be putting our house up for sale up there pretty soon. We built this and moved, sort of moved over here and haven't finished.*

The way it's been for years, the people that settled here first, like Mary Ann's grandfather, and he's not the only one that did this, a lot of families did this. When they settled here, then they gave their children a piece of land, and those children in turn split the land again and gave to their children. And now the price's got out of reach for the children to buy land. Things were tougher, I think, in the bygone days as far as prosperity goes, but things were a lot better as far as people would lend a hand easier and not expect a dollar in return. So that atmosphere is gone.

*[Mary Ann] Where Dale is that's the piece of property that was given to us on our first anniversary.*

*And did you give that to him?*

*[Mary Ann] No it was given to us but then after... my younger brother, he got married and he couldn't afford electricity and septic and everything, and so it was already in on our property. So we swapped that piece for another piece, down, just two lots down. When Wayne decided to sell it, my younger brother, then we bought it. Dale bought it from us. Yeah.*

*That's neat, stayed in the family.*

*[Mary Ann] Yeah. Yeah. Well, moving over here, that was my mum's and I... Well, it was my grandpa's to begin with. And so this was still my grandpa's land over here that we bought from my aunt. Yeah, so we're still on his land.*

0:25:02

*So we should talk about the Jefferys then, I think.*

0:25:06

Oh yeah, there's more to talk about.

0:25:09

*[Mary Ann] I was just going to say that his mom and dad lived two more places here too.*

*Oh wow. Maybe we should hear that right because right now we're just at Burnside property. Oh where'd we go after Burnside now.*

*[Mary Ann] Up here at where we, they call Jack's Pond my dad's pond.*

*Oh that's named after your dad.*

0:25:40

*[Mary Ann] My dad.*

0:25:41

Oh.

0:25:42

Yeah.

0:25:43

*But you lived there.* Um, my mother, no, I didn't live there. I was on my own by then. My mother and father bought the piece of property adjacent to Jack's Pond. And then Dad, hmm, I think he got into his second childhood. He decided to go back to the farm. So he headed out for Saskatchewan, where they spent a few years. And then wanted to move back out. So they moved into Smelt Bay into Otto Ellingson's home. *[Mary Ann] Yeah, they rented it.* From there they moved to Quadra Island, where my father passed on and my mother took residence in Campbell River until her demise. I have one brother on Quadra Island, Stanley, two brothers in Campbell River, Howard and Patrick are both in Campbell River, one brother Russ that's in Pt. Alberni. And one brother... and the youngest brother and the youngest sister, Barbara and Doug, are in Regina.

0:27:24

*[Mary Ann] Isn't Doug in Regina and Barbara in Saskatchewan? Yeah.*

0:27:32

Oh Barbie's Saskatoon, I guess.

*So did your parents sell Jack's, the land at Jack's pond before you left?* My mother and father sold that to Pat, my younger brother Pat, and then Pat in turn sold it to Jack Parry.

*Ah, he's your father.* *[Mary Ann] Yeah.*

0:27:59

*Are you two married at this time?*

0:28:02

Oh yeah, yes. Mary Ann and I have been married for 30 years plus.

0:28:06

Yeah, 30 years. 31 in August. Yeah, just about 31 years. *And that's when it became Jack's Pond.*

0:28:20

*[Mary Ann] Yeah, they've always called it Jack's Pond.*

0:28:24

*Yeah. The kids skate on it in the winter.* Before Jack moved up there, it really wasn't a pond.

0:28:32

It was a little bit of a gravel pit, and that's where they got the gravel for the roads. But then

all of a sudden, the gravel pit got quite a bit bigger and became a pond. So then it became Jack's pond.

0:28:50

*[Mary Ann] Because the kids would go there, and then when they got cold, they'd always go over to Dad's and warm up and have cocoa or whatever. So it just kind of stuck.*

0:29:01

Yeah.

0:29:03

*Where was the house?*

*[Mary Ann] It's still there. Oh. Up here, right across from that water, that little pond.*

*Uh-huh. I know where the pond is, but I can't remember the house that's in it. Is that house really close?*

*[Mary Ann] Yes, Suzanne's in it. Oh, so it's kind of across the road then. Yeah, and Suzanne actually bought it, I guess, last year. But yeah, then Dad sold Mom's house then.*

0:29:28

*He went back.*

0:29:30

*He ended up up there.*

*Well I'm sure Suzanne could take over the tradition of cocoa.*

0:29:45

Yeah.

0:29:46

*[Mary Ann] Last year I wish I'd stopped. I was going to go up to the mail and I had my camera too and the fire truck was putting water on the ice to get another coat. I thought, gee, I should have stopped and taken a picture, because when I got back, it was gone.*

0:30:08

Talk about Jefferys, Mary Ann. Hmm? *The Jefferys. The Jefferys.*

0:30:13

*I might as well start a new slide from the Jefferys.*

Disclaimer: This text is transcribed from an audio recording. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some places it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors. It is posted as an aid to understanding the oral history, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.